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*Martin Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers taken from  
the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther.*

*Unless otherwise noted, Biblical quotations are from the ESV.*

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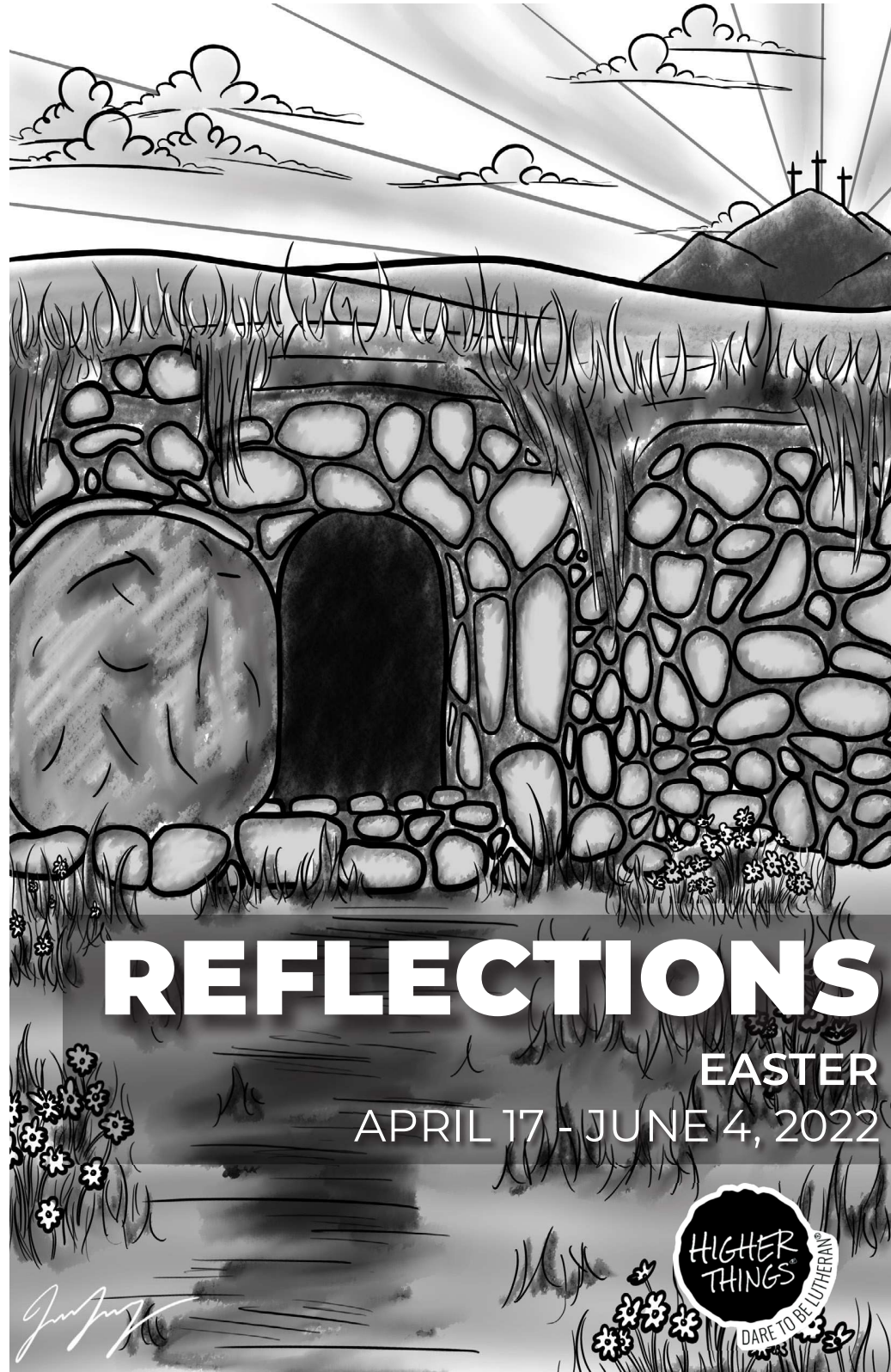
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## Easter

APRIL 17 - JUNE 4, 2022

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## Notes

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## Notes

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## A Short Form for Daily Reflection

ADAPTED FROM LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

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*Make the sign of the Holy Cross and say:*

**In the name of the Father, † Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Read the Psalm for the Day (A table of daily psalms can be found in Lutheran Service Book, page 304).*

*Read "Today's Reading" if there is one listed.*

*Read the Daily Lectionary selections.*

*Read the Reflection for the Day.*

*Say the Apostles' Creed.*

*Pray the Lord's Prayer.*

*Pray one of these little prayers:*

*(In the Morning)*

**I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee to keep me this day also from sin and all evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

*In the morning go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, such as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest.*

*(In the Evening)*

**I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously kept me this day, and I pray Thee to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

*If it is evening, then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.*

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## The Eve of Pentecost

JUNE 4, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** John 14:15-21

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 20:22-21:9; Luke 20:45-21:19

*"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*  
*(John 14:21)*

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen. Do you love Jesus? It seems like a silly question to ask a Christian, and yet it was just asked of you. How is it that you love Jesus? Was it something you decided to do one day? Did you will your love for Jesus into existence? Clearly those seem to be unlikely answers. Your love of Jesus, your love for God, did not and could not come from you. Such a love came about because of a Gift that you received, the Gift of faith. This Gift was given to you by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus prepares us for that time when He will no longer be among us in the flesh. As upsetting to the disciples as that might have been, that day was drawing ever closer. But Jesus promised that the disciples would not be left alone. You, too, have received that promise, for Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to you. He comes to give to us the Gift of faith which believes all that God has said and done.

By faith, you have to come to know love, true love shown by God to us sinners. It is this love which led Him to send Jesus into creation, to make Jesus our sacrificial Lamb. God has made you known to Him, but more importantly, God has made Himself known to you. He has done so by giving you a name, one that is more important than any other name: child of God. That makes God your Father, and because God is your Father, He desires to give you the greatest Gift in all of creation, and that is the forgiveness of all of your sins. No greater Gift can be given than that, for it is by forgiveness that you are received into the kingdom of God. All that God desires to give you is yours because you have been made a part of Him. In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty and ever-living God, You fulfilled Your promise by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to unite disciples of all nations in the cross and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the Gospel spread this gift to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*(Collect for the Eve of Pentecost)*

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## Friday of the Seventh Week of Easter

JUNE 3, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 20:1-21; Luke 20:19-44

*So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. (Luke 20:20)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. You have to hand it to the scribes and the chief priests for staying true to themselves. They pretend to be sincere when it comes to Jesus, all while trying to find ways to put Him to death. At least they're consistent in their doubletalk.

What was at the heart of their issue with Jesus? For the scribes and chief priests, it came down to one word: power. They had it, and then Jesus came onto the scene, disrupting their powerbase. They could not allow that to happen, and so they sought to do whatever they could to remove Jesus from the picture.

Regarding Jesus, it came down to a different word: authority. Jesus had the authority because He spoke the Word of God, not the word of man. That was at the heart of all the issues the people had with Jesus. It wasn't about power, but authority. When you seek to change God's Word in order to keep your power, it is clear that you do not have authority. Jesus, however, has all authority because He IS the authority. He is God in the flesh. If anyone should know what God has said, it would be Jesus.

Later, when asking regarding marriage and the resurrection, the scribes and priests were put in their place again, because what they desired wasn't a legitimate answer. They wanted instead to discredit Jesus, show Him to be one who had no authority. And once again, they proved to be on the losing side of things, for Luke records: "For they no longer dared to ask him any question" (Luke 20:40).

There is only one authority and that is God's authority. That authority has been revealed to us through His Word, both written and in the flesh of Jesus. God's Word reveals to us the length that God is willing to go to in order to redeem creation. For Christ's sake, your sins have been forgiven, not by man's authority but by God's. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## The Resurrection of Our Lord

APRIL 17, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Mark 16:1-8

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 14:10-31; Hebrews 7:23-8:13

*And they went out and fled the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them... (Mark 16:8)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Christ is risen! So shall you be! Historically Mark, who wrote this Gospel, has been recorded as the one who fled away naked from Jesus on the night of Jesus' betrayal. Imagine that for a minute. Seeing your Lord and Master being betrayed with a kiss of peace, put into shackles and hauled off to trial. Imagine the fear that gripped Mark and the disciples. Fear that was so intense that Mark would rather run away naked in public than be caught up with Jesus in suffering.

Fear and trembling gripped the disciples, just as fear and trembling gripped the women on that first Easter morning. Fear and trembling grips us in the throes of life as well. Changes, decay, chaos, confusion, and death are looming all around us. Our fears can get the best of us and our trembling can cause us to run away from the Lord's work. It happened to the disciples, to the women, and it happens to you.

Yet within all of the fear, trembling, and astonishment, the simple words of a young man ring out for us today: "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here" (Mark 16:6). The man sitting with the white robe in the empty tomb foreshadows you on the day of the resurrection of all flesh. You shall not die eternally, but you shall live. You have received the robe of Christ's righteousness that covers all your sin. You are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. Fears, trembling, and astonishment subside as Christ tells you today, "Peace be with you!" You are forgiven, you are restored. Christ is risen, He is risen indeed, and so shall you rise. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O God, for our redemption You gave Your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross and by His glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of the enemy. Grant that all our sin may be drowned through daily repentance and that day by day we may arise to live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*(Collect for the Resurrection of Our Lord)*

## Monday of Easter Week

APRIL 18, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** Luke 24:13-35

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 15:1-18; Hebrew 9:1-28

*When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.* (Luke 24:30-31)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Christ is risen! The resurrection is hard to believe and hold onto. We don't see people rising from the dead in our cemeteries on a regular basis. It would be great if we could point everyone to the resurrected Christ in our midst every Sunday. Obviously we cannot do this, but nonetheless, Jesus has not left us to fend for ourselves. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:19).

The message of the resurrected Christ is foolishness to the world and even at times to our ears as well, but we are not those who have no hope. This is why Jesus gave us His Word and even by that Word He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar for us and for our salvation. The first disciples doubted Jesus' resurrection even on that first Easter Sunday. They were sure that all was lost. Jesus opened up their minds to the Scriptures and finally revealed His victory over death in the breaking of the bread.

