

Confession and Absolution

702 My Faith Looks Up to Thee

- 1 My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!
- 2 May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart;
My zeal inspire!
As Thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire!
- 3 While life's dark maze I tread
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.
- 4 When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Savior, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-87

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 184

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Kneel/Stand

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

Confession of Sins

LSB 184

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

- C** I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Absolution

LSB 185

- P** Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Stand

Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 50:7–10; antiphon: v. 1

- P** The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- C** Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.
- P** Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me.
- C** I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds.
- P** For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
- C** The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Gloria Patri

LSB 186

- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Kyrie

LSB 186

- C** Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 187

- P** Glory be to God on high:
C and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spirit.
P Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful God, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost. Graciously open our ears and our hearts to hear His call and to follow Him by faith that we may feast with Him forever in His kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Hosea 5:15—6:6

¹⁵I will return again to my place,
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
and in their distress earnestly seek me.

¹⁶“Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn us, that he may heal us;
he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.

²After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.

³Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;
his going out is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth.”

⁴What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early away.

⁵Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.

⁶For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 4:13–25

¹³The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” ²³But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia

LSB 190

C Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 9:9–13

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

C Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

⁹As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

¹⁰And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹²But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,

**the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

**the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;**

**who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.**

He suffered and was buried.

**And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.**

**And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**

Sit

689 Let Me Be Thine Forever

- 1 Let me be Thine forever,
My faithful God and Lord;
Let me forsake Thee never
Nor wander from Thy Word.
Lord, do not let me waver,
But give me steadfastness,
And for such grace forever
Thy holy name I'll bless.
- 2 Lord Jesus, my salvation,
My light, my life divine,
My only consolation,
O make me wholly Thine!
For Thou hast dearly bought me
With blood and bitter pain.
Let me, since Thou hast sought me,
Eternal life obtain.
- 3 And Thou, O Holy Spirit,
My comforter and guide,
Grant that in Jesus' merit
I always may confide,
Him to the end confessing
Whom I have known by faith.
Give me Thy constant blessing
And grant a Christian death.

Text: tr. Matthias Loy, 1828-1915, alt.; (st. 1): Nicolaus Selnecker, 1532-92; (sts. 2-3): Gesang-Büchlein, 1688, Rudolstadt
Text: Public domain

Sermon

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

Over the next 14 weeks, our Epistle readings will be from Romans. Romans is a full and exhaustive doctrinal treatise, the most systematic and complete of all of Paul's Epistles, proclaiming the divine counsel of grace and salvation for all, Jew and Greek alike.

In this morning's epistle, Paul examines the promises made to Abraham, Abraham's faith, Abraham's righteousness before God, and the promises God makes you, your faith, and your righteousness.

God chose to make a name for Abram, to whom God would give the name Abraham in Genesis 12, immediately following the Tower of Babel ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) What a striking contrast! Mankind wants to do it themselves. Even Abraham succumbed to the temptation to "do it himself" sometimes. Abram goes to Egypt and fearing for his own life, despite God's promises, lies about his relationship with Sarai, bringing curses on Pharaoh. Abram consents to Sarai's plan for Hagar to bear Ishmael to help God deliver on God's promises, bringing turmoil into Abram's house. Even after being promised Isaac within the year, Abraham again lies about his relationship with Sarah, bringing curses upon Abimelech. And despite all of this, God is faithful to God's promises to Abraham.

"Do it yourself" is the prevailing theme in this world. Do what makes sense to you. Do what is right in your own eyes. Rules and laws are only for those who want to follow them. If you are not happy about something in your life, change it, no matter how fundamental. After all, it is your life. And you have rights. The world makes it clear that marriage is only about the two people involved, not children and family. The world teaches

that doing what makes you happy is all that is important; you get to make your own rules. The world does its best to force God out of the picture. That is what Satan wants. Examples are everywhere, from premarital sex to living together outside of marriage, to making Illinois a destination for abortion, losing sight of God's commands to protect all life.

While it is easy to wag a judgmental finger at the world, the church too struggles with a "do it yourself mentality". There are basically two religions – one in which you "do it yourself" and one in which God does it for you. Either you are working out your own salvation or God has given you your salvation. Said differently, your salvation is either based on observing the Law or the gift of the Gospel. Any attempts to combine the two are contaminated by the Law.

The Law comes naturally. We are born sinful and unclean. From a baby's first breath, the baby is solely focused on herself. A baby cries, and her needs are met. She is fed or changed or held. As we get older, we learn that if we do what we are told, good things follow. For those of us who are older, doing what we were told meant that we weren't physically disciplined. We learn to play our parents against one another to get our way. We learn which parent to ask for specific things. We learn boundaries. We find that when we do x, y happens. We feel good when we can point to an accomplishment and receive the reward.

The Gospel is foreign to us. In this world, there is no free lunch. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. In this world, someone is always trying to take advantage of others. Scammers abound, deceiving trusting souls. Satan and his fallen angels are hard at work to take us from the safe confines of God's provision and promises.

The Law always accuses. The Law points out where we fall short, and how often we fall short. Luther struggled with the Law. Luther's conscience was formed by the Church's teaching that Christians were called to live a life of penance, not of repentance. The Sacrament of Penance had three tenets – contrition, being sorry for sins, confession, listing sins, and penance, doing good works to make up for sins. To be forgiven, sins had to be listed so that penance could be assigned and done. This left Luther always questioning whether Luther would be saved or damned; whether Luther would go to heaven or to hell.

