

Confession and Absolution

566 By Grace I'm Saved

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| <p>1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
No! Then this word must true remain:
By grace you too will life obtain.</p> <p>2 By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;
Our works and conduct have no worth.
God in His love sent our Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;
His death did for our sins atone,
And we are saved by grace alone.</p> <p>3 By grace God's Son, our only Savior,
Came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of your own merit
That Jesus died your soul to win?
No, it was grace, and grace alone,
That brought Him from His heav'nly throne.</p> | <p>4 By grace! This ground of faith is certain;
As long as God is true, it stands.
What saints have penned by inspiration,
What in His Word our God commands,
Our faith in what our God has done
Depends on grace—grace through His Son.</p> <p>5 By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation's furnace tried,
By grace, in spite of fear and trouble,
The Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure?</p> <p>6 By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;
For though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown
Since I am saved by grace alone.</p> |
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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 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.

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 118:22–24; antiphon: v. 1

- P** Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
C for his steadfast love endures forever!
P The stone that the builders rejected
C has become the cornerstone.
P This is the LORD's doing;
C it is marvelous in our eyes.
P This is the day that the LORD has made;
C let us rejoice and be glad in it.
P Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
C **as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
P Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
C for his steadfast love endures forever!

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.**

Salutation and Collect of the Day

- P** The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Let us pray.
 Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; 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 5:1–7

- ¹Let me sing for my beloved
 my love song concerning his vineyard:
 My beloved had a vineyard
 on a very fertile hill.
²He dug it and cleared it of stones,
 and planted it with choice vines;
 he built a watchtower in the midst of it,

- and hewed out a wine vat in it;
 and he looked for it to yield grapes,
 but it yielded wild grapes.
³And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
 and men of Judah,
 judge between me and my vineyard.
⁴What more was there to do for my

vineyard,
 that I have not done in it?
 When I looked for it to yield grapes,
 why did it yield wild grapes?
⁵And now I will tell you
 what I will do to my vineyard.
 I will remove its hedge,
 and it shall be devoured;
 I will break down its wall,
 and it shall be trampled down.
⁶I will make it a waste;
 it shall not be pruned or hoed,

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Philippians 3:4b–14

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse

LSB 205

C Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

C Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 21:33–46

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

C Glory to You, O Lord.

³³[Jesus said:] “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ ³⁹And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?”

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

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

544 O Love, How Deep

1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals’ sake!
2 He sent no angel to our race,
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame,
And to this world Himself He came.
3 For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptation sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.
4 For us He prayed; for us He taught;
For us His daily works He wrought,

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By words and signs and actions thus
Still seeking not Himself but us.
5 For us by wickedness betrayed,
For us, in crown of thorns arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death;
For us He gave His dying breath.
6 For us He rose from death again;
For us He went on high to reign;
For us He sent His Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.
△ 7 All glory to our Lord and God
For love so deep, so high, so broad;
The Trinity whom we adore
Forever and forevermore.

Sermon

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

What fruit comes to mind when I mention Georgia? Peaches, of course. How about Florida? Oranges. How about Washington? Apples. Just as states are known for the fruit that its people produce, so too are we kingdom people are known for the fruit we produce. Just as peach trees produce peaches, orange trees produce oranges, and apple trees produce apples, so too Kingdom people produce kingdom fruit.

This morning's Gospel is set in Holy Week. Jesus has triumphantly entered Jerusalem, has overturned the money changers tables, returned the next day and has been questioned about his authority by the chief priests and elders. We omitted the parable of the two sons in which one son agrees to go and then doesn't and the other son refuses to go and does, pointing to the importance of repentance and ultimately following God's Will.

This morning's Gospel reading is the parable of Tenants. Vineyard parables are about God's chosen people, the people of Israel. The master establishes a vineyard and hires tenants to work the vineyard. The tenants agree to produce a portion of the fruit for the owner and a portion for themselves. When the fruit comes, the tenants break the agreement. The patient master, much more patient and merciful than a master would be, sends servants twice and finally his son to claim the fruit only to have the servants and his son killed. Finally, the master comes and evicts the tenants and leases to other tenants who will yield fruit. The master has every reason to expect fruit from the vineyard, just as God has every reason to expect kingdom fruit from us, those he has called to live in His Kingdom, those for whom God provides forgiveness, life and salvation, everything needed for this life and for eternity.

