

Confession and Absolution

644 The Church's One Foundation

sts. 1–5

- 1 The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
- 2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation:
One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With ev'ry grace endued.
- 3 Though with a scornful wonder
The world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.
- 4 Through toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.
- 5 Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessed heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900, alt.

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

- 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.

*Kneel/Stand***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.**

*Stand***Service of the Word****Introit***Psalm 30:1–5; antiphon: Psalm 149:1*

- P** Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!
C **I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me.**
P O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
C **O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.**
P Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.
C **For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**
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 Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!

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.

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; 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

First Reading

Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60

¹Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ²And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. . . .

²And Stephen said:

"Brothers and fathers, hear me. . . .

⁵¹You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵²Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

⁵⁴Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a

young man named Saul. ⁵⁹And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

1 Peter 2:2–10

²Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation—³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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

John 14:1–14

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fourteenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹Jesus 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’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in

me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹²“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. ¹³Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

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

722 Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

- 1 Lord, take my hand and lead me
Upon life's way;
Direct, protect, and feed me
From day to day.
Without Your grace and favor
I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior,
And lead the way.
- 2 Lord, when the tempest rages,
I need not fear,
For You, the Rock of Ages,
Are always near.
Close by Your side abiding,
I fear no foe,
For when Your hand is guiding,
In peace I go.
- 3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen
And night has come,
I know that You will strengthen
My steps toward home.
Then nothing can impede me,
O blessed Friend;

So take my hand and lead me
Unto the end.

Text: Julie von Hausmann, 1825–1901; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt.

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Sermon

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

Have you ever thought to yourself “what have I gotten myself into”? The negative possibilities are endless. It could be a wrong turn, leading you somewhere sketchy, somewhere you wouldn’t otherwise go. It could be not wanting to say no. Everything starts off well but goes south quickly, as you feared. It could be buying a car or a house or what have you that has one problem after another. But there can be positive possibilities as well. Perhaps you hate to leave home but find yourself having a great time once you do. Or maybe you weren’t 100% sure about a purchase or a commitment and things worked out even better than you hoped.

Today’s Epistle tells us what we have gotten into. Better yet, we have been called into. When you were born, what choices did you have? Did you get to choose which parents you got? Did you get to choose your gender or your race? Of course not. God had a plan for you as Jeremiah wrote (29:11) “¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare^[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Hear the words of Psalm 139:13-16 “¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.^[a] Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” God still has a plan for you. God sent the Holy Spirit to work faith in your heart and to call you to the waters of Baptism to be His own dear child. In the waters of Baptism, your old Adam was drowned, put to death, and a new spiritual you was born. A spiritual baby who needs spiritual milk, just as a newborn baby needs her mother’s milk. As a baby grows, more solid food is introduced. More independence is learned. More freedom is granted as the child grows and becomes an adult. Yet, every parent knows that they are a heartbeat away from heartbreak. Wise parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles lift up their children in prayer daily, asking God to protect their children from evil and the temptations of this world. Yet, too often, as parents, we end up asking our children and grand children “what have you gotten yourself into?”

While you didn’t have a choice as to which family you were born into, your family nurtured and shaped you into the person you are today. Family gives us heritage. Family gives us identity. Our early years to shape our life. Often, families create those “what have I gotten myself into” moments. The sins of the father continue to the third or fourth generation. Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we still end up making the mistakes that our parents did. And we watch our adult children make the same mistakes. When the grandkids got to be 18, we described a choice that they needed to make. They could choose to be just like their parents or they could choose something different, something better, for themselves. My family’s heritage is to have a hair-trigger temper. But that is not what I chose for myself and for my family.

What has God gotten you into? God chose you to be His own dear child. And that makes you special. Hear again the words of 1 Peter 2:9-10 “⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” While you are not a descendent of Abraham, you are a member of God’s family. Your salvation is assured. You have gone from being an enemy of God, born sinful and unclean, to being a child of God for whom Jesus died on the cross reconciling you to God. By yourself, by myself, we are nothing special. But when God chooses you, you are someone special. We are part of God’s royal family. We are part of a holy nation, a people chosen by God. Yet our sinful nature clings to us, drawing us away from God and back into the darkness of our life before God. Psalm 145:8 says it well “The Lord is gracious and

merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” And so, when we ask ourselves “what have I gotten myself into”, we cling to God’s promises of grace and mercy, repent and confess our sins knowing that He will forgive our sins.

You are a part of God’s Church, God’s Temple here on earth. Not a physical building like the Temple of Jerusalem that was destroyed completely by the Romans in 70 AD, making sacrifices for sins impossible. Sacrifices for sin are no longer needed. Instead, God sent Jesus to pay the ultimate price, a price that all the sheep in the world can’t begin to pay for your sins. Jesus took your sins to the cross and paid your debt in full. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus reconciled you to the Father. And in response, you are a living stone who makes up God’s Church in the world. And as God’s Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you grasp the promises of God through Jesus Christ. You cling to the promises of God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit works faith in your heart which cling to the promises of God. And we have God’s promise, especially the end of verse 6 “and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

When you find yourself asking “what have I gotten myself into”, know that God is always beside you, seeing you through those challenging times. Know that you deserve only temporal and eternal punishment for your sins of not putting God first in your life. For not loving God and neighbor more than yourself. For coveting and trying to take what you have not been given, be that relationships, possessions, or reputation. For being caught up in worldly desires. For not being focused on God and being rooted in His Word.

God has gotten you into situations where you are to be a faithful witness. God brings you into situations to trust His provision. God brings you into situations to share your faith with those around us, family, friends, and total strangers. You serve a gracious and loving God whose mercies are new every morning. God has chosen you to be His own dear son or daughter. God has made you part of His family. God sets you apart to serve Him. God wants what is truly best for you. God calls you to set sin aside and be His hands and feet to shine His light into this sin darkened world. God calls you to be with Him for all eternity because Jesus died for your sins. We await the last day when you will be made imperishable and immortal and will reign with God for all eternity. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

Stand

Prayer of the Church

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

For all His adopted children in Christ, that they would long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the royal priesthood of believers, that they would offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving acceptable to God, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all pastors and church workers and those preparing for church-work vocations, that we may be supplied with faithful leaders and servants of His Word, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the households of God’s people, that begotten in Holy Baptism, we may grow in His grace and share together in His forgiveness and life, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For good government; for Joseph, our president; the Congress of the United States; JB our governor; and all civil servants, that they may honor the holy God, establishing order and justice, encouraging virtue, and protecting all life, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, the sorrowing, the anxious, the fearful, the homebound, the homeless, the dying and all who have requested our prayers, *[including _____,]* that for the sake of Christ’s restoring cross, God would grant them healing, comfort and entrance into His heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For faith and love in imitation of Stephen, the Church’s first martyr, that we may speak Christ’s truth with boldness, forgive those who persecute us and fall asleep in Jesus, 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.**

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.**

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.

739 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

- 1 Precious Lord, take my hand,
 Lead me on, let me stand;
 I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
 Through the storm, through the night,
 Lead me on to the light.
 Take my hand, precious Lord; lead me home.
- 2 When my way grows drear,
 Precious Lord, linger near,
 When my life is almost gone,
 Hear my cry, hear my call;
 Hold my hand lest I fall.
 Take my hand, precious Lord; lead me home.
- 3 When the darkness appears
 And the night draws near
 And the day is almost gone,
 At the river I stand;

Guide my feet, hold my hand,
Take my hand, precious Lord; lead me home.

Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993

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