

Confession and Absolution

526 You Are the Way; through You Alone

- 1 You are the way; through You alone
Can we the Father find;
In You, O Christ, has God revealed
His heart and will and mind.
- 2 You are the truth; Your Word alone
True wisdom can impart;
You only can inform the mind
And purify the heart.
- 3 You are the life; the empty tomb
Proclaims Your conqu'ring arm,
And those who put their trust in You
Not death nor hell shall harm.
- 4 You are the way, the truth, the life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win
Whose joys eternal flow.

Text: George W. Doane, 1799–1859, alt.

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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 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 119:9–16; antiphon: v. 12*

- P** Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!
C **How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.**
P With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!
C **I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.**
P Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!
C **With my lips I declare all the just decrees of your mouth.**
P In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.
C **I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.**
P I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.
P Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!

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.
O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; 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 58:3–9a*

- ³“Why have we fasted, and you see it not?
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?”
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,
and oppress all your workers.
⁴Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with a wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day
 will not make your voice to be heard on high.
⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
 a day for a person to humble himself?
 Is it to bow down his head like a reed,
 and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
 Will you call this a fast,
 and a day acceptable to the LORD?
⁶“Is not this the fast that I choose:
 to loose the bonds of wickedness,
 to undo the straps of the yoke,
 to let the oppressed go free,
 and to break every yoke?
⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
 and bring the homeless poor into your house;
 when you see the naked, to cover him,
 and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
⁸Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
 and your healing shall spring up speedily;
 your righteousness shall go before you;
 the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
 you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

1 Corinthians 2:1–16

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁶Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
 nor the heart of man imagined,
 what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*Stand***Alleluia***LSB 190***C Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.****Holy Gospel***Matthew 5:13–20***P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.**C Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**¹³[Jesus said:] “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.**C Praise be to Thee, 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***578 Thy Strong Word**

1 Thy strong word did cleave the darkness;

At Thy speaking it was done.

For created light we thank Thee,

While Thine ordered seasons run.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise to Thee who light dost send!

Alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia without end!

2 Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness,
 Dark as night and deep as death,
 Broke the light of Thy salvation,
 Breathed Thine own life-breathing breath.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!

3 Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;
 Bright with Thine own holiness,
 Glorious now, we press toward glory,
 And our lives our hopes confess.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!

4 From the cross Thy wisdom shining
 Breaketh forth in conqu'ring might;
 From the cross forever beameth
 All Thy bright redeeming light.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!

5 Give us lips to sing Thy glory,
 Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,
 Throats that shout the hope that fills us,
 Mouths to speak Thy holy name.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 May the light which Thou dost send
 Fill our songs with alleluias,
 Alleluias without end!

△ 6 God the Father, light-creator,
 To Thee laud and honor be.
 To Thee, Light of Light begotten,
 Praise be sung eternally.
 Holy Spirit, light-revealer,
 Glory, glory be to Thee.
 Mortals, angels, now and ever
 Praise the holy Trinity!

Text: Martin H. Franzmann, 1907-76

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Sermon

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

So often, how we look at things changes our reaction and can change our lives. Have you ever experienced that? I had a pastor explain to me that sermons are like time bombs. Every week, another sermon is set to go off at about 10:20, give or take a few minutes. And for a while, sermons became a “I have to”, and writing sermons became more difficult. And at one point, I caught on to the difference that “I get to” instead of “I have to” makes. When “I get to”, the task becomes a privilege, a pleasure, enjoyable. I spent most of my life doing “I have to” activities. And I can and will step up and do those “have to” tasks. You’ve probably heard the saying “if you love what you do, you’ll never have to work a day in your life”. You won’t find yourself bogged down in the “I have to” but instead in the “I get to” which changes everything.

Paul continues to focus on the Christ crucified which changes everything. The Cross is the lens through which Paul viewed life. And the cross is the lens through which we look at life. The Cross changes who we are and how we look at life. The cross changes everything. Jesus changes everything. The theme for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was “It is still all about Jesus”. It is. The whole Bible is about Jesus.

The Old Testament points to, prophesies about Jesus. The Old Testament teaches us the Law, the 10 Commandments, showing us our sins, that we cannot free ourselves from our sins and we need a savior.

