

# Confession and Absolution

## 837 Lift High the Cross

*sts. ref-6*

- ref Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
Till all the world adore His sacred name.
- 1 Come, Christians, follow where our Captain trod,  
Our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. Refrain
  - 2 Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
The hosts of God in conqu'ring ranks combine. Refrain
  - 3 All newborn soldiers of the Crucified  
Bear on their brows the seal of Him who died. Refrain
  - 4 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
As Thou hast promised, draw us all to Thee. Refrain
  - 5 Let ev'ry race and ev'ry language tell  
Of Him who saves our lives from death and hell. Refrain
  - 6 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
Praise to the Crucified for victory! Refrain

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827-1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874-1956, alt.

Text: © 1974 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001274

### 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

203

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** **who made heaven and earth.**

**P** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

**C** **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

**P** Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, and call upon Him in prayer and praise, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

### Confession of Sins

*LSB 203*

**C** **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

### Absolution

*LSB 203*

**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 1:1-5; antiphon: v. 6*

**P** For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

**C** **Blessèd is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;**

**P** but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**C** He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

**P** The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**C** Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

**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** For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

## Kyrie

LSB 204

**C** Lord, have mercy;  
Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy.

## Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 204

**C** 1 To God on high be glory  
And peace to all the earth;  
Goodwill from God in heaven  
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!  
We praise and bless You, Father;  
Your holy name, we sing—  
Our thanks for Your great glory,  
Lord God, our heav'nly King.

2 To You, O sole-begotten,  
The Father's Son, we pray;  
O Lamb of God, our Savior,  
You take our sins away.  
Have mercy on us, Jesus;  
Receive our heartfelt cry,  
Where You in pow'r are seated  
At God's right hand on high—

3 For You alone are holy;  
You only are the Lord.  
Forever and forever,  
Be worshiped and adored;  
You with the Holy Spirit  
Alone are Lord Most High,  
In God the Father's glory.  
"Amen!" our glad reply.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

## Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant strength and protection to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*Sit*

## Old Testament Reading

*Micah 6:1–8*

<sup>1</sup>Hear what the LORD says:

Arise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.

<sup>2</sup>Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth,  
for the LORD has an indictment against his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

<sup>3</sup>“O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I wearied you? Answer me!

<sup>4</sup>For I brought you up from the land of Egypt  
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,  
and I sent before you Moses,  
Aaron, and Miriam.

<sup>5</sup>O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised,  
and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

<sup>6</sup>“With what shall I come before the LORD,  
and bow myself before God on high?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?

<sup>7</sup>Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

<sup>8</sup>He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Epistle

*1 Corinthians 1:18–31*

<sup>18</sup>The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup>For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God

made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. <sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

## Alleluia and Verse

### Alleluia

*LSB 205*

**C** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

### Verse

*LSB 205*

**C** These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

### Alleluia

*LSB 205*

**C** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

### Holy Gospel

*Matthew 5:1–12*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.

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

<sup>1</sup>Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

<sup>2</sup>And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup>“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup>“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup>“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**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***842 Son of God, Eternal Savior**

- 1 Son of God, eternal Savior,  
     Source of life and truth and grace,  
 Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
     Hallows all our human race,  
 You our Head, who, throned in glory,  
     For Your own will ever plead:  
 Fill us with Your love and pity,  
     Heal our wrongs, and help our need.
- 2 As You, Lord, have lived for others,  
     So may we for others live.  
 Freely have Your gifts been granted;  
     Freely may Your servants give.  
 Yours the gold and Yours the silver,  
     Yours the wealth of land and sea;  
 We but stewards of Your bounty  
     Held in solemn trust will be.
- 3 Come, O Christ, and reign among us,  
     King of love and Prince of Peace;  
 Hush the storm of strife and passion,  
     Bid its cruel discords cease.  
 By Your patient years of toiling,  
     By Your silent hours of pain,  
 Quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,  
     Stem our selfish greed of gain.
- 4 Son of God, eternal Savior,  
     Source of life and truth and grace,  
 Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
     Hallows all our human race:  
 By Your praying, by Your willing  
     That Your people should be one,  
 Grant, O grant our hope's fruition:  
     Here on earth Your will be done.

Text: Somerset T. C. Lowry, 1855-1932, alt.

Text: Public domain

**Sermon**

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

Sometimes, we take the cross for granted. Growing up Roman Catholic, one made the sign of the cross on oneself so frequently, so automatically, almost completely without thought. Each time one walked into a church, one dipped one's hand in Holy Water and made the sign of the cross. Each time one prayed at a meal, the prayer began and ended with the sign of the cross. Mass itself began and ended with the sign of the cross. Some baseball players make the sign of the cross when they step up to bat. Some wear a cross but when asked don't consider themselves Christians or are no longer practicing Christians, leaving me wondering why they continued to wear a cross.

But, after becoming a Lutheran, I intentionally stopped making the sign of the cross. The Lutherans I knew didn't make the sign of the cross. That was too "Roman Catholic". We said the words, but we didn't do the physical motions. It distinguished my Lutheranism. People I grew up with, including my siblings, noticed. At first it felt strange. But over time it became more normal, more natural. I've even been asked about saying the words to begin a public prayer. But lately, especially here in Southern Illinois, I see more and more Lutherans making the sign of the cross, especially Pastors.

As you have heard over the last two weeks, Paul is writing to the Corinthians who have sunk back into their heathen practices. Instead of being unified in Christ, they have divided up into cliques. They have chosen division over unity, based on who brought them to faith. They have lost sight of Jesus as their savior. They forgot what Jesus did for them. Jesus took the punishment for their sins and the sins of the whole world, unlike everyone else who has faced capital punishment for his or her own sins. Imagine the disgrace and shame of being put to death for a crime. And even more so if you did not do the crime.