Jesus's condemnation of those in the kingdom, the chief priests and religious leaders, not bearing fruit is very clear. Jesus says so in no uncertain terms, *Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits* (Matthew 21:43). These words of rejection spoken to those who denied Jesus also carry special emphasis for those being given the kingdom of God. The emphasis of His message is just as strong to the new tenants. Simply stated, *The kingdom of God will be ... given to a people producing its fruits.* Said differently, Kingdom people produce kingdom fruit."

Through Word and Sacrament, by God's grace in Christ Jesus, we are kingdom people, a gift we do not deserve. Without God's grace and mercy, we were enemies of God unable to enter God's Kingdom. Only God could act to reconcile us to Himself. Paul tells the Romans "*While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son* (Romans 5:10a). Through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus, we are reconciled to God. In the waters of Baptism, our sins are washed away and faith is given.

By faith, then, we believe in Jesus as the Son of God. By faith, then, we are tenants of God's kingdom. By faith, then, we bear fruit for the kingdom. Paul also tells the Romans "*Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God* (Romans 7:4).

Let there be no doubt. To be kingdom people is a gift. The words of Jesus are clear. The kingdom of God is "given." At the same time, let it be equally understood. Just like the tenants in the parable, we are expected to bear fruit. And just like the tenants, the master will *let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give Him the fruits in their seasons* (Matthew 21:41b). God expects kingdom fruit from His kingdom people. The message of John the Baptist was equally clear, *Bear fruit in keeping with repentance* (Matthew 3:8). And like the tenants, God provides all that we need to bear fruit. The Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel and enlightens us with His gifts. (ref. *Luther's Small Catechism*, Meaning of the Third Article of The Creed.). The same Holy Spirit that brought us to faith and sustains our faith also produces kingdom fruit in us and through us. God doesn't ask us to do things that we can't do. God equips us to bear fruit. God asks us to do things that we can do. The Holy Spirit prepares us and those around us for our witness. The Holy Spirit keeps us connected to Jesus, our lifeline for bearing fruit. Jesus said, "*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit ... I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit*" (John 15:5a, 16b). We bear fruit because we are connected to Jesus and so we *walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work* (Colossians 1:10). But, as Jesus declared, *Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more* (Luke 12:48).

God has been abundantly generous to us, His kingdom people. We lack nothing for the work of His kingdom. Yet, we all too often find ourselves making excuses instead of producing fruit. Sometimes, like the tenants, we believe that what we possess is ours! But, the psalmist reminds us, *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof* (Psalm 24:1).

We have the warning of what happens to those who do not respond to His generosity, those who reject His Word and His Son, and those who do not produce fruit. The kingdom will be taken away. But just like the tenants, the Master is patient and merciful. John writes “⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). The Holy Spirit brings us to turn from our sins, to repent of not bearing Kingdom fruit. Therefore, with repentant hearts and forgiven lives, we do well to heed the words of Colossians 3:17: *Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

For those to whom the kingdom has been given, it is fruit producing season. This is what kingdom people do. By God’s grace, this is what the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) does. As we say the LWML pledge in a few moments, listen for the pledge’s emphasis on fruit. Pay attention to the simple yet significant work of bearing fruit. Willing service. Voices to sing His praise. Lips to proclaim His redeeming love. Mites to extend His Kingdom.

From churches to communities to the world, these Lutheran Women in Mission are well known for gathering mites for mission grants in their home districts and global work abroad. Their hands-on labors expand from congregation to community to the world. The LWML is a blessing to many. “Kingdom people produce kingdom fruit” fits well the description of their purpose and mission.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “*Every healthy tree bears good fruit*” (Matthew 7:17). As followers of Jesus, God makes us healthy in Christ. We are in the right state, namely His kingdom. We are in the right season, the fruit-producing season. So, Kingdom People, “Produce Kingdom Fruit!” Bear forth the fruits of repentance, faith, and works of faith. Go, make disciples. May the kingdom of God be recognized by our fruit! To God alone be the glory!

