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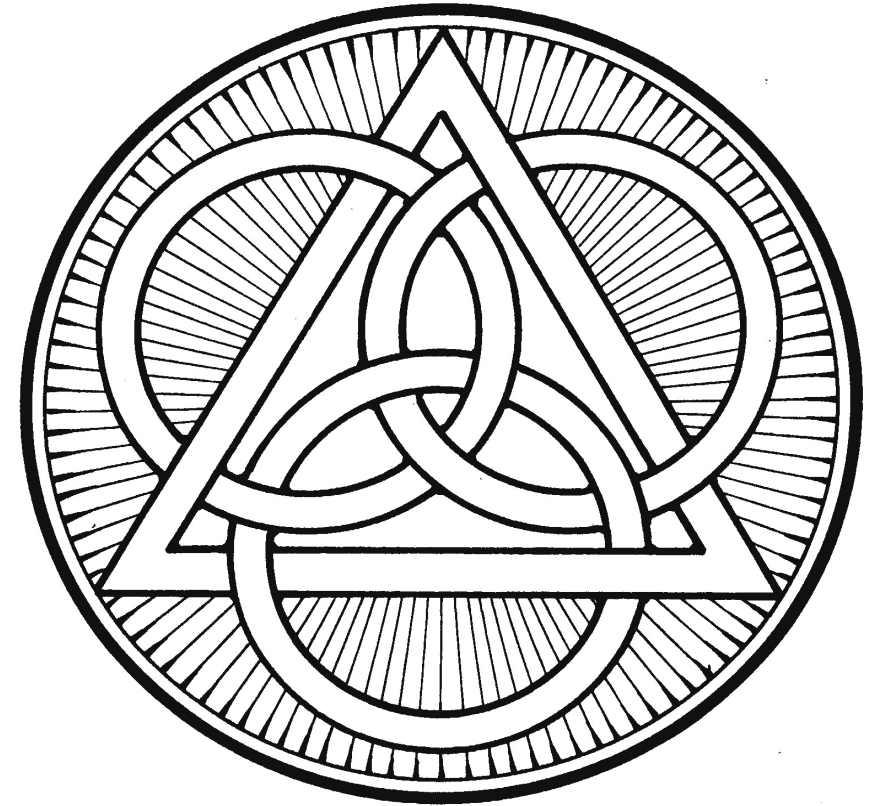
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REFLECTIONS

**Pentecost through
Saturday of the Third Week After Trinity
May 24, 2026 - June 27, 2026**



MAY 24 - JUNE 27

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Saturday of the Third Week After Trinity

JUNE 27, 2026

Today's Reading: Introit for Trinity 4 - Psalm 27:3-4a, 5; antiphon: Psalm 27:1-2
Daily Lectionary: Joshua 2:1-24; Acts 8:26-40

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light." Out of the nothingness and darkness, God spoke, and light was created. And God said it was good. John's gospel opens with "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:1, 5) The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? All this talk of light. Why? Because there is darkness in this life. There is suffering and hardship. And there are things we fear. On our own, we are left hurting and broken with no hope and no lasting help.

Sin breaks stuff. The world is broken, and so are we. The suffering we endure in this life, often as a consequence of our own sin, is persistent and heavy, and overpowering. The devil seeks to devour us. The world seeks to destroy us. Our sinful nature hates God and would call evil everything He has called good. The sinful flesh has reason to fear the darkness and shadow.

But God is not afraid of the dark. God's solution to this darkness and evil, and brokenness is not to turn His back on us. He does not leave us in the dark. He sends light and life. He sends Jesus. Jesus, the light no darkness can overcome. Jesus, who died that sinners might live eternally. Jesus, Who rose that we might also rise in Him to newness of life. There is much to fear, but you, dear child of God, need not fear. The Lord of life and death calls you His own. You have been given life and light, forgiveness and salvation, freely. You have been given the Gift of dwelling in the house of your God all the days of your life, now and in eternity. Though an army encamps against her, Jesus will not forsake His Bride, the Church, and that includes you. When you find yourself in the valley of the shadow of death, remember these words: Jesus is my light and salvation, Jesus is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus comes in joy and sorrow, shares alike out hopes and fears; Jesus comes whate'er befalls us, cheers our hearts and dries our tears; Alleluia! Alleluia! Comforts us in failing years. (LSB 353:4)

Friday of the Third Week After Trinity

JUNE 26, 2026

Today's Reading: Acts 8:1-25

Daily Lectionary: Joshua 1:1-18; Acts 8:1-25

"Now when Simon [the magician] saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 8:18-19)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Simon the magician likes a spectacle. He profited from the deeds and signs he performed. The people called him "the power of God that is called Great." It seemed, outwardly, he possessed great power. When the disciples came, preaching the Good News of Jesus, Simon the magician and many others believed and were baptized, having been amazed by signs and wonders. To magic Simon, this was power! Peter and John came to lay on hands, that the people might receive the Holy Spirit, and it was then that Simon came with money to purchase this power. Peter rebukes him harshly, warning of destruction for Simon if he does not repent. Simon believed he could buy the gifts of God with money. Simon then asks Peter to intercede with the Lord on his behalf. But the truth is clear: God and His gifts cannot be bought.

The sinful flesh and world seek power and will take it by whatever means necessary. We see this in the account of Simon the magician, but we see it in ourselves as well. We want power over others; we want control. Simon's desire to literally buy power is the most obvious depiction of our inner desire to be God and use that authority our way.