Each Sunday Jesus opens your minds in the hearing of His glorious Gospel and in the breaking of the bread. As your pastor raises the bread and the cup in the Eucharist, he proclaims, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." This isn't an earthly peace or some temporary sense of being calm. This is the peace that Christ won for you by His death and resurrection. As you come to the altar you partake of the crucified and resurrected Jesus who reveals Himself for you. By this wondrous meal you are forgiven and strengthened in this Christian faith. Jesus says to you today, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Come to the Easter feast, come and see and receive Jesus. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Paschal victim, paschal bread; With sincerity and love Eat we manna from above. Alleluia!*  
(*"At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" LSB 633, st.4*)

## Thursday of the Seventh Week of Easter

JUNE 2, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism:* Apostles Creed, First Article part 3

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 16:41-17:13; Luke 20:1-18

*All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.*  
(*Small Catechism: Apostles Creed, First Article*)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. When you read the Explanation to the First Article, it's amazing how much God does for us, especially when you look at who we are—sinners. You and I deserve nothing, and yet God grants to us everything. There is no reason for God to do what He does, and yet He does it anyway. We don't even need to ask why, because Luther tells us: "without any merit or worthiness in me." And so, Luther writes in the Large Catechism, "We confess that He does all this out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a kind Father. He cares for us so that no evil falls upon us."

There is no worthiness in us that causes God to do all that He does. He shows His great love for us in giving us all things to support our earthly body and life. Because of the great things God has given, we want to serve Him with all that we have received. However, according to Luther, we sin daily, even with the gifts God has given. We fail to do as Luther says: "thank and praise, serve and obey Him."

It is fortunate for us that we have a gracious God, one who doesn't treat us the way that we deserve. He gives freely, "out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy..." That means that you don't have to do anything to earn what God gives; you simply receive from His bountiful goodness.

As good as it is to receive temporal gifts from God, it is better to receive eternal gifts, and there can be no greater eternal gift than that of salvation and everlasting life. God has seen fit to give that to you as well, no strings attached, no hoops to jump through. That's what a loving Father does: gives generously. For you, He has done it and there is nothing for you to do except to receive from God the gifts He desires to give. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, heavenly Father, Your mercies are new to us every morning and, though we in no wise deserve Your goodness, You abundantly provide for all our wants of body and soul. Give us, we humbly pray, Your Holy Spirit that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness toward us, give thanks for all Your benefits and cheerfully serve You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

## Justin, Martyr

JUNE 1, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 16:23-40; Luke 19:29-48

*“For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”*  
(Luke 19:43-44)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Today the Church remembers Justin, a martyr from the early second century. Raised in a pagan home, Justin converted to Christianity and taught the faith in Ephesus and Rome. Sadly, but not unexpected given his upbringing, Justin was martyred along with six others for refusing to make pagan sacrifices and the like. But all was not in vain, for Justin’s bold confession of faith would lead to a strengthening of the Christian faith in the early second century.

So what does that have to do with you or the Christian Church today? Quite a bit, actually. Justin came to faith in Jesus after being raised a pagan. Such an influence like that would be hard to overcome, and yet Justin did just that, though not without help. The Holy Spirit worked faith in him to believe in Jesus, just as the Holy Spirit has done for you. While facing great persecution for his beliefs, Justin did not relent in his confession of faith. We continue to face that reality today, as the world seems to grow ever more hostile towards the Christian Church.

In much the same way that Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of what was happening there, so, too, does He view the Church today. Jesus tells us in Matthew’s Gospel, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account” (Matthew 5:11). The world will be hostile to the Church and She will be persecuted for Her faith in Jesus. You, too, will be persecuted for your faith; Jesus tells us as much. Like the martyrs who have gone before us, may we remain ever faithful to the calling which we have received: faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty and everlasting God, You found Your martyr Justin wandering from teacher to teacher, searching for the true God. Grant that all who seek for a deeper knowledge of the sublime wisdom of Your eternal Word may be found by You, who sent Your Son to seek and to save the lost; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for Justin Martyr)

## Tuesday of Easter Week

APRIL 19, 2022

**Today’s Reading:** Luke 24:36-48

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 15:19-16:12; Hebrews 10:1-18

*And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.*  
(Luke 24:41-42)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Jesus loves to eat! This is quite remarkable! The resurrected Christ breaks bread with those grieving men at Emmaus, turning their tears and confusion into hope and purpose. Then Jesus shares in eating fish with the disciples in Jerusalem, with a similar impact. For Luke, Easter is less about an empty tomb than it is about food shared around a table! Ghosts and spirits cannot eat real food. The resurrected Jesus asks for and eats this fish to prove that He is truly resurrected in body and soul. If a high point of your Easter celebration was a big family meal, how appropriate—it would appear that Jesus spent Easter Day eating, and calling the ones He loved to the place where bread is broken and food is shared.

Luke challenges us to think of Easter in terms of food. We should not have difficulty in doing that. Central to our Holy Week remembrance is that wonderful meal that Jesus provided for his followers in the Upper Room on the night before He was handed over to His enemies. We hear of Jesus sitting with the disciples on that first Maundy Thursday. Jesus took the Passover bread, blessed it in a special way, then broke the bread and shared it with His friends. In words that have become woven into the fabric of our believing hearts, Jesus gave His new covenant in His blood for us to eat, drink, and be forgiven and sustained. This great act is not only a defining memory for us, but it is the way we are fed by Jesus Himself: in, with, and under the bread and wine.

This points us to the promise we hear, again and again, in the great resurrection banquet” that no one will be hungry and all will be satisfied. The last will be first and the first will be last, and the feasting will continue forever. Christ is risen: Come and let us feast! “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (Psalm 34:8). In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for Holy Thursday)

## Wednesday of Easter Week

APRIL 20, 2022

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**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 16:13-35; Hebrews 10:19-39

*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*  
(Hebrews 10:22)

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen. In the third setting of the Divine Service, during Confession and Absolution we say, "Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins..." (LSB, p.184). How does one draw near to God? Is this something that we can choose to do? Is it something that we have the ability to decide on? The answer to all of these questions is a resounding "NO!" We cannot decide to draw near to God, we do not have a choice in the matter, and because of our sin we don't even want to draw near to God.

So how can we fulfill what the author of the Hebrews tells us to do? Jesus must first draw us to Himself. He has done just that through His glorious death and resurrection, won for you that first Holy Week. He poured out this Gift to you freely in your Baptism. In Holy Baptism your sins are drowned and you are resurrected in the newness of Jesus' life. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh..." (Hebrews 10:19-20).

In Holy Baptism you have the confidence and assurance that your confession of sins is heard by almighty God. In Holy Baptism you are given the confidence that your Old Adam has been drowned and that you have been resurrected to new life in Christ. In Holy Baptism you can be assured that you have been drawn near to Christ and forgiven of all your sins and cleansed to walk in the newness of eternal life. We confess our sins and we know that our Father in heaven has forgiven us of all our sins on account of Jesus. In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

*Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You called us to be Your own possession. Grant that our lives may evidence the working of Your Holy Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.*  
(Prayer for Life as a Baptized Child of God)

## Tuesday of the Seventh Week of Easter

MAY 31, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** 1 Peter 4:7-14

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 16:1-22; Luke 19:11-28

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*  
(1 Peter 4:8)

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen. Peter sure has a lofty goal for us, that we love one another earnestly. Clearly Peter never had any enemies and he certainly hasn't met our enemies before, those people who are unworthy of our love. There's a good reason why they're our enemies and we don't love them; all you have to do is ask us and we'll tell you all about it.

Sadly, that's not the way that it is supposed to be. God does not want us to love some and hate others. That's not what Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." No, God wants us to love all people, despite who they might be and what they may have done. This is because of who we were: enemies of God. Paul tells us, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Since we are sinners, we know that we have a multitude of sins. What does God do with those sins? Does He condemn us for them? No, He forgives them, each and every one of them. He does that out of love for us, His creation. That is because He is our loving Father, and as our Father, God does nothing but love us, loving us to the point of the death of His Son Jesus.

We see just how much love covers our multitude of sins. They are covered in Jesus' holiness and righteousness, so much so that God does not see our sins, but only sees Jesus. Every person, from all times and all places have received the forgiveness of their sins on account of Jesus' death and resurrection. They are all people whom God has loved and for whom Christ has died. God doesn't play favorites with regards to His love. If God has created them, then God loves them; and since God has created all, God loves all.

That idea of loving everyone is contrary to how we want to behave. God sees us for who we are: sinners in need of salvation. And because we are all sinners, God shows His love to all of us by sending Christ. That is the unconditional love that God has for us, and the same love which we should show others. In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, grant us a steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, a cheerful hope in Your mercy, and a sincere love for You and one another; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



## Monday of the Seventh Week of Easter

MAY 30, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Ezekiel 36:22-28

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 14:25-45; Luke 18:35-19:10

*"You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."  
(Ezekiel 36:28)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. There are advantages when you belong to something. Belonging to something often means that there are perks. If you're really fortunate, you get rewarded with free stuff just for belonging. You do belong to something, or rather, to someone: God. And when you belong to God, there are some great perks that go with it. You have God's Name placed on you, marking you as part of Him. You receive the free Gift of the forgiveness of your sins. Let's not forget the Gift of everlasting life that you receive by belonging to God. The best part of this: All of it is freely given to you, no punch card required!

When you belong to God, everything is freely given to you. That's the promise God gave when He made us His people and He our God. The only thing necessary on your part is faith, and even that is given to you by the Holy Spirit. All of this is yours as a free gift.

This is what God had done in the very beginning with Adam and Eve. They were God's people and He their God. They lived together in perfect harmony. Through man's fall into sin, all of that went away. Track throughout the Old Testament how many times God's people walked away from Him, believing in false idols and rejecting God. While the people strayed from God, He never strayed from them. He would remain faithful to them despite the fact that they were unfaithful to Him.

That's the great difference between man and God. Man is faithful today but faithless tomorrow. We are easily tempted by the bright and shiny things of this world. We can and do easily forget that we belong to God. Fortunately for us, God does not lose faith in us and forget us. God can't forget us because He made a promise to us, to be our God, and that's not a promise that God takes lightly. In fact, God doesn't take any of His promises lightly. Every promise made is a promise kept. You are His people and He is your God, now and forevermore. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O Lord, keep Your Church with Your perpetual mercy; and because of our frailty we cannot but fall, keep us ever by Your help from all things hurtful and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.  
(Collect for Trinity 14)*

## Thursday of Easter Week

APRIL 21, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Job 19:23-37

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 17:1-16; Hebrews 11:1-29

*"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth."  
(Job 19:25)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. No one needs to convince you that over the last two years we have seen and experienced the sharpness of death. From the ongoing pandemic to wars being fought in Europe, we are constantly under the shadow of death in this life. Job experienced the tragic loss of his own family. He lost his possessions, his health, and even his sons and daughters, who perished when a severe storm destroyed the house where they were assembled. On hearing this news, Job felt thoroughly stripped of everything. He tore his robe, fell to the ground, and exclaimed, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21).