And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). Amen.

Stand

LWML Pledge (© 1955 LWML authored by Rev. Harry Fricke)

☐ In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His Kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

Merciful Lord, You have planted us as Your own vineyard, that we might bear good fruit for Your glory. Grant to us grace, that we may be faithful and show forth in our lives the good works that glorify You and serve Your purpose. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Father, embolden us by Your Spirit, that we may give witness to Your mighty acts. Bless the missionaries who bring the Gospel to people who have not heard, and raise up faithful pastors who will nurture the congregations in their care with Your Word and Sacraments. Give us ears willing to hear, minds willing to be instructed and hearts willing to trust You in all things. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Lord, rescue us from all enemies of Your Church, and bless us with church leaders whose voices will not waver in the face of threat. Bless Pastor Harrison, president of the Synod; Pastor Scharr, our district president; Pastor Eickhoff, our circuit visitor; and *Pastor Nehring* our pastor(s). Inspire men and women to go into church-work vocations, and bless those preparing for church work. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty Lord, give to the nations both the desire for and the blessing of peace. Thwart the actions of terrorists and those who would oppress with the power of fear. Bless Donald, our president; JB our governor;

and all who pass, enforce and judge our laws. Spare us from disease and fear. Deliver the poor from want, and provide jobs and worthy employment for all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Everlasting Father, guide husbands and wives to love and forgive each other and strengthen them in their life together. Bless the homes in which Your people dwell. Help parents to be faithful examples for their children, and give room in their hearts and homes so that orphans may know the joy of a family of their own. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of love, deliver the sick from their illnesses, give relief to the suffering, help the troubled to know peace of mind, and be with the grieving and those in their final days. Guide all health care professionals to serve those in need, and give patience to those who must bear with their infirmities, disabilities and infertility. Hear us especially for _____. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, Give to us unity of faith and harmony in our life together. Bring us at last together with the saints who have gone before us, that we may attain everlasting life and dwell in Your presence forever. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, give us a willing spirit, that we may serve You with all that we have and all that we are. Help us to be faithful and fruitful in the godly use of Your resources and gifts, that we may use them in accord with Your will and for Your glory. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed Lord, keep us from resentful hearts that would begrudge Your mercy or live selfishly for ourselves and teach us to live for You the life that You have given us, treasuring in our hearts all that is good and wise and seeking after these things. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, Bless all the ladies of the LWML, especially those here at Trinity, those serving at the district and synod levels. Prosper their mission and ministry so that Your will is done in to the praise and glory of your Holy Name. Lord, In your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

Hear us, O Lord, and give answer to the prayers of Your people prayed in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, whom with the Father and the Spirit, You are one God and one Lord, forevermore. **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.

Closing 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.

Serve the Lord with gladness! to the tune of 662-Onward Christian Soldiers

Text: Prof. Ernest Lewerenz

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. “Serve the Lord with gladness!”
It is He alone
Who redeemed us sinners,
Guides us as His own
To enjoy the blessings
Of His love and grace,
Will at last in glory
Meet us face to face.
Onward, then, for Jesus!
Let this be our aim:
“Serve the Lord with gladness!”
Glorify His name.</p> <p>2. “Serve the Lord with gladness!”
He gave us command
To proclaim His Gospel
Now in every land
So that fellow sinners
May, like us, be blest.</p> | <p>Leading them to Jesus,
We can serve Him best.
Onward, then, for Jesus!
Let this be our aim:
“Serve the Lord with gladness!”
Glorify His name.</p> <p>3. “Serve the Lord with gladness!”
There’s no greater joy
Than to serve the Master,
Work in His employ.
As we build His kingdom
Angels, too, rejoice
Over every sinner
Brought to hear His voice.
Onward, then, for Jesus!
Let this be our aim:
“Serve the Lord with gladness!”
Glorify His name!</p> |
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