The Gospels are the story of Jesus’s life among us, born of the Virgin Mary. True God and true man. His sinless life. Yet, Jewish leaders, the religious authorities, those should have seen Jesus as the Messiah, but didn’t. Their view, their lens, was distorted, warped by their sinful human nature. Desiring to protect the Law, they lost sight of the Gospel. God was no longer their savior, their redeemer. Instead, they followed the Law, upheld the law, hoping God would restore the kingdom to David. Their relationship was no longer God taking the initiative, but them living by the law, a whole litany of 613 mitzvot, 613 rules, 613 “have tos”. Their relationship became about what they could do for God than what God did for them. They tried to be active in their relationship with God being passive, simply receiving the gift of salvation from God who provides all things including our salvation. Before creating, God knew we would sin, be unable to free ourselves from our sinful condition and need a savior to save us from our sins. And God knew how to solve the problem. Jesus. As Paul writes “⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6) and “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8).

The Epistles show how God changed the lives of those called to faith by the Holy Spirit. Those called to believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Those who “get to” share the Gospel, to tell others about the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Jesus took your sins to the Cross to show you God’s Glory. Yes, the Cross, “The emblem of suffering and shame,” (The Old Rugged Cross). The most brutal and humiliating method of execution for the worst of the worst. Jesus, true God and true Man, took the sins of the whole world upon Himself and died that you would not die eternally. Jesus is your priest who sacrificed Himself for you and for me. Jesus is your priest who intercedes for you at the right hand of the Father. And because Jesus is your priest, you have the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. You are freed from slavery to sin and live in God’s grace and mercy which changes your outlook, your perspective, your lens on life.

God is your creator and sustainer who defends you against all evil. You are His; He is your God. God provides all that you need for this life and for all eternity. God gives daily bread to all people, even evil people who have turned from Him to pursue other gods, be it possessions, relationships, finances, or lifestyle. God calls you to faith by the power of the Holy Spirit and calls you to the waters of Baptism to wash away your sins and made you His own dear child and heir of His Heavenly Kingdom. God takes the first step in your relationship and calls you to be His own. And God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, calls you to repent and confess your sins so that you will be forgiven by the Holy Spirit who has called you by the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctified and kept you in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. (SC Art 3) That changes everything. See life differently. See life through different lenses, through Jesus colored glasses.

Don’t be confused by the world’s lack of objective truth and morality. God created with a plan and rules and order in mind. With each of the commandments, God gives you good gifts. In the First Commandment, He give a relationship with Himself as your God. In the Sixth Commandment, God gives you sex, a gift to be shared exclusively by one man and one woman within the estate of marriage. In the Firth Commandment, God gives you life and defines life as beginning with conception and ending in a natural death. In the Seventh Commandment, God gives you good things, possessions, to steward, not own and hoard for ourselves. You get to share God’s blessings with those around you, especially those in need. You get to trust God and His plans for you. God loves you so much that He sacrificed His only begotten Son for your sins. God loves you so much that He has a plan for your life, that you may show forth His glory.

Always view your life and the world around you through the lens of the cross. Jeremiah (29:11) writes God’s words to the exiles “¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare^[b] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” You and I see only a small piece of the whole picture. God sees the big

picture, from eternity to eternity. God knows you inside and out. The Holy Spirit intercedes for you in groans too deep for words. God leads you on paths of His making, not necessarily of your making. Man's wisdom pales beside God's. Isaiah writes God's words "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Through the lens of the cross, see God at work in your life. Trust His providence, even when things are bleak. As you face health issues. As you face relationships challenges. As you face the death of loved ones. As you face challenges and disappointments, keep your eyes focused on Jesus and the cross. Through the lens of the cross, see Jesus's love for you that purchased and redeemed you. Know that God is working all things for good, to bring glory to His name and bring you to Himself for all eternity. 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.

Sit

Offering

Stand

Prayer of the Church

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

For deliverance from the oppression of sin, that God, who looses the bonds of wickedness, would cleanse our hearts to know Him as the Giver of all that is good, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church, that our merciful God would open the lips of pastors to declare His just decrees and store them up in the hearts of His people, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For children and youth of our congregation, that the Lord would guard their ways according to His Word and give them delight in His testimonies as much as in all riches, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For peaceful homes, that in the midst of a quarrelsome, self-seeking world, God would give parents wisdom and courage to teach their children His ways, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the rulers of this age whom God has placed in authority, [*especially Joseph, our president, and JB, our governor,*] that they may fulfill their duties in wisdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, [*especially _____,*] that God would cause healing to spring up speedily according to His good and gracious will, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Holy Spirit, that delivered from the spirit of this world, we may hold fast in faith to what You freely give us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

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.

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.

427 In the Cross of Christ I Glory

- 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.
- 2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo, it glows with peace and joy.
- 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more luster to the day.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide.

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