Left alone in his sin, his shame, and nakedness Job would surely not survive such tragic losses. Likewise we who have encountered and engaged with the sharpness of death around us are useless if we are left on our own. Job survived in the faith He had been given. A faith that confessed, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). It meant that he, too, would rise again from the grave. But even more! Job was to live many more years. God gave him a second family and enabled him to see "his children and their children to the fourth generation" (Job 42:16).

God has not promised that He would end pandemics or wars or replace lost families, but He has solemnly declared, "I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Also He says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). This grace is given to us in its fullness in Jesus Christ, His Son, who gave His life for our salvation. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*He lives to grant me rich supply; He lives to guide me with His eye; He lives to comfort me when faint; He lives to hear my soul's complaint.  
(“I Know That My Redeemer Lives” LSB 461, st.4)*

## Friday of Easter Week

APRIL 22, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 18:5-27; Hebrews 12:1-24

*Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*  
(1 Corinthians 5:8)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Leaven is yeast, which in baking makes dough rise. If you have ever made bread or rolls with yeast in them, you know that you only use a little bit of yeast. But when you put it into the lump of dough and give it time, it works its way through the entire lump and makes it expand to twice its original size, or more.

This idea of leaven became a common metaphor in the Bible for the corrupting influence of sin. Paul's point is that a relatively small amount of sin, even one sin, if it is not dealt with properly, can spread its influence throughout an entire church. Paul is reminding us of this constant battle that we have against sin within the Church. It doesn't take much guilt and shame caused by sin to bring a Christian down. In the same way, it doesn't take much sin to bring an entire church down.

However, the Church remains the Body of Christ by faith and has been made alive by the Holy Spirit through our Baptisms into Christ. In His second letter to the Corinthians, Paul will remind them that in Christ we are new creations. The old things have passed away. All things have become new. Specifically, what makes us "new" is the presence of Christ as He comes to His Church through Word and Sacrament. The Holy Spirit is the One who applies the saving work of Christ to us and strengthens our faith against the leaven of sin and evil. That is your position in Christ. Paul says "You really are unleavened." You really are righteous and holy in Christ. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O holy and most merciful God, You have taught us the way of Your commandments. We implore You to pour Your grace into our hearts. Cause it to bear fruit in us that, being ever mindful of Your mercies and Your laws, we may always be directed to Your will and daily increase love toward You and one another. Enable us to resist all evil and to live a godly life. Help us to follow the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to walk in His steps until we shall possess the kingdom that has been prepared for us in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (Prayer for obedience to the Word)

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter

MAY 29, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** John 15:26-16:4

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 14:1-25; Luke 18:18-34

*"I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away."*  
(John 16:1)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Have you wondered why Jesus spends so much time with His disciples? If He wanted to get His message out to the mass population, you would think that He would devote more time to being amongst the people, though He does spend His fair share of time with them. In order for the disciples to be strengthened and prepared to go and spread the Word of God, Jesus needs to convey that Word to them. The best way He knows how to do that is to bring them with Him and teach them as much as He can in a short amount of time.

The Word of God that was taught to the disciples is that same Word that has been and continues to be taught to you. There is so much that is contained within God's Word, you could never mine every nugget of God's wisdom. What we have recorded in Scripture is what God has decided we need to have—nothing more and nothing less. The purpose is simple according to John: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

The devil is quite crafty and continues to try to cause doubt in the believer. Anyone who will doubt God and His Word is a win for Satan. This will continue until the day that Jesus returns. Luther tells us, "He will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without..." (Small Catechism). The only sure defense we have against Satan is God's Word.

It is for that reason that Jesus spends so much time with His disciples, to teach them God's Word. It is for that reason that you and I remain in God's Word, and that we will always have before us God's promise of forgiveness and salvation. God's Word, both in its written form and through the Word made flesh, has been given to us, to lead and guide us into the truth. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.* (Collect for the Seventh Sunday of Easter)

## Saturday of the Sixth Week of Easter

MAY 28, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 27:1, 11a, 12; antiphon: v.7a, 8b, 9a)

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 13:1-3, 17-33; Luke 18:1-17

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is my stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

*(From the Introit for the Seventh Sunday of Easter)*

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Children tend to be fearful of many things, especially of the dark. It's likely because they can't see anything and are afraid of what might happen to them. As we get older, our fears tend to subside and we aren't so easily frightened. When it comes to this present darkness in which we live, it would be easy for us to fear, but there is no reason for us to fear. Though there is darkness, there is Light: Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, the Light no darkness can overcome (John 8:12, 1:5).

Satan tried desperately to extinguish this Light, to snuff out our salvation. Try as he might, Satan could not succeed. Tempting Jesus failed. Leading Judas to betray Jesus failed. Crucifying Jesus failed to extinguish the Light. All that Satan could do was sit and watch God's promise of salvation come to fruition.

Despite knowing that he has already lost, Satan doesn't go down without a fight. He musters all of his wicked strength to go after the children of God, causing all sorts of trials and temptations to rise up against us. Throughout the darkness, we must remember that we have God for us. That means that nothing can harm us; it means that nothing can be against us (Romans 8:31).

As the blood-bought and redeemed children of God, we would do well to remember all that God has done for us, continues to do for us, and will do for us. God has spared us from eternal death and damnation by the sending of Jesus. God protects you from all the assaults of Satan and whatever he can throw at you because Jesus has conquered the darkness. There is nothing that you need to be fearful of because God is your stronghold.

God is our salvation. God is your hope. God is your everything. In this earthly life, He provides you everything you need. But more importantly, He grants to you the forgiveness of your sins and the privilege of being called a child of God. There is nothing for you to fear, for the LORD Almighty is with you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

*A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon; He helps us free from ev'ry need That hath us now o'er taken. The old evil foe Now means deadly woe; Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal.* ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" LSB 656, st.1)

## Saturday of Easter Week

APRIL 23, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Second Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 81:1, 71, 10, 16b; antiphon: 1 Peter 2:2a)

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 19:1-25; Hebrews 13:1-21

*"I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."*

*(From the Introit for the Second Sunday of Easter)*

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. As you read through various narratives in the Old Testament, it's easy to see that when God is saving His people He is also feeding them. As the Israelites were being delivered from their slavery to Egypt, the Lord gave clear instructions as to how they would be fed. In Exodus 12 the Lord established the Passover meal for His people. They were about to be freed from their slavery under Pharaoh, and in preparation the Lord told them to take an unblemished lamb and kill it. They were to paint the doorposts of their houses with the blood of the lamb and they were also to eat. The Lord told them; "In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover."

Throughout the generations of Israel, God's people were to remember their deliverance from Egypt and how the Lord fed them at the same time. Each Sunday we gather around the Word of God where we are reminded of how Jesus our Lamb was slain for us and for our salvation. God has brought us out of our slavery to sin as we have been washed clean in the blood of Jesus. In the same way, the Lord feeds us in the midst of our salvation. We come to the Lord's table to partake of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the whole world. We eat as strangers and sojourners in this world as we follow the great Exodus out of this world and into the Promised Land prepared for us by Jesus.

Until that time comes for you, remember the Lord's salvation for you in the Cross and resurrection of Jesus. Open your mouth wide so that He may feed you with Himself the bread of everlasting life which forgives you and strengthens you in body and soul until life everlasting. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

*Blessed Savior, Jesus Christ, You have given Yourself to us in this holy Sacrament. Keep us in Your faith and favor that we may live in You even as You live in us. May Your body and blood preserve us in the true faith to life everlasting. Hear us for the sake of Your name. Amen.*

*(Prayer of Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament)*

## The Second Sunday of Easter

APRIL 24, 2022

**Today's Reading:** John 20:19-31

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 20:1-24; Luke 4:1-15

*Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)*

In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen. We can certainly agree with Thomas in today's reading: "Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." We don't see people rise from the dead today! We cannot sit down with someone who has come back from the grave and ask them all of the questions that we have concerning death and the promises of Jesus.

Yet how many other things do we take for granted and believe in this life even though we do not have physical proof of their existence? We believe that things like the Civil War occurred and that Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address. We believe that men landed on the moon. Yet we cannot speak to Lincoln or Neil Armstrong to verify that they really did what we have learned. But we are taught to believe and understand our history and embrace it.

The Bible says that there were well over 500 witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. The Gospel writers recorded that Jesus was truly risen in the flesh from the dead. Jesus would be seen with His disciples, He would physically eat with them and promise them life eternal.

The Scriptures are given to us to reveal the will of God for us and for our salvation. They bear witness to all the things that Jesus has done for us through His death and mighty resurrection. We may not be able to prove His resurrection to the world, and in fact the Bible says the world will call us fools for believing such a thing. But by faith Jesus calls you blessed. We are blessed with the peace that passes all our understanding, blessed with the knowledge that even though we may die, in Christ we shall live. In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, grant that we, who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection, may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*(Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter)*

## Friday of the Sixth Week of Easter

MAY 27, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Luke 24:44-53

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 11:1-23, 31-35; Luke 17:1-19

*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "You heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5)*

In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen. Baptism. Baptized with water. Now, baptized with the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this is significant, not just for Jesus, but for the Church as a whole. This is an important point in the lives of the disciples. Jesus has risen from the dead and appeared to them, as well as to many others. In short order, though, Jesus will leave the disciples again. But He promises not to leave them lacking; He promises to send them the Holy Spirit.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, something else will be coming: the gift of faith. Jesus sends the Spirit of truth to guide the disciples into all truth. The truth is nothing short of God's divine plan of salvation that is meant for His creation. The truth is of Jesus Christ, and His salvation of us through His life, death, and resurrection. The work of the Holy Spirit is to create faith in a person. Note that the Spirit does not speak on His own, but rather speaks on behalf of the Father and Jesus, and testifies about Jesus. It's all about Jesus. For the Holy Spirit, it has to be all about Jesus because Jesus is the sole means of salvation.

If there is a single message that we need to hear and take to heart, it is that of Jesus Christ, for He is our sole means of salvation. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to create this wonderful Gift in us called faith. It is that faith which believes in Jesus, believes in His atoning sacrifice for our sins.

All of this was promised by God to His people of old, from Adam and Eve all the way up to the disciples and to the early Church. This promise was extended to all peoples of all times and in all places; this promise extends to you as well. God's promise was the promise of salvation, to undo the damning effects of sin at the Fall. God's promise had been made and it was fulfilled. Jesus has come and forgiven us our sins. In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen.

*O Lord, You have made the promise of salvation to Your people of old and fulfilled in Your Son, Jesus Christ. Strengthen the faith of Your people, that they would look alone to Jesus for their salvation, trusting in Your great mercy for Your creation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## The Ascension of Our Lord

MAY 26, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Luke 24:44-53

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 11:1-23, 31-35; Luke 17:1-19

*While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.*  
(Luke 24:51)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. We all are familiar with the saying, "Here today, gone tomorrow." Whether we like it or not, what is today will not be tomorrow. This same thought applies to Jesus as well, whether you like it or not.