Today, capital punishment doesn't exist in the state of Illinois and 22 other states. In states where capital punishment exists, it is most often by lethal injection and even if not, involves a sedative. This is a far cry from Roman Capital Punishment. Roman crucifixion was reserved for the worst of the worst. Crucifixion was reserved for slaves, pirates, and enemies of the state. Crucifixion was a public spectacle intended to deter others from committing the same crime. Crucifixion was a gruesome spectacle, the most painful and humiliating death imaginable. Even after flogging, being beaten with leather whips with bone or metal embedded, crucifixion was a slow death taking hours to days brought on by a combination of being unable to lift oneself up to breathe, exposure, heart trauma, and blood issues. And after death, the body was often left on the cross as a deterrent and eaten by animals. Is it any wonder that those outside of Christianity would find the Cross offensive and non-sensical? Only the lowest of the low, the worst of the worst were crucified.

Have you ever said to yourself or someone else "I wouldn't have done it that way?" For those without faith, it makes no sense. Why would God send His Son into our flesh to begin with? Much less send His Son into our flesh to die such a horrible, scandalous death? Could God have come up with another way? Maybe. But God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Not to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. To suffer the punishment that your sins and my sins deserve. To suffer the punishment that all sins over all time deserve. Jesus was forsaken on the cross. Separated from the Father by the sins He bore for you and for me. Mark records "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)

Dying on the cross, Jesus paid your sin debt. Jesus took your sins to His cross and paid the full price. The full price for sins you have committed and sins you will commit. Sins of not loving the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul. Sins of not loving your neighbor as yourself. Sins of having other gods such as wisdom or knowledge, thinking that you know better than God. Having gods of money and wealth. Desiring things other than God's Word. Allowing other things to take your attention off God. Wanting things that are not given to you, be it relationships or possessions. Not being content with what God has given you. Excusing your sins as too small or too insignificant compared to the sins of others. Not giving thanks to God for all good things and turning to God in times of trouble.

During the Heidelberg Disputation in 1518, Luther points out that it does no good to recognize God in His Glory without recognizing the shame and humiliation that Jesus suffered on the Cross. God can only be found in suffering and the cross. The power of God can be seen in nature. The grace of God can only be seen in God's Word and Sacraments, on the cross and in the Lord's Supper, which appear foolish and weak to the world. God empowers His Church through the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Good News of God's Salvation. His church reveals his grace and glory, which you will see when Jesus comes again. God's glory is revealed in His people, joined with the church Triumphant, the church of all time joined in faith to Jesus Christ, the church's head.

There is only one God, the Father of our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ. You are not a god unto yourself. You are subject to God, your Creator, Sustainer and Defender. God protects you from harm and danger and all evil, all out of His divine, gracious goodness. Not because of who you are. Not because you desire His love. Not because of what you do, for you can add nothing to your relationship with God. But because God loves and gives grace to His people. All religions don't lead to heaven. Hell is real. God is a just God who must punish evil and unrighteousness. God is not a doting Grandfather type who looks the other way when one sins. Instead, God hates evil. God sent Jesus to die for you sins and the sins of the whole world. You were bought by Jesus's innocent, precious blood shed on the cross, the emblem of shame and disgrace. Jesus died to give you eternal life. Jesus died so that you will not die eternally. The Holy Spirit works in you, bringing you to

faith, connecting you to the Body of Christ, the Church, where you learn of God's Love, Mercy and Grace. The Holy Spirit gives you both the opportunities and the words to speak God's Word and forgiveness to those around you. The Holy Spirit makes you holy, a people set apart to proclaim the wonders of God. Called by the Holy Spirit to the waters of Baptism, you have put on Jesus Christ and him Crucified for the sins of the world. You are a forgiven child of God, an heir of the kingdom of heaven both during your life and after you are called home. You are a redeemed child of God, an heir of all eternity both here in this world and there in eternity. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep you heart and mind in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Stand*

## **Prayer of the Church**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For pardon, that the Lord would set aside His indictment against our sin and forgive us for Jesus' sake, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For the wisdom of God, that we would not confess the wisdom of men, but boldly proclaim Christ and Him crucified for the salvation of the world, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For meekness, that we would be delivered from stubborn hearts and gladly submit to God's holy will, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For parents, that the Lord who gave His firstborn for our sins would strengthen them to teach their children His ways and to rejoice in His grace rather than embrace the sins of their forebears, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For peace, that the Lord who led His people past Pharaoh and Balak would provide wise rulers to the nations and protect us from tyranny, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For those reviled and slandered on account of Jesus, that the Lord would preserve them and ceaselessly give them joy and gladness that their reward in heaven is great, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For help in affliction, that the Lord who chooses what is weak in the world to shame the strong would use infirmities for our good until He delivers those who suffer them, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For hunger and thirst for Christ's body and blood, that by His Holy Communion we may be cleansed of our sin and equipped to love Him above all and to love our neighbor as ourselves, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

Lord God, heavenly Father, receive our thanks for the saints whom You preserved in righteousness and delivered to glory. Purify our hearts by Your grace and strengthen us against temptation, that we would look joyfully to the day when we will see You in glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Lord's Prayer**

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

**and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## Post-Communion Collect

**A** Let us pray.

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.

**C** Amen.

## Benedicamus

*LSB 212*

**A** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Benediction

**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.

## 425 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.
- 3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Text: Public domain

## 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 © 2023 Concordia Publishing House.