Luther's struggles with sin led him to Romans where salvation is a freely given gift of God, not something to be earned. Your relationship with God is based solely on God's Grace and Mercy, God's promises to you, just as to Abraham, are solely based on God's grace and mercy. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God calls you into a gracious, loving relationship with Him. You can only receive in this relationship. Your only choice is to reject God's gift of salvation. As Luther teaches in the Third Article, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." Because of God's great love for you, you respond to God's grace and mercy. Ephesians 2:8-10 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. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

You are, however, active in your relationships with others. And that is where the good works just mentioned come in. God works through you to love and serve others. But that is also where sin comes in. Other gods take God's place in your life. You don't always pray, praise, and give thanks to God as you should. Sometimes you misuse God's name. Sometimes, your trust in God takes a back seat to your trust in yourself, or material things. Sometimes your relationship with God is overcome by the things of this world that seem more urgent, more important, in the moment than being in God's Word, praying or worshiping. You don't always respect and honor those in authority over you. You want what you want, not necessarily what God has given you. You don't always love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul. You don't always love your neighbor as yourself. Like Abraham, sometimes, you place your trust in yourself and not in God and his promises.

Just like Abraham, God has promised you to be in relationship with you. To provide for you. To forgive you when you repent and confess. To be faithful even when you are not. God graciously gives you what you do not deserve at the expense of Jesus who laid down His life to redeem you. Jesus died so that you will not die eternally. This is truly God's gift to you and to everyone one around you, just as faith was given to Abraham. Abraham relied on God's promises, as yet unseen. Abraham trusted God's promise to send a savior. And God sent Jesus who died for you. For your sins. To graciously mark your sin debt "paid". Just as God was faithful to Abraham, so God is faithful with you, calling you to faith, redeeming you from sin, and promising you eternal life in His kingdom which has no end. Amen.

Votum

- P** The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
C Amen.

Stand

Offertory

LSB 192

- C** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
 Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

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

For repentance, that the Lord who both strikes down and heals would revive us and raise us up to live before Him, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For pastors and all who teach the Word of God, that the ears of many would be opened to hear and acknowledge Him in His Word and to live in His steadfast love, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who work this weekend to prepare for our Synod's convention, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For parents, that our Father in heaven would strengthen them to train their children diligently, defend them from discouragement and apathy, and convince them that He is able to do what He has promised, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For peace among the nations, that our Lord, who calls everything into existence and governs it for good, would guide those in authority to reflect His order and purpose in their work, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For healing of body and strength of faith, that God would help the suffering [*including _____*] and restore them according to His gracious will, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For faith, that our Father would strengthen us like Abraham to trust His promises in Christ despite our weaknesses and troubles, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That Christ, who ate with tax collectors and sinners, would prepare our hearts now to receive His body and blood in repentance and faith, and so depart in righteousness and peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For His kindness to Abraham, Sarah and all the saints who have received Christ's eternal promises, let us give thanks to the Lord; and that He would preserve us in faith and righteousness to glorify Him now and forever, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Hear us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

LSB 194

- P** The Lord be with you.
C **And with thy spirit.**
P Lift up your hearts.
C **We lift them up unto the Lord.**
P Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.
C **It is meet and right so to do.**

Proper Preface (Full)

- P** It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

LSB 195

- C** **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;**
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

Lord's Prayer

LSB 196

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

The Words of Our Lord

LSB 197

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
 In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

LSB 197

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C **Amen.**

Agnus Dei

LSB 198

- C** **O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.**
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace.
Amen.

Sit

Distribution

555 Salvation unto Us Has Come

- 1 Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer.
- 2 What God did in His Law demand
And none to Him could render
Caused wrath and woe on ev'ry hand
For man, the vile offender.
Our flesh has not those pure desires
The spirit of the Law requires,
And lost is our condition.
- 3 It was a false, misleading dream
That God His Law had given
That sinners could themselves redeem
And by their works gain heaven.
The Law is but a mirror bright
To bring the inbred sin to light
That lurks within our nature.
- 4 From sin our flesh could not abstain,
Sin held its sway unceasing;
The task was useless and in vain,
Our guilt was e'er increasing.
None can remove sin's poisoned dart
Or purify our guileful heart—
So deep is our corruption.
- 5 Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and has God's anger stilled,
Our human nature sharing.
He has for us the Law obeyed
And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
Which over us impended.

Text: Public domain

The Dismissal

LSB 199

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ☩ in peace.
- C** Amen.

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199

- C** Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Thanksgiving

LSB 200

- A** O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

- 6 Since Christ has full atonement made
And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad
And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
Your death is now my life indeed,
For You have paid my ransom.
- 7 Let me not doubt, but truly see
Your Word cannot be broken;
Your call rings out, "Come unto Me!"
No falsehood have You spoken.
Baptized into Your precious name,
My faith cannot be put to shame,
And I shall never perish.
- 8 The Law reveals the guilt of sin
And makes us conscience-stricken;
But then the Gospel enters in
The sinful soul to quicken.
Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live;
The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.
- 9 Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone
And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known,
With love and hope increasing.
For faith alone can justify;
Works serve our neighbor and supply
The proof that faith is living.
- △ 10 All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace;
All glory to His merit.
O triune God in heav'n above,
You have revealed Your saving love;
Your blessed name we hallow.

Text: Paul Speratus, 1484-1551; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.

C and His mercy endureth forever.

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Salutation

LSB 201

P The Lord be with you.

C And with thy spirit.

Benedicamus

LSB 202

A Bless we the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 202

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen, amen, amen.

803 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

- 1 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.
- 2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,

Text: Henry Van Dyke, 1852–1933, alt.

Text: Public domain

- Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.
△ 3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Fountainhead of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit!
Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), 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.