After His three years of ministry, there were people who were more than happy to see Jesus die; this was the prevailing sentiment from the beginning of His ministry. But for as many people who wanted to see Jesus dead, there were just as many who wanted to see Jesus live forever. Their reasons varied: Some admired His teaching, some looked to Jesus as a means of healing the sick. For the disciples, Jesus was their Teacher. He was their Master. He was their Friend. Regardless of who Jesus was, He was not destined to live a long life on earth. He was destined to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

As much as the disciples did not want to hear of Jesus' death, it was necessary. Following our Lord's resurrection, all seemed well with the disciples—Jesus had returned to them! Though the disciples had Jesus back again, Jesus had other plans—He would return to the Father. All of this had been taught to them. All of this was according to God's divine plan for salvation.

Luke's Gospel gives us just a glimpse of our Lord's Ascension. In fact, the Ascension itself comprises a single verse: "While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." Jesus was here yesterday and gone tomorrow. But then, Jesus was here again following the resurrection. How happy the disciples must have been to have Jesus with them once again. But that would not last long, as Jesus needed to return to the Father. All would not be lost after Jesus' Ascension, though, as He would grant to them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Because Christ has ascended unto the Father, so we will ascend as well. We will be with Him in glory. We will enjoy all of the benefits Christ has won for us. We have life because Christ has laid down His life and taken it up again in order to grant life for all believers. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for the Ascension of Our Lord)

## St. Mark the Evangelist

APRIL 25, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Mark 16:14-20

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 22:20-23:13; Luke 4:16-30

*And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."*  
(Mark 16:15)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Mark was one of the evangelists whom Jesus would use to proclaim the Gospel into all the world. Mark would go out after Jesus' ascension to tell that the kingdom of God was at hand and that all should repent and be baptized. Mark was never alone; Jesus was always with Him, just as He is with His Church today. But what was Mark to proclaim? This is more than just the facts about Jesus, as if He were just an important figure from the past, but is the living presence of Jesus with all His power to save. This is more than just "good news." It is news that brings about the new creation through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Today as we remember the Feast of St. Mark, we ponder that he (with Matthew and Luke) recorded for us the account of the Lord's Supper. This meal is the greatest of signs and wonders that accompany the proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus continues to pour His blessings through Word and Sacrament, which are His continued accompanying presence.

As we approach to receive that same Jesus whom Mark received, we pray that the Gospel will be proclaimed further and further throughout the world. Give thanks to God for the work He did through Mark and pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would continue to send out this proclamation to all the world. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, You have enriched Your Church with the proclamation of the Gospel through the evangelist Mark. Grant that we may firmly believe these glad tidings and daily walk according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for St. Mark the Evangelist)

## Tuesday of the Second Week of Easter

APRIL 26, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Ezekiel 37:1-14

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 23:14-33; Luke 4:31-44

*"Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."  
(Ezekiel 37:5-6)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. It was a dark time for God's people. Most of Israel had been exiled and there was a certain sense of hopelessness. The Temple had been destroyed, and its treasures taken. The Temple was the center of God's presence abiding with His people, and when that was destroyed, all seemed lost. God would reveal to Ezekiel a startling vision. His Spirit brought him to a valley full of dry bones. A place where there was no life. What Ezekiel sees is more hopelessness and despair. God asks Ezekiel if these bones can live. God then tells Ezekiel that these bones would be resurrected. God breathed on these dry and dusty bones the breath of life. At once they "came to life and stood on their feet." Moreover, they became "an exceedingly great army."

God explained that "these bones are the whole house of Israel." That He would cause His people to "come up out of your graves" and "come to life." And He would place them "on your own land."

Just as these dry bones have come back to life, we can be sure that on the last day the risen Lord Jesus will say to our dry and dusty graves, "Arise and live!" Despite our own despair and feelings of loss or hopelessness, He will accomplish His purpose. And He will bless those who bless His people. He will raise you on the Last Day. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee, From death's dread sting Thy servants free, That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia!  
("The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done" LSB 464, st.5)*

## Wednesday of the Sixth Week of Easter

MAY 25, 2022

**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism: Apostles' Creed,*  
First Article part 2

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 10:11-36; Luke 16:19-31

*He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.  
(Small Catechism: Apostles' Creed, First Article)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Did you know that you are rich? It doesn't matter if you don't have a dime in your pocket. You are rich, but that's because your wealth doesn't involve money. We are rich because God has provided everything that we need to support our earthly life. That means the clothes on our backs and the shoes on our feet, the food in our stomachs and the roofs over our heads. Luther sums up our First Article gifts with three simple words: "all I have." But what is that?

We know the things we have because we can see them and touch them. But what about the things we can't see and touch? Do we have those as well? Not only does God provide us all that we see, He also provides all that we do not see, namely, our salvation.

When a person looks at you, do they see that you are covered in the blood of the Lamb which forgives you all of your sins? Do they see God's Name placed upon you in your Baptism? Do they see that your sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ? None of that is visible to the naked eye, and yet, that is what we have as well.

We are wealthy beyond all measure because of the sacrifice that was made for us by Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, all that God intended for creation to have, all that was lost because of sin, has been restored. Everything that was meant for you from before the creation of the world is yours once again because Jesus has died and is risen again. He has made full satisfaction for your sins. All that we need in this life is given to us by God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. All that you need for the life of the world to come, is yours because of Jesus. The best part of all of this is that you don't need to wait until Christ comes again to receive the full benefit of Christ's death and resurrection. It is yours now, for Christ has died for you. All that Christ has to give is yours; all of your sins are forgiven and salvation is yours now. God has richly provided for you, now and forevermore. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*We all believe in one true God... He in soul and body feeds us; All we need His hand provides us... He cares for us by day and night; All things are governed by His might.  
("We All Believe in One True God" LSB 954 st.1)*

## Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Easter

MAY 24, 2022

**Today's Reading:** James 1:22-27

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 9:1-23; Luke 16:1-18

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.  
(James 1:22)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. How do you “do” the Word of God? Martin Luther tells us that we “hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it” (Explanation to the Third Commandment). That’s the hearing which James speaks of, but what about the doing of the Word? What does that mean? What does it look like?

To be a doer of the Word means to do what the Word says. And what does that Word say? “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). To be perfect means to do all that God has commanded of you. It means to do all that His Law says and to do it exactly as He has said to do it, to the letter. But you and I are not capable of keeping the Law perfectly. The only thing we are good at is failing to do what God has commanded of us.

If we expect to be perfect, to do all that God commands of us, someone else will have to bring that about. A thought like that goes against everything the world would have us believe. The world wants you to think that you are certainly capable of doing what God tells you to do, that you are capable of saving yourself. The harsh truth is that the world lies to you. The world builds you up, sets you up for something that you are not capable of doing.

Fortunately for us, we have One who does set us up, but not for failure. God our heavenly Father sets us up for salvation by making a promise and keeping that promise. There was nothing that Adam and Eve could do to save themselves, just like there is nothing that you can do to save yourself. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, was sent into this world. He who is the Word is also the doer of the Word. His Word created and His Word saves. He does exactly what God sets out for Him to do: to redeem creation from the devastating and destructive forces of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus does all that the Father commands: He keeps the Word of God perfectly. so He keeps that Law of God perfectly. He keeps all things perfectly, including His sacrificial death and resurrection from the dead. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Lord, Your mercy will not leave me; Ever will Your truth abide. Then in You I will confide. Since Your Word cannot deceive me, My salvation is to me Safe and sure eternally. (“Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion” LSB 559, st.4)*

## Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter

APRIL 27, 2022

**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism:* Ninth Commandment

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 24:1-18; Luke 5:1-16

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house. What does this mean? We should fear and love God, so that we do not craftily seek to gain our neighbor's inheritance or home, nor get it by a show of right, but help and serve him in keeping it. (Small Catechism: Ninth Commandment)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Have you ever looked at the places that other people live in and long to own their house, their condo on the beach, or their apartment in the big city? We typically talk about coveting smaller things like cars, electronics, or other stuff that belongs to our neighbors. Many people around us live in better conditions and in better homes.

How do we respond? Do we wait and pray for patience, knowing that God will provide for us according to His will? Do we uphold and protect the things that belong to our neighbor, including the home in which they live? Make no mistake: This commandment reminds us that we are consumed with all that our neighbor has and dwells in even when it’s not rightly ours. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.”

Thanks be to God that these commandments lead us to recognize our own sin. Jesus Christ has come for you. As He has told us, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20). He serves you while giving up His heavenly home and rightful inheritance in the Kingdom of God so that you may be forgiven. Since we are redeemed by His precious blood, even the most covetous behavior we engage in is wiped away. As we are found homeless and without any riches in our sins, He now has promised to us a place that is prepared for us, an inheritance that will neither perish nor fade away.

He takes all of your sins, every last one of them, onto Himself so that you might be set free. You are who He obsesses over and that is why He has taken on sin, death, and the devil’s fiercest attacks, all so that He can declare you to be His own dearest possession and call you to be at the Father’s house forever and ever. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*To me He said: “Stay close to Me, I am your rock and castle. Your ransom I Myself will be; For you I strive and wrestle. For I am yours, and you are Mine, And where I am you may remain; The foe shall not divide us.”  
(“Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice” LSB 556, st.7)*

## Thursday of the Second Week of Easter

APRIL 28, 2022

**Today's Reading:** 1 John 5:4-10

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 25:1-22; Luke 5:17-39

*For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*  
(1 John 5:4-5)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. It seems as if the world can throw an awful lot at us. It seems that just as we get through one major hurdle, like the pandemic, we have to deal with wars breaking out and inflation at all-time highs. Just one of these things would be difficult to overcome. If that wasn't bad enough, we also have all the sin and temptation that we wrestle with in our day-to-day lives. It certainly seems like the world is winning against you, dear Christian.

Yet John reminds you that you are not of this world, for you have been "born of God." Jesus Christ has come to defeat sin, the devil, and our flesh, as well as this world, by the shedding of His blood. Water and blood flowed out of Jesus' side as He was hanging on the Cross. As He gave up His Spirit, He was fulfilling the victory for us over all of our enemies, including the world. Because He has overcome the world, so shall you. "For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree."

