

# Confession and Absolution

## 499 Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,<br/>And make our hearts Your place of rest;<br/>Come with Your grace and heav'nly aid,<br/>And fill the hearts which You have made.</p> <p>2 To You, the Counselor, we cry,<br/>To You, the gift of God Most High;<br/>The fount of life, the fire of love,<br/>The soul's anointing from above.</p> <p>3 In You, with graces sevenfold,<br/>We God's almighty hand behold<br/>While You with tongues of fire proclaim<br/>To all the world His holy name.</p> <p>4 Your light to ev'ry thought impart,<br/>And shed Your love in ev'ry heart;</p> | <p>The weakness of our mortal state<br/>With deathless might invigorate.</p> <p>5 Drive far away our wily foe,<br/>And Your abiding peace bestow;<br/>With You as our protecting guide,<br/>No evil can with us abide.</p> <p>6 Teach us to know the Father, Son,<br/>And You, from both, as Three in One<br/>That we Your name may ever bless<br/>And in our lives the truth confess.</p> <p>△ 7 Praise we the Father and the Son<br/>And Holy Spirit, with them One,<br/>And may the Son on us bestow<br/>The gifts that from the Spirit flow! Amen.</p> |
|--|--|

Text: Public domain

### Stand

*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

### Invocation

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

### Exhortation

*LSB 151*

**P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

### Confession of Sins

*LSB 151*

**P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**C** **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

### Absolution

*LSB 151*

**P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

# Service of the Word

## Introit

*Psalm 121:1–4, 7–8; antiphon: v. 5*

**P** The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

**C** **I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?**

**P** My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

**C** **He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.**

P Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

**C The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.**

P The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

**C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

## Kyrie

*LSB 152*

**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**C Amen.**

## This Is the Feast

*LSB 155*

**C This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

## Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray.

O God, the protector of all who trust in You, have mercy on us that with You as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

*Sit*

## Old Testament Reading

*Isaiah 45:1-7*

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,  
 whose right hand I have grasped,  
 to subdue nations before him  
 and to loose the belts of kings,  
 to open doors before him

that gates may not be closed:  
<sup>2</sup>“I will go before you  
 and level the exalted places,  
 I will break in pieces the doors of bronze  
 and cut through the bars of iron,  
<sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness  
 and the hoards in secret places,  
 that you may know that it is I, the LORD,  
 the God of Israel, who call you by your name.  
<sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
 and Israel my chosen,  
 I call you by your name,  
 I name you, though you do not know me.  
<sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is no other,  
 besides me there is no God;  
 I equip you, though you do not know me,  
<sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun  
 and from the west, that there is none besides me;  
 I am the LORD, and there is no other.  
<sup>7</sup>I form light and create darkness,  
 I make well-being and create calamity,  
 I am the LORD, who does all these things.”

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Epistle

*1 Thessalonians 1:1–10*

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,  
 To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:  
 Grace to you and peace.  
<sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,  
<sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope  
 in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our  
 gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.  
 You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of  
 us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that  
 you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For not only has the word of  
 the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth  
 everywhere, so that we need not say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves report concerning us the kind of  
 reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,  
<sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the  
 wrath to come.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

## Alleluia and Verse

*LSB 156*

**C** Alleluia.  
**Lord, to whom shall we go?**  
**You have the words of eternal life.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia.**

## Holy Gospel

*Matthew 22:15–22*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-second chapter.

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

<sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle [Jesus] in his talk. <sup>16</sup>And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. <sup>17</sup>Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” <sup>18</sup>But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup>Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” <sup>21</sup>They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” <sup>22</sup>When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

**Apostles’ Creed**

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.**

**The third day He rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

*Sit*

**940 Holy God, We Praise Thy Name**

*sts. 1–5*

1 Holy God, we praise Thy name;  
Lord of all, we bow before Thee.  
All on earth Thy scepter claim,  
All in heav’n above adore Thee.  
Infinite Thy vast domain,  
Everlasting is Thy reign.

2 Hark! The glad celestial hymn  
Angel choirs above are raising;  
Cherubim and seraphim,  
In unceasing chorus praising,  
Fill the heav’ns with sweet accord:  
Holy, holy, holy Lord!

3 Lo, the apostles’ holy train  
Join Thy sacred name to hallow;  
Prophets swell the glad refrain,  
And the white-robed martyrs follow,

Text: Public domain

And from morn to set of sun  
Through the Church the song goes on.