In Holy Baptism you have been washed clean by water, blood, and the Spirit in order that you may share in the victory of Christ. This testimony is true; God does not lie to you, His children, and He will return to bring you out of this world into the new heavens and new earth that will never fade away. Until then this world will rage against you and the Church. It will seem as if the world is claiming victory over us, but hold on to your Baptism, hold on to your dear Savior Jesus, who assures us that, "It is finished." The world has been overcome for you. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*What is the world to me With all its vaunted pleasure When You, and You alone, Lord Jesus, are my treasure! You only, dearest Lord, my soul's delight shall be; You are my peace, my rest. What is the world to me!*  
(*"What Is the World to Me" LSB 730, st.1*)

## Monday of the Sixth Week of Easter

MAY 23, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Numbers 21:4-9

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 8:5-26; Luke 15:11-32

*From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way.*  
(Numbers 21:4)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. "I don't want to!" "No!" "You can't make me!" Does this sound familiar to you? Do you remember ever saying those words yourself? I don't know about you, but I've said those phrases a time or two, probably more recently than I'd want to admit.

As God's people began to voice this sentiment, they probably all jumped into the cadence of complaint. But to whom was their complaint directed? Of course this was directed against Moses, because it was Moses who issued the command to move. But where did Moses get the command? "And the people spoke against God and against Moses..." (Numbers 21:5).

Clearly, all of this was God's fault. It was God's fault that the people were impatient. It was God's fault that the people didn't want to listen to God. It was God's fault that they had no food or water. Blame God for everything and everything will work out for the better, right? That's how God's people thought then and that's how people tend to think today, isn't it? Things go well and we think we were the cause; things go bad and we blame God.

What good is there in blaming God? What good is there in trying to go around God and do things our own way? Whenever we try to do things without God, the results are never promising. In fact, we make things worse for ourselves all because we don't want to listen to what God has to say about this and that.

What happened to God's people when they chose not to listen? God sent fiery serpents to the people and many died. It was then that the people repented and returned to Moses, asking what they needed to do to be saved. The answer: Look to the fiery serpent and live.

You and I do not have a fiery serpent to look at in order to be saved. We have Jesus. We see our salvation as He is lifted high upon the Cross. We see our Jesus in the breaking of the bread. We see Jesus in the waters of Holy Baptism. We see our salvation high and lifted up for us, that we may gaze upon Jesus and be saved. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim Til all the world adore His sacred name. O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree, As Thou hast promised, draw us all to Thee.*  
(*"Lift High the Cross" LSB 837, st.4*)



## The Sixth Sunday of Easter

MAY 22, 2022

**Today's Reading:** John 16:23-33

**Daily Lectionary:** Numbers 3:1-16, 39-48; Luke 14:25-15:10

*"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*  
(John 16:33)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Many will say that life changed in March 2020 and has not returned to normal. Instead, we are learning what the "new normal" is, whatever that means. But life changed long before 2020. Life changed in the Garden of Eden, and it didn't change for the better.

It didn't take long for God's creation to go from perfect to not perfect. There was no in-between with regard to creation's state of being. It wasn't not-quite-perfect; it wasn't mostly perfect; it wasn't anything having to do with perfect, because perfect was left in the rearview mirror. In other words, there was no chance of getting perfection back. In its place, we were left with the complete opposite of perfection: sin.

Sin was not meant to be part of God's creation. However, because man chose to listen to the serpent rather than God, sin became intertwined with creation to the point that there would be no way to separate the two. Because of sin, we are left with all sorts of things that God did not desire for us. Sin leads to tribulation, and in this world, there will be no shortage of it. Jesus tells the disciples as much. Sin leads us away from God, eternally separating us from God. Without God, there can be nothing but tribulation. All would seem lost: "seem" being the key word.

We have something or rather, someone, working in our favor: Jesus. He has conquered sin, and with it, He has conquered tribulation. Whatever was done by the Fall into sin was undone by Jesus' death upon the Cross. We hear in our communion liturgy, "... through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life..."

For the Christian, the joys of Easter cannot be confined to a single day, or even to a single season of the Church year. Instead, every day is a little Easter, a day of rejoicing in Christ's victory over sin and death, once and for all. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter)

## Friday of the Second Week of Easter

APRIL 29, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 31:1-18; Luke 6:1-19

*And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.*  
(Luke 6:9-11)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. In our daily lectionary reading from Luke we see a portrayal of the Pharisees as those who, in their attempt to protect the Sabbath, burdened it with restrictions. We remember from the commandments that we are to "Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy." In Luther's explanation we read: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it." Are we more like the Pharisees in Luke's story than we care to admit? How have we managed to turn God's gift of the Sabbath into a burden?

One could argue, for instance, that we have gone to the opposite extreme of the Pharisees. There are no restrictions on what we can do on our Sabbath Day. So many of us have soccer and baseball games, and multiple other activities on Sunday. Most of our stores are open and we often have taken Sundays to catch up on chores and projects around the house. When it comes to Sunday worship and the Divine Service, well, that becomes one more thing to squeeze into a busy day.

Jesus says that the Sabbath was made for humankind. It is meant to be life-giving, not life-draining. It is meant to be a gift, a time apart from the relentless demands of daily life, a time to rest in God's presence. Whether it's Sundays at church or as you are reading this devotion on a Friday, your Sabbath time is a blessed time to savor the goodness of Jesus' work for you. He worked tirelessly on your behalf and He did not rest until He was laid dead in the tomb. He is risen, and that is why Sundays have been our traditional time for the Sabbath rest. Church is a place of rest, not burden, a place of freedom, not obligation. Jesus has established your Sabbath rest in His Word so that you might be fully restored in body and soul. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Preserve me, O God, for in You I take refuge.*  
(Psalm 16:1)

## Saturday of the Second Week of Easter

APRIL 30, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Third Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 33:1, 18-20; antiphon: v.5b, 6a)

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 32:1-14; Luke 6:20-38

*Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy. (From the Introit for the Third Sunday of Easter)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Have you ever watched something so closely that you became obsessed with it? Maybe it's your phone or TV, maybe it's a video game that you can't tear yourself away from. Our eyes are generally fixed on things that are hard to look away from. Sometimes that is good, most of the time it is bad.

The psalmist says that "The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him." That might seem a bit uncomfortable for us to hear. When we think about the Lord looking down on us with His own eyes we often feel a sense of guilt, maybe even a sense of wanting to hide. We certainly don't want anyone else to see us in our sins, let alone the Lord God almighty. While it is true that God sees us in our sins, that is not why He looks upon us with His eyes. He looks upon us to see where we are at in life and to draw us back to Him. Tomorrow is Good Shepherd Sunday. It's a wonderful Sunday in the Easter season when we are reminded that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Everyone knows that a Good Shepherd keeps a watchful eye on His flock. He keeps an eye on them so they do not wander off into danger. The eyes of the Lord are on you to bring you back to His mercy which is found in the forgiveness of all your sins. On the Last Day the Lord will look upon you with His own eyes and He will see nothing but His dear Son in you. Until then, rejoice that His eyes are ever upon you to guard and keep you until life everlasting. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints, we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*(Prayer of Thanksgiving to God)*

## Saturday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 21, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 66:1-2a, 17, 19-20; antiphon: Isaiah 48:20b)

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 26:21-33, 39-44; Luke 14:1-24

*Send it out to the end of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!" (Isaiah 48:20b)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. You can almost taste it! Freedom is right around the corner. Summer is coming and the chains of school requirements are about to be cast off. You are ready for whatever the summer has in store for you. Your emotions are running high. The final exams are almost here, or maybe they have already passed and now it is just a matter of biding your time until that final bell rings. In the end, freedom is close at hand.

As Isaiah writes to the people of God, he reminds them that freedom approaches for them as well. The shackles of slavery are about to be removed and their shouts of freedom will abound. The one doing the freeing is the one true God. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God who will deliver them. He will redeem them from the bondage of the Babylonians. No longer will they be subject to the godless people who have held them captive, but instead they will return to their land, a land flowing with milk and honey. A land given to them by their God. Redemption is at hand.

In sin we are held captive to the requirements of the Law. The Law requires us to be perfect in every aspect. On account of our sinful condition it is impossible for us to keep the Law. We are in need of being redeemed. We are in need of being freed from the righteous requirements of the law for our salvation. In Christ we are set free. In Christ the shackles of the righteous requirement of the Law have been taken off. Christ has fulfilled the Law for us. We shout for joy and sing His praises as He has given to us our freedom.

In Christ we look to the day of His glorious return. We are prepared for His return in the waters of Baptism. In the Sacrament of the Altar we look back and proclaim His death while at the same time we look forward to His glorious return on the Last Day. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear; Arise, O Sun so longed for, O'er this benighted sphere. With hearts and hands uplifted, We plead, O Lord, to see The day of earth's redemption That sets Your people free!*

*("Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers" LSB 515, st.4)*

## Friday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 20, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 26:1-20; Luke 13:18-35

*“When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’”*

*(Luke 13:25)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. In the 1970’s, American Express advertised that its card was for important people. People who mattered carried their exclusive card. The movie star or famous athlete would conclude, “Do you know me?” then the ad would flash to an American Express card with his name on it while the person would say, “That’s why I carry American Express.” The idea was that if you could present your American Express card, you were important.

As Christ speaks of the kingdom of heaven, He reminds His hearers that salvation is not about how important they are in this world. Your salvation is hinged upon your faith in Christ. The master of the house denies entrance to the foreigners. Who are you? Where do you come from? He does not know the strangers knocking on the door. It is an eerie narrative that Christ delivers. He identifies that there are some who are going to heaven and some who are not.

Those who are brought into heaven are known by the master of the house. The Lord knows them. They come from the four corners of the world. As Christ speaks to the people of Jerusalem, He warns them about the dangers of their unbelief and rejection of the son of man. He teaches them that salvation is for the four corners of the world.

In your Baptism you are known by your Father in heaven. You are connected to Jesus Christ and it is He who presents you to His Father in heaven. Your salvation is delivered to you through the work of Christ. His works are for You. On the Last Day, in the resurrection, you can be sure that salvation is yours because Christ is known by His Father and Christ knows you. As He knows you, so also the Father knows you. The narrow door is opened wide for you to enter and live in a new, restored earth for all eternity. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.* *(Treasury of Daily Prayer, p.283)*

## The Third Sunday of Easter

MAY 1, 2022

**Today’s Reading:** John 10:11-16

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 32:15-35; Luke 6:39-49

*“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”* *(John 10:11)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. “I am the good shepherd,” says Jesus. That seems to mean that there are some bad shepherds, too. How do you know which shepherd is good or bad? A bad shepherd is not concerned with the well-being of the sheep. A bad shepherd will really only live for himself at the expense of the sheep he is supposed to care for. A bad shepherd comes to steal and rob the sheep. However, do not be deceived: The bad shepherds among you will also speak in ways that will sound very attractive, all while causing us to wander further and further away from the Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd, on the other hand, cares for the sheep. But He does so in ways that seem unreasonable to most shepherds. He follows the one lost sheep through rugged terrain far and wide in order to bring him back to the fold. The Good Shepherd tells us, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:23).

As our Good Shepherd is lifted up on the Cross it may seem as if He has abandoned His sheep and failed them. However, in the Cross of Jesus Christ we are drawn safely to His side. We have the Good Shepherd who seeks us out to bring each one of us, His lost sheep, safely home to His fold. Sheltered and secure in His goodness and love, we lack nothing. We are His and He is ours, now and forever. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.* *(Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter)*

## St. Philip and St. James the Apostles

MAY 2, 2022

**Today's Reading:** John 14:1-14

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 33:1-23; Luke 7:1-17

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."*  
(John 14:12-14)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. We always have a tendency to want the full road map of the future. We all crave certainty and understanding. Jesus says we crave that too much. He reminds us that He is sufficient. He is the Way, after all. "I'm not showing you the way, I am the way," Jesus says. "Believe in the Father and believe also in me, and this ought to be enough that your hearts will not be troubled."

But questions continue, and that is why we celebrate the Lord's work though Philip and James. They were not ones who are seen as great and mighty heroes of the Christian faith. Like Thomas, Philip questioned the path and the destination. Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

It's never quite enough for us, is it? Even when Jesus comforts us and shows undying sacrificial love for us, we still want something a little more. The early 2020s have reminded us that we can't anticipate more and that no one has a clear picture of the future. No one can tell us what the world will look like 72 hours from now let alone six months or six years from now. The urge to know what lies ahead of us is understandable. We all want to plan, prepare and be ready. Yet Christ assures us of our greater home, the heavenly place prepared for us already. We will not be able to understand or anticipate every single twist and turn here on earth, and yet His assurance remains: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." And this is enough. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, because of Your tender love towards sinners You have given us Your Son, that believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant to us Your Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in this faith to the end and finally come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*  
(Prayer for Steadfast Faith)

## Thursday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 19, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 24:1-23; Luke 12:54-13:17

*"And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"*  
(Luke 13:16)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. The great reversal of Luke takes place again. Jesus heals on the Sabbath and is reprimanded for breaking the laws. He just cannot win with these picky church leaders. Nothing is ever right for them. Christ reads Scriptures and explains it, and the leadership wants to stone Him. He shows up at the temple and heals a man with a withered hand, and they accuse Him of Sabbath violations. He heals a woman on the Sabbath and again He is chastised for violating God's ceremonial laws. Christ heals on the Sabbath.

The work laws for the historic Jew were strict. No work on the Sabbath was a primary one. Yet there were all kinds of exceptions that could be invoked so that you would not be accused of violating the law.

When Christ heals on the Sabbath, it is because that's His day to work. The whole concept of resting is reversed when it comes to Christ. At creation God worked for six days and then rested on the seventh. He declared the seventh day to be a holy day. A day of rest. The Sabbath Day connected God's people to His work and rest cycle.

As Christ comes into the temple and synagogues on the Sabbath, a reversal takes place. He is the one working now. Today, Christ works on our Sabbath. As we gather in His Holy sanctuaries on Sunday, the eighth day of the week as well as the day He rose from the dead, we rest while He works. His Holy Word is spoken to us. He absolves us through the work of the Office of the Holy Ministry. He places in our ears His comforting words of reconciliation and forgiveness. He points us back to our Baptisms and gives us comfort in knowing that we belong to Him. He comes to us in His precious Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar for the forgiveness of our sins and strengthening of our faith. He is doing all the work and we are merely resting and receiving. Sunday is the day of our rest and the day that Christ conquers sin, death, and the devil. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Now have I found consolation, Comfort in my tribulation, Balm to heal the troubled soul. God, my shield from ev'ry terror, Cleanses me from sin and error, Makes my wounded spirit whole.*  
(*"Jesus Comes Today with Healing" LSB 620, st.6*)

## Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 18, 2022

**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism: Apostles' Creed,*  
First Article part 1

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 23:23-44; Luke 12:35-53

*"I believe that God has made me and all creatures..."*

*(Small Catechism: Apostles' Creed, First Article)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. "Rome was not built in a day!" If you try to claim that Rome was built in a day you would be ridiculed for being ignorant and foolish. Rome could not possibly have been built in a day. The secular world laughs at us when we say that the world was created in six days. "How could that possibly be?" they say. Six days to put all of this together from the simplest organism to the complexities of human life? Impossible! It is inconceivable that the entire creation could come about in 144 hours.

The book of Genesis opens up with the simple phrase, "In the beginning God created...." Those simple words leave no doubt that the start of everything, including time, comes from God. He is the source of all that exists. Understanding God as the source of everything is very humbling for mankind. We like to think of ourselves as the creator, not the creation. We work hard to demonstrate how much we have discovered in all of our sciences. We define life's origins in billions of years. We capture light and attempt to determine the origins of the universe. We try to develop life on our own apart from the natural process that God gave us in creation. We take from God's creation and claim it as our own. We use His subatomic particles, His atoms, His molecules, His cells and say, "Look at what WE have created!" In the end it is all God's, and His creation. We have done nothing new.

In spite of our desire to lay claim to creation, God still takes care of us. He provides all that we need to sustain this life from day to day. We pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." He places homes over our heads, parents to raise us, food to feed us, churches for worship, and clothes to cover us. He never stops taking care of us. He not only created you, He also sustains you in all your needs. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*The world seeks after wealth And all that mammon offers Yet never is content Though gold should fill its coffers. I have a higher good, Content with it I'll be: My Jesus is my wealth. What is the world to me!*

*("What Is the World to Me" LSB 730, st.3)*

## Tuesday of the Third Week of Easter

MAY 3, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Ezekiel 34:11-16

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 34:1-28; Luke 7:18-35

*"I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice."*

*(Ezekiel 34:15-16)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. In Ezekiel 34 we find God's people in a time of defeat. They are a nation in exile. But what made this worse was Israel's leaders, the shepherds, who failed in their callings. Unfaithful, they cared more about themselves than about the flock God charged them to serve and lead. So, how did God respond? He said that He would get rid of them. He would become their Shepherd, replacing those unfaithful and wicked leaders.

But here's where it gets weird. When God said that He wanted shepherds for His people, just by saying that, He was describing the people of Israel as sheep. That's not a flattering description. Have you seen how stupid sheep can be? Sheep rescued from a fire have even been known to run back into the flames from which they were just rescued. So, what point was God making by referring to His people as sheep? It was this: Just as sheep can be stupid, so can we. That's not to insult you; it's sin that makes us stupid. So, if sin makes us stupid like sheep, and we get lost like sheep, then it makes sense why God was so angry at those shepherds who didn't care for His flock. They failed by not feeding the sheep. Earlier in Ezekiel 34, God said, "My shepherds fed themselves but did not feed my sheep" (Ezekiel 34:8). They had failed to feed the sheep.

God would become the Shepherd of His people. Jesus came, fulfilling all the shepherding roles that God had given to His old-covenant priests and prophets. He is the Good Shepherd, fulfilling the old covenant, all while ushering in the new. And so, this shepherding and feeding of God's flock takes place in Christ's Church, today through your pastor. That's how the sheep, the flock, hear the voice of their Shepherd today. As you gather together with fellow sheep, Jesus cleanses you of all the sins you have fallen into. As He cleans you He promises you, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish" (John 10:27-28). In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, grant to Your church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes from down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Prayer for the Church)*

## Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter

MAY 4, 2022

**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism:* Tenth Commandment

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 34:29-35:21; Luke 7:36-50

*What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.*

*(Small Catechism: Tenth Commandment)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. While the Ninth Commandment deals with coveting "stuff" that belongs to our neighbor, the Tenth Commandment is really about coveting other people. That may sound rather odd. But think for a moment about the people who are all around you. Think about your parents or your teachers or your spouse. You might say in your heart, "I wish I had different parents," "I wish I had different teachers," or, "I wish I had a different husband or wife or boyfriend/girlfriend."

It always seems that other people have individuals in their lives who are cooler than the ones that God has placed into your life. This has caused us to do so many different things in order to separate others from the relationships that God has established. The Ninth and Tenth Commandments remind us that we are never fully satisfied with what God will give to us. We have truly squandered all that we have, including everyone around us.

Yet Jesus still seeks you out in the midst of your covetousness. Our Lord is always seeking you out, no matter how disappointed you are in Him. As you walk by the baptismal font at your church, be reminded that in that wonderful gift of Baptism Jesus has called you by name. You are His because He has set you free from the sins and temptations of your heart. Now you walk in the newness of life and by faith you can come to realize the true value of everyone Jesus has placed into your life, all because Jesus gave Himself up for you. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*What is the world to me! My Jesus is my treasure, My life, my health, my wealth, My friend, my love, my pleasure, My joy, my crown, my all, My bliss eternally. Once more then I declare: What is the world to me!*

*("What Is the World to Me" LSB 730, st.4)*

## Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 17, 2022

**Today's Reading:** James 1:16-21

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 23:1-22; Luke 12:13-34

*Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

*(James 1:21)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. God's people are to be holy people. It is how God designed it. Holiness reflects God's holiness. In the Garden of Eden man was created in the holy image of God. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they lost that holiness. The inclination of the heart is opposed to the will of God. Left to ourselves, we want nothing to do with God's desire for us to be holy. Our condition is that we are dead in our transgressions with no ability whatsoever to come to God or to be holy as He is holy.

James uses language that reflects the passive nature of our salvation. On account of our sinful condition, we cannot come to God by our own power. Rather, it is God who comes to us. James' words are very specific. He says to "receive" the implanted Word. We do not accept the Word, but rather receive the Word. The doingness is through the work of the Holy Spirit and God's Holy Word is brought to us.

Often we will hear someone say that you need to "accept" the Word of God as truth. Unfortunately, that is the wrong language to use when we speak about our relationship with God. We "receive" His Holy Word. The burden is not on us, it cannot be on us, because we are spiritually dead in our sin. James does not stop with just conversion. He reminds his hearers about their new life in Christ. As children of God, we live in a constant tension between the Old Adam and the New Man in Christ. The Old Adam desires to pursue the wants of the flesh and live in filthiness and rampant wickedness. The New Man in Christ desires to live as a holy being, in the image of a holy God. In your Baptism you have put on Christ. Daily, the Old Adam is drowned and the New Man in Christ is resurrected. In that resurrection you live with the robe of Christ's righteousness over you. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Hope of the world, afoot on dusty highways, Showing to wand'ring souls the path of light, Walk Thou beside us Lest the tempting byways Lure us away from Thee to endless night.*

*("Hope of the World" LSB 690, st.3)*

## Monday of the Fifth Week of Easter

MAY 16, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Isaiah 12:1-6

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 21:1-24; Luke 12:1-12

*For though you were angry with me, your anger turned away that you might comfort me.*  
(Isaiah 12:1b)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Approaching the end of a school year can be very stressful. The last days, weeks, and months remind us that a chapter of our life is about to end, and a new one is about to begin. The summer months are pressing in on us and plans for travel, vacations, or other summer activities are well underway. It is understandable that there may be some anxiety resting upon our hearts as these times of transition take place. We reflect on the things to come and the things that have transpired. In those reflections, memories of unresolved conflict may arise.