4 Thou art King of Glory, Christ;  
Son of God, yet born of Mary.  
For us sinners sacrificed,  
As to death a Tributary,  
First to break the bars of death,  
Thou hast opened heav’n to faith.

△ 5 Holy Father, holy Son,  
Holy Spirit, three we name Thee;  
Though in essence only one,  
Undivided God we claim Thee  
And, adoring, bend the knee  
While we own the mystery.

## Sermon

Grace, Mercy and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

It's a trap! We've all watched tv programs and movies where we know that it is a trap. An ambush. We may have even screamed at the TV, trying to warn the person not to wander haplessly into a trap. Of course, the hero always manages to escape the trap and save the day.

As we continue with Holy Week readings in this morning's gospel, the Pharisees form a new alliance, this time with the Herodians, to try to trap Jesus. We don't know much about the Herodians, but if this were a melodrama, we'd boo and hiss, just because their name contains Herod, bringing up memories of the Holy Innocents, the babies in Bethlehem killed by Herod the King after the Magi return home via another route. Or perhaps the Herod the tetrarch who beheaded John the Baptist as a reward to his niece/stepdaughter for a seductive dance at a party. Isn't a bit odd that the Pharisees who hoped that a return to ritual purity would cause God's favor and restore David's kingdom over Israel would partner with the Herodians, part of the ruling power of Rome? Even in those days, politics made for strange bedfellows. And then the question "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar?" after being buttered up about Jesus's impartiality and truthfulness. Jesus sees the trap and answers "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" verdict, leaving his opponents marveling and frustrated that Jesus slipped through the trap unscathed.

This lesson gives us an opportunity to consider our situation just two weeks before the election. Let's start with the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment "Honor your Father and your Mother". As Luther explains in the Small Catechism "*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them. Luther's Germany was not a democracy but a dictatorship with each area ruled by a Prince. Our political environment is a democratic republic in which we each have the opportunity to vote as part of the process to elect our government. In fact, many would say responsibility, not opportunity. Luther would likely say responsibility. Luther teaches two important concepts which shaped his understanding.

First, Luther taught two kinds of righteousness, righteousness before God and righteousness before man. Our righteousness before God is God's work alone. Jesus's death and resurrection makes us righteous before God. There is nothing you can do to be righteous before God. We are passively righteous before God. Ephesians 2:8-9 says it so well "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast." And then there is our righteousness before man. This is our active righteousness, the third use of the Law, a guide. Before man, we struggle to love our neighbor as ourselves. These are the good works that Ephesians 2:10 talks about "10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Luther aptly summarized "God doesn't need our good works, but our neighbor does." This sets Lutherans apart.

Second, Luther describes the two Kingdoms, the kingdom of the right, God's Kingdom and the kingdom of the left, the rulers and authorities God has placed over us. Let that last statement sink in. The rulers and authorities God has placed over us. Who watched the presidential debate? How clear was it that the two participants are a gift of God to us? Was the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment broken? Did either or both parties "put the best construction on" or as the newer catechisms say "explain everything in the kindest way"? We live in God's Kingdom as saints, passively righteous, washed clean by the innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. We live in the kingdom of the left as a sinner who struggles to actively live righteously before men and sins and falls short of the glory of God. As we live in the kingdom of the left, we are called to be faithful witnesses to God's law and gospel. We are called to be God's voice in the world around us.

God has always used humans to influence and shape history. Sadly, the church of Germany fell eerily quiet during the Hitler's rise to power and during World War II. In many ways, many Americans are also practicing

the same quietism, the unwillingness to speak against the immorality of our times. As we look at the many challenges facing the United States today, it is more important than ever before to make our Christian voices heard, especially to advocate for those who do not have a voice, the lives unable to speak for or protect themselves, the pre-born children, the disabled, and the elderly. We also have the responsibility to stand up for the family which is also under attack.

God calls us to care for our neighbor, for those around us, those in our community and nation. One way we do so is through our participation in government. For some, doing so leads to a political vocation, serving in an office. For most others, doing so means exercising our right and responsibility to vote according to our conscience and as God would have us vote, upholding God's Law. Our righteousness before others demands that we become informed voters who view government as God's temporal authorities who bear the sword for the punishment of wrongdoers and for the benefit of those who follow the laws.