It is that unresolved conflict that Satan and sin use to keep us from the comfort of our Father in heaven. Our lives in sin create that chasm between us and Him. He wants nothing more than to draw us back to Him. As God the Father walks in the Garden of Eden, after the Fall, He wants to be with Adam and Eve. They have disobeyed God and have hidden themselves, for they were afraid. The image of God is lost and His wrath is kindled. He curses the serpent, the woman, the man, and even the ground is cursed. God's wrath is finally delivered to His Son Jesus Christ in His death on the Cross. God delivers the punishment of our sin to His Son. His wrath is turned away from us.

In His wrathful punishment of His Son on the Cross, our salvation is won. No longer do we fear His wrath, but rather we are covered in the comfort of His unfailing mercy, where the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation have taken place. Joy and comfort are delivered in the message that on the Last Day we will rise from the dead. We will walk upon a restored earth and under a new heaven. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Lord Jesus, by Your Spirit, You give us faith to cast out all fear of confessing the true faith; for we are helpless to save ourselves, and we must trust in You and You alone for our salvation. Keep us faithful to the end, that You will not be ashamed of us when You come in Your glory with Your Father and the holy angels; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## Thursday of the Third Week of Easter

MAY 5, 2022

**Today's Reading:** 1 Peter 2:21-25

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 38:21-39:8; Luke 8:1-21

*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*  
(1 Peter 2:21)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. The beginning of our reading today isn't quite clear as to what we have been called to. We need to go back to verse 20 to grasp what this is: "For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God" (1 Peter 2:20).

Great, this sounds like a calling that is really motivating. We are called to "suffer"? To be honest, most of us are willing to suffer for Christ, but it has to be something big and inspiring. The nitty-gritty, day-to-day stuff that we face in our lives isn't worth it. Give us the big stuff, where it is crystal clear that we are truly suffering on account of Jesus. The crosses that God appoints for us are not inspiring or majestic, they are just painful and seem so ordinary.

The truth is that the glorious suffering of the heroes of the faith was not all that glorious for them. The luster of glory that descends on them comes from time and space between us and them. For them, it was the pain of the moment, and the ache that was happening right then. There was nothing of glory or fame or pleasure about it while they endured it.

Likewise, the Cross of Christ was not all majestic and glorious for Him to endure. It was pain and nails and sweat and humiliation and burning agony inside and out. Then it was death. That is what the price was for your salvation. "By His stripes you are healed!" Your sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake. Now He has been made Shepherd of your soul. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Why should cross and trial grieve me? Christ is near With His cheer; Never will He leave me. Who can rob me of the heaven That God's Son For me won When His life was given?*

*("Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me" LSB 756, st.1)*

## Friday of the Third Week of Easter

MAY 6, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 39:32-40:16; Luke 8:22-39

*And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"  
And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they  
ceased, and there was a calm. (Luke 8:24)*

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen. In our daily lectionary today we hear about one of the more famous accounts of Jesus and His disciples. They are crossing the Sea of Galilee and a storm rises up. While the disciples fear they are going to drown, Jesus is asleep.

Most of us have never been caught in a storm that threatened our lives, but we are familiar with feelings of desperation, especially in the midst of circumstances that we cannot control. Like the disciples, sometimes we feel like God is not aware of what is going on in our lives—that He is asleep at the wheel and or has forgotten about us. However, this passage is not simply about Jesus calming the “storms of life.” We should be careful not to simplify what Jesus does here in the boat.

The storm that the disciples faced was real. In that very real story Jesus has all “authority in heaven and on earth,” even over the wind and waves. Jesus was present at the foundation of all creation and despite His sleeping during this storm, He still has authority over the wind and waves while in the boat. By His simply speaking to the wind and waves, everything was placed back into order.

If Jesus has this ability to calm the wind and waves, He certainly has the ability to speak His Word over the waters of your Baptism where He declared from heaven to earth, “This is my beloved child.” In Holy Baptism Jesus speaks over the waters of life and death. You were crucified and buried with Him in Baptism so that you, too, might rise and walk in the newness of life. By your Baptism into Christ you are safe and secure in the Ark of the Christian Church until Christ returns to bring you home to the quiet waters of paradise. In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

*O Lord, since You never fail to help and govern those whom You nurture in Your steadfast fear and love, work in us a perpetual fear and love of Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.  
(Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity)*

## The Fifth Sunday of Easter

MAY 15, 2022

**Today's Reading:** John 16:5-15

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 20:1-16, 22-27; Luke 11:37-54

*"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away,  
for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will  
send him to you." (John 16:7)*

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen. The disciples' plan of salvation was not going in the direction they had hoped. Jesus has been doing miracles, teaching in the synagogues, preparing the people for the kingdom to come and now He was talking about leaving and sending a helper. This was not what they had in mind. Jesus cannot leave. The language of death and resurrection was contrary to the way freedom was usually brought to a nation. Now He is speaking of leaving and sending someone else, and this is to our advantage?

Christ's words of departure and promise to send the “Helper” were foreign to the disciples. He was promising the sending of the Holy Spirit to equip and enable them to proclaim the Good News of salvation. God's plan of salvation was completely different from what the disciples had in mind. The disciples sought temporal freedom from the Roman Empire. Christ brought to them eternal freedom through His actions and deeds.

In our lives we, too, have our own plans. We want our lives to go as we desire. We fail to see or do not want to see God's work in our lives through Christ. Our sinfulness pulls us back from what Christ has delivered to us and points us to the temporal activities in our own situation. The Holy Spirit works in our lives, waging war against the sinful man and pointing us back to the eternal things of God. He delivers to us the Gift of salvation won for us on the Cross. Through the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples proclaimed the message of hope and reconciliation to the churches. It is the same message that is proclaimed today: that Christ delivered us through His life, death, and resurrection. In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

*Come, Holy Light, guide divine, Now cause the Word of life to shine. Teach us  
to know our God aright And call Him Father with delight. From ev'ry error  
keep us free; Let none but Christ our master be That we in living faith abide,  
In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide. Alleluia, alleluia!  
(“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” LSB 497, st.2)*



## Saturday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 14, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 98:1b, 3-4; antiphon: v.1a, 2b)

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 9:9-18, 26-37; Luke 11:14-36

*Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.  
(From the Introit for the Fifth Sunday of Easter)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. "God works in mysterious ways!" We hear that phrase frequently in our lives. We attribute the unexplainable to God's mysterious way of interceding in our lives. We reduce His marvelous work to some form of mysticism or magical event taking place.

In our sinful, temporal lives we look only at the current activities that surround us. We invoke the Name of God in the hope that He'll be a "fix it" god who resolves our current struggles. We use Him as a handyman to get us through the times that we see as difficult and then we ignore Him when we are comfortable. When tragedy strikes, then we call upon Him again. In sin, our focus is only on the right now. In sin we dictate to God what we believe He needs to do in our lives so that our lives can be comfortable by our standards. We do not want to experience any discomforts that may lead to strengthening of faith and growth in our trust in Him.

The psalmist reminds his hearers to sing a new song to the LORD. No longer are they to sing a song of lament and sorrow, but rather a song of joy and comfort. The LORD has done marvelous things in the redemption of His people. No longer are they bound in slavery but they are set free from their enemies. The twofold meaning of the opening stanza of the psalm draws the reader to the immediate temporal lives that the LORD redeemed from earthly slavery and points them to the coming Messiah and His work of redemption. In our lives, God bestows upon us our daily bread of sustenance. We are also reminded of the marvelous work the LORD did through the Gift of redemption. He has redeemed us through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. A new song is sung, proclaiming that we have been set free through the blood of the Lamb. We sing a new song because He has done marvelous things. He has given us eternal life through Christ. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, With exultation springing, And with united heart and voice And holy rapture singing, Proclaim the wonders God has done, How His right arm the vict'ry won. What price our ransom cost Him!*  
(*"Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" LSB 556, st.1*)

## Saturday of the Third Week of Easter

MAY 7, 2022

**Today's Reading:** Introit for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

(Psalm 66:3, 5, 8-9; antiphon: v.1-2)

**Daily Lectionary:** Exodus 40:17-38; Luke 8:40-56

*Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you."  
(From the Introit for the Fourth Sunday of Easter)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. This psalm places into our mouth and on our lips the appropriate praise for our heavenly Father. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. Even His enemies are summoned to acknowledge His power, although they "come cringing" before the Lord of glory (Psalm 66:3b).

We can think of a myriad of stories where God's people were rescued from their enemies. In many ways it seems like something that we rarely get to experience ourselves. But we do not merely sit back and read about God's mighty deeds. Instead, we live in them, because He carries out His continued work for us today. Each day He reveals His mighty arm which was stretched out on the Cross to take away our sins. God's great power was hidden and, at the same time revealed, at the Cross.

Every time your pastor proclaims Absolution to you, God is working His mighty deed for you. On that first Easter, God's power over our enemy of death was proclaimed for the entire world. Jesus would walk out of the empty tomb, risen from the dead. In the wonderful waters of Holy Baptism God the Holy Spirit has marked you with the sign of the Cross on your forehead and heart to signify that you have died and risen with Christ. Death is destroyed, Hell is overcome and our enemies have been defeated.

Jesus is the One who prepares a table before you in the presence of your enemies of sin and death. As you partake of His Body and Blood you are receiving the mighty deeds of God for your forgiveness and the strengthening of faith. "Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man." In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*  
(Collect for Wednesday of Holy Week)

## The Fourth Sunday of Easter

MAY 8, 2022

**Today's Reading:** John 16:16-22

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 8:1-13, 30-36; Luke 9:1-17

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice."  
(John 16:20a)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. The season of Easter is a time of celebration. We look back at the resurrection of Christ while looking forward to His glorious return and our resurrection. All around us in our worship life we see and hear the song of the saints going forth boldly. The white on the altar, the lingering smell of the lilies, the joyful banners that adorn our sanctuaries all remind us of what has taken place and what will take place.

Our struggle is the *now*. Right now, in this world and in this life, we wrestle with all that the world throws at us. We are reminded daily of the consequences of sin in our lives. Fathers still provoke their children to anger. Children still disobey their parents. Pornography and sexual immorality still abound and tempt us. Bullies still bully. Addiction still controls our lives or the lives of others we know. Siblings still manipulate each other. Death still kills us.

After the death of Christ, His disciples and followers were "holed up" in a room with the doors locked. They were lamenting His death. Their hope of being freed from Roman tyranny did not come to fruition. The world around the disciples rejoiced in the death of Christ. It seemed as if God's plan had been thwarted. While we weep and lament in the chaos of sin, the world rejoices in that chaos as God is removed from our lives. The world thrives on chaos.

In the middle of the chaos is order. God prevails now. You are baptized and in that Baptism you are connected to the death of Christ. The connection of your Baptism does not end at the crucifixion. You are also connected to His resurrection. As Christ walked from the tomb, so also will you walk from your grave. You struggle through this life, rejoicing in the knowledge that death does not prevail. Your faith holds fast to the promise that Christ has died and Christ has conquered death. In Christ, you rejoice in His resurrection as that is also your resurrection. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Almighty God, You show those in error the light of Your truth so that they may return to the way of righteousness. Grant faithfulness to all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Church that they may avoid whatever is contrary to their confession and follow all such things as are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*(Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter)*

## Friday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 13, 2022

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 18:1-7, 20-19:8; Luke 11:1-13

*"Father, hallowed be your name..." (Luke 11:2b)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. God gives His Holy Name to us. A Name that is above all names. A Name that is more than just an identification. His Name is set apart from all other names and clarifies who He is and what He has done.

In our world today, names bring identity to individuals and have become symbols of success. Families have names that are passed down from generation to generation. Companies have names, and with those names come branding and marketing logos. Schools are given names and mascots of those schools are given names, too. Everything has a name.

God's Name is unique. His Name brings comfort that no other name on earth can bring. His Name is holy, not because we make it holy but because He declares it to be holy. In our sinfulness we loathe His Holy Name. We use it frivolously and toss it around as some insignificant name. We use His Name to deride, to curse, to swear, to lie, to deceive. We take His Holy Name and cast it among the names of other false gods and equate the value of His Name with their names. In the end, we really want nothing to do with His Name.

It is God who wants something to do with you. In His unfathomable love for you, He has called you by name. In your Baptism, the Name of the Triune God was given to you. In His Name and with the waters of Baptism you were washed and cleansed with the forgiveness of sins. You received the sign of the cross both upon your forehead and upon your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. The benefits of His death and resurrection are yours through Baptism. As you are sent into this world you carry His Name upon you. He takes you and equips and enables you to serve in the vocations that He has created. He has prepared you for His glorious return when every knee shall bow and every mouth confess His Holy Name. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*At the name of Jesus Ev'ry knee shall bow Ev'ry tongue confess Him King of glory now, 'Tis the Father's pleasure We should call Him Lord, Who from the beginning Was the mighty word. ("At the Name of Jesus" LSB 512, st.1)*

## Thursday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 12, 2022

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**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 17:1-16; Luke 10:23-42

*But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"* (Luke 10:29)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. The lawyer was really pressing Jesus in order to justify himself. "So tell me Jesus, who really is my neighbor?" The ambiguity of the word "neighbor" was working on the heart of the lawyer. The reality that all people could be the lawyer's neighbors did not sit well with him. The lawyer was only looking at himself to fulfill the Law. His original question regarding what he must do to inherit eternal life showed that he was a man who was all about the Law. His salvation was up to him.

Jesus delivers to him the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a parable that many of us are familiar with and have heard throughout our lives. Often we are placed in the parable as the one who is helping and assisting. We are the ones working to demonstrate our validity before others. We see ourselves as the "Good Samaritan."

Unfortunately, when we insert ourselves as the one doing the action, we usurp the work of Christ. The lawyer wants to know two things: What must I do to inherit eternal life, and who is my neighbor? With both of these questions he is seeking justification. It is the latter question that answers the first question. The Good Samaritan is not him! It is not us! Reading the text through the work of Christ we see that Christ is the Good Samaritan and we are the person lying in the road (half) dead because of our sins. We have been beaten down and left for dead by the world.

Christ comes as the person least likely to help us. In our sinfulness we despise Christ just as the Samaritans were loathed by the Jewish people. He is the neighbor who serves us and restores us to life. He pays for all our needs and then He is coming again to claim us. No longer are we left dead along the road. The Good Samaritan has washed your wounds in the waters of Baptism. He has restored you with the nurturing strengthening of faith in the Eucharist. You are in His everlasting care until He returns in the resurrection of the dead. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Christ has our host surrounded With clouds of martyrs bright, Who wave their palms in triumph And fire us for the fight. Then Christ the cross ascended To save a world undone And, suffering for the sinful, Our full redemption won.* ("Christ Is the World's Redeemer" LSB 539, st.2)

## Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 9, 2022

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**Today's Reading:** Isaiah 40:25-31

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 9:1-24; Luke 9:18-36

*He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.* (Isaiah 40:28b)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. Captivity is exhausting. God's people were tired. The consequences of following the false gods and bending the knee to the deities around them drove them into captivity. They were no longer free. The people of God were slaves and foreigners in the land that they had been driven to in the deportation. They were tired and weary.

In sin we are held captive in the shackles of this world. Sin holds us in despair. As we compare ourselves to the Law we are left in complete contempt of our failure. We have shackled ourselves to the Law.

Our God sees our exhaustion. He sees our captivity, and through His Son, Jesus Christ, delivers freedom to us. In Christ, the Law was fulfilled on our behalf. We are set free from the condemnation of sin. As the Law beats us down and says to us, "You are not worthy," Christ says, "You are baptized and connected to my fulfillment of the Law." Christ is the one who goes to the Cross and pays the price for your sins. He did not turn His back on you and grow tired. He instead reaches out to you with His Holy Word. He speaks His Holy words of Absolution into your ears. He declares you forgiven. He takes His holy water in Baptism and covers you in His righteousness. He shows His love for you in that while you were still a sinner, He died for you.

We will never be able to comprehend His love for us. All we have is faith that holds fast to His promises and knowledge that in Christ Jesus all is fulfilled. No sin too great for forgiveness. No chasm too great for His reconciliation. His love is far greater than any human mind could understand. The world in which we live delivers bondage, captivity, and shackles. Our God, the Triune God, delivers freedom through Jesus Christ. He is the one God, and He does not grow weary with us. He frees us and sets us apart to live in this world as His people. He is the God who freed His people through His Son Jesus Christ by Christ's death on the Cross and resurrection. In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*Lord Jesus, think on me And purge away my sin; From worldly passions set me free And make me pure within.* ("Lord Jesus, Think on Me" LSB 610, st.1)

## Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 10, 2022

**Today's Reading:** 1 Peter 2:11-20

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 10:1-20; Luke 9:37-60

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)*

In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen. Three hiking trails traverse the United States from south to north: The Pacific Crest Trail, the Appalachian Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail. All three trails allow the hiker to go from some of the most southern areas of our country to the most northern areas. Each trail delivers breathtaking views in three different regions of our country from east to west. As one travels these trails, he becomes a sojourner, someone who is merely passing through. Experienced hikers may claim that they “live” on the trail, but generally speaking their home is somewhere not intrinsically connected to the trail.

In this world, as God's children, we are sojourners. We are travelers. The world around us is not our true home. It is our home insofar as we have a bed on which to lay our head, we have tables that we eat around, we have families, and we have a structure that provides shelter from the elements but it is not our permanent home. It is temporary. As Peter writes to his audience, he reminds them that they are merely travelers in a foreign land. In this foreign land there are deceit and temptation that have come about because of man's fall into sin. The world wants to draw us away from our walk in our Baptisms and move us into a walk with itself. The Old Adam in us draws us to the desires of the flesh and encourages us to engage in behaviors contrary to the will of God. In the end, the world does not care about your wellbeing or your spiritual health. It merely wants you to indulge and gratify those sinful desires.

In God's Holy Word we are drawn back to our Baptisms. We are reminded that we carry a mark that is not of this world but of God. Our focus is not on this world but on the world to come. The world around us is temporary and we are merely sojourners in this world. Our lives have been pointed beyond this world to the world that is to come. In the restored world, the new Jerusalem, we will not be sojourners but dwellers. We will have the classification of permanent citizens. In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen.

*O Jesus Christ, do not delay, But hasten our salvation; We often tremble on our way In fear and tribulation O hear and grant our fervent plea: Come, mighty judge, and set us free From death and ev'ry evil.  
("The Day Is Surely Drawing Near" LSB 508, st.7)*

## Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Easter

MAY 11, 2022

**Today's Reading:** *Small Catechism: Close of the Commandments*

**Daily Lectionary:** Leviticus 16:1-24; Luke 10:1-22

*God threatens to punish all who break these commandments.  
(Small Catechism: Close of the Commandments)*

In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen. Nothing starts the heart pumping harder than to see those flashing lights in the rearview mirror. The law is coming for us. We might not have done anything wrong, but just the mere sight of lights behind us that starts the mind racing. What could we have possibly done wrong to warrant this?

God's Law convicts us. The Law reveals to us that we are unholy people before a holy, holy, holy God. The Law condemns us. On account of our sinfulness, we deserve nothing but punishment and eternal condemnation. However, God does not leave us to eternal death. He put in place a plan for our redemption. The First Commandment reminds us that we should have no other gods. The Close of the Commandments reminds us that there is a loving God who has given to us a Holy Law. His Holy Law reflects who He is as a Holy God.

Our sinfulness reveals that we are in need. We are in need of a Savior. In Christ, the Holy Law of God is fulfilled on our behalf. It is Christ who has taken the punishment for our sins. We deserve the punishment that Christ received. In simple terms we say, “He got what we deserved.” Christ kept the commandments perfectly. He kept them not to demonstrate how we should live our lives, but to fulfill God's Holy Law that we are completely incapable of keeping. Christ's obedience is for me! Christ's obedience is for you! In His perfect obedience is our redemption. As God looks down on you, He sees Christ's perfection covering you. He sees the work of Christ in that robe of righteousness that has been placed over you in your Baptism. No longer are you under the threat of the Law, but rather, you are covered in the blood of the Lamb. His life and death are for you!

On account of Christ, you do not need to live in the fear of God's punishment, because the punishment for your sins was taken to the Cross. You live now in the promises of your Baptism that connects you to the work of Christ. Your faith holds fast to the work of Christ. In Christ the Law is fulfilled for you. In the Name ✝ of Jesus. Amen.

*To Jesus we for refuge flee, Who from the curse has set us free, And humbly worship at His throne, Saved by His grace through faith alone.  
("The Law of God Is Good and Wise" LSB 579, st.6)*