Too often, we, myself included, want to avoid the ugliness of American politics in which the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment, "You shall not bear false witness" or the more modern translation "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" is trampled underfoot. Debates in which name calling and eye rolling carry more meaning than the content of the discussion. Political rallies in which emotion are more important than content. And yet because we have a voice in the process, we should be faithful stewards who prayerfully consider the candidates, positions, and ballot items and make our Christian voices be heard by voting.

Our Gospel readings are from early in Holy Week; we know how Holy Week ends. Jesus allows himself to come under Pontius Pilate's authority and surrenders His life for our sins. Jesus takes our sins to the cross and dies a scandalous, horrible death for the times we fail be faithful stewards, rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. For the times we fail to honor the authorities placed over us, and the laws of the land. The times we fail to act righteously towards our neighbors. The times when we see God's blessings as something we own, not something we steward. Jesus's death makes us righteous before God who calls us to be His children, sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. Jesus's resurrection confirms that Jesus has conquered sin, death and the devil. Jesus has reconciled us to the Father that we may be brought to faith by the Holy Spirit and live in God's Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Right while we also live in the Kingdom of the Left, this world, where we live our faith and proclaim Jesus as Savior as we love and serve our neighbor, especially as we make our voices heard in the upcoming election. Amen. And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

## Prayer of the Church

O Lord, deliver Your people by Your power, and grant to us grace sufficient for all our needs and for the needs of all people.

### *Brief silence*

Let us pray to the Lord to open the eyes of the blind by the light of His Word and to open the ears of the deaf with the voice of His Gospel, and for the Lord to clear the way for all people to know the riches of His grace, the gift of forgiveness and the promise of life in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord to raise up evangelists who will witness the Gospel, for preachers who will testify to the mighty act of deliverance on the cross by which we have been saved, and for the Lord to bless His Church and all church workers who serve us in His name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord to teach us to trust not in our works but in His Word, and for a steadfast faith to endure in time of test, trial and tribulation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord to bless our nation with peace and harmony, and for the Lord to bless our president, governor, all legislators and judges, and those who protect and defend us against all the enemies of our land. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord to heal the sick, give relief to the suffering, grant comfort to those who mourn, and give peace to the dying, especially \_\_\_\_\_ and those we name in our hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord on behalf of those who serve as doctors and nurses, for medical researchers and those who work to end disease, and for those who care for people most vulnerable. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord for the renewal of our lives of prayer and devotion, interceding on behalf of all those in need and those who have devoted themselves to the Lord's work. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord for our stewardship of His creation, for our faithful use of all His gifts, and for grateful hearts, that we may honor the Lord with our words and with our works. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord that we may not forget those who delivered to us the sacred deposit and taught us the faith and let us join them in passing on the faith to those yet to come. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to the Lord that we may remain steadfast and immovable in faith, and that we may endure to the day of His coming again, when we shall be reunited with those who have gone before us with the sign of faith and now rest from their labors, to live in His eternal presence and sing His praise without end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

**C** Our Father who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be Thy name,  
 Thy kingdom come,  
 Thy will be done on earth  
 as it is in heaven;  
 give us this day our daily bread;  
 and forgive us our trespasses  
 as we forgive those  
 who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom  
 and the power and the glory  
 forever and ever. **Amen.**

## Prayer

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes 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, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Benediction

*LSB 166*

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**C** Amen.

## 781 We Give Thee But Thine Own

<p>1 We give Thee but Thine own,          Whate'er the gift may be;          All that we have is Thine alone,          A trust, O Lord, from Thee.</p> <p>2 May we Thy bounties thus          As stewards true receive</p>	<p>And gladly, as Thou blessest us,          To Thee our firstfruits give!</p> <p>3 Oh, hearts are bruised and dead,          And homes are bare and cold,          And lambs for whom the Shepherd bled          Are straying from the fold.</p>
--	---

4 To comfort and to bless,  
To find a balm for woe,  
To tend the lone and fatherless  
Is angels' work below.  
5 The captive to release,  
To God the lost to bring,

Text: Public domain

To teach the way of life and peace,  
It is a Christ-like thing.  
6 And we believe Thy Word,  
Though dim our faith may be:  
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,  
We do it unto Thee.

## Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV<sup>®</sup> Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version<sup>®</sup>), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2018 Concordia Publishing House.