Thanks be to God, His ways are not our ways! Instead of having to pay anything to receive God, He gives Himself freely to sinners who believe. We should repent when we seek to wield the love of God as a means to our own ends. God's power cannot be bought. His love cannot be taken by force. It is only given, and this is Good News to you and me. Instead of withholding life and salvation or His own Spirit from sinners who misuse it, God, in His mercy, pours out Himself that sinners may be forgiven and the dead and dying may live. Jesus paid the price, in His death and resurrection, so we may be given life-saving grace, free of charge. Simon mistook the power of God as a tool for him to wield. He was wrong. The power of God is freely given to forgive sinners. It cannot be bought and does not need to be. It is yours, dear Christian, that you may have life in Christ now and always.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

What costly sacrifice to cover human sin! Who but Christ Jesus had the right to enter in? His blood, that sprinkled price, so we might be assured that our inheritance in light has been secured. (LSB 564:4)

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A Short Form for Daily Reflection

ADAPTED FROM LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK

Make the sign of the Holy Cross and say:

In the name of the Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Read the Psalm for the Day (A table of daily psalms can be found in Lutheran Service Book, page 304).

Read “Today’s Reading” if there is one listed.

Read the Daily Lectionary selections.

Read the Reflection for the Day.

Say the Apostles’ Creed.

Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

Pray one of these little prayers:

(In the Morning)

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

In the morning go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, such as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest.

(In the Evening)

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

If it is evening, then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.

Thursday of the Third Week After Trinity

JUNE 25, 2026

Today’s Reading: Catechism: The Lord’s Prayer - 6th Petition
Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 31:10-31; John 21:1-25

And lead us not into temptation.

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

Prayer is chiefly for comfort. It is not a way to barter with God for what we want, like a cosmic vending machine. It is a Gift our Heavenly Father gives to us to be a balm in a hurting world. When we pray the words Jesus gave us, they are meant to remind us of God’s many promises. The words, “lead us not into temptation,” are not merely a request. They are a repeating back of God’s promise, but not because He’s forgotten you. God does not need a reminder, but you and I do. Praying the same words day after day is to remind you, dear Christian, that God has already promised and granted these things. He sees you, knows you, and hears you. So pray the Lord’s Prayer, not because it is the only way to get God’s attention, but because He gave us prayer that we might cling to the promises therein, as dear children go to their dear father for comfort.

The Sixth Petition is about our ongoing struggle with sin—sin we have inherited from Adam and Eve. The truth is, we cannot evade temptation because of our sinful nature. Apart from God, we are naked and vulnerable to the assaults of the devil, the world, and our own flesh. Without the Lord, we fail each and every time. So as God’s people, we flee to Him for protection. Luther’s explanation is clear: God tempts no one. But He doesn’t simply watch us blindly stumble in the dark, either. Instead, God gives us guard and protection: Christ Jesus. Jesus was tempted just as you and I are, but He did not falter. Having kept the law perfectly, He suffered, died, and rose from the dead to impart His perfection to you. In Baptism, you were washed clean and were given robes of righteousness. So when you are tempted, you lean on Jesus and His saving work. And when you fall into temptation, you may receive the forgiveness won for you and freely given to sinners. We pray that God leads us not into temptation but rather to the great victory that is ours in Christ, our Lord, because He has already promised to do so. And there is our comfort.

In the Name † of Jesus. Amen.

Transcendent Comfort in our every need, help us neither scorn nor death to heed that we may not falter nor courage fail us when the foe shall taunt and assail us. Lord, have mercy! (LSB 768:3)

Nativity of St. John the Baptist

JUNE 24, 2026

Today's Reading: Luke 1:57-80

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 30:1-9, 18-33; John 20:19-31

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Everything John the Baptist did pointed to the Messiah. His father, Zechariah, prophesied John "would go before the Lord, to prepare His way to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins." John preached in the wilderness, calling the people to repentance. He prepared them for the Gospel. He directly pointed to Jesus as "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world" when Christ came to be baptized. John, even in his doubts, when he sent his disciples to Jesus, bore witness to Christ. Jesus tells John's disciples to tell him, "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matthew 11:5). John did not point perfectly, but he pointed to Jesus. And finally, in his martyrdom, John pointed to Christ as he preached the truth to unlistening ears. John the Baptist pointed to Christ - that's the job of a hypeman.

What's worth hyping up that much, though? Zechariah's words at his son's birth say it clearly: God visited His people and redeemed them. The Second Person of the Trinity took on human flesh (even at John's birth, Jesus was already in Mary's womb) and not only visited God's people but dwelt among them. And while He dwelt among us as Immanuel, he suffered and died that He might purchase, or redeem, us with His precious blood. This was the promise God made first to Adam and Eve in the Garden and reminded His people over and over again. The Messiah is coming. God even added that one would come to prepare the way for the Messiah to clue in the people that their Redeemer was coming soon. John gave a Baptism of water only, prefiguring the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to come. He, as a faithful way pointer, directed the hurting towards their Redeemer and Lord.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord, to do His Father's pleasure; Baptized by John, the Father's Word was given us to treasure. This heav'nly washing now shall be a cleansing from transgression and by His blood and agony release from death's oppression. A new life now awaits us. (LSB 406:1)

Pentecost

MAY 24, 2026

Today's Reading: John 14:23-31

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 21:10-35; Luke 21:20-38

"Jesus answered him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'" (John 14:23)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

"Jesus answered him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'" (John 14:23) I love Jesus. I'm sure most of you do too. Jesus says that if we love Him, we will keep His words. The word "keep" here doesn't just mean to obey; it also means to treasure or hold on to. If we love Jesus, we will love and obey His Words. That totally makes sense. If we love Jesus, we'll love the things that He tells us to love and cling tightly to them. If we love Jesus, we'll love the things that Jesus loves. If we love Jesus, we'll want to make Him happy and do the things that He wants us to do. This is all most certainly true.

So, how's that going for you? Do you always appreciate everything Jesus has said to you? Do you love Jesus' words that say you should forgive that girl at school who's always mean to you? Do you love God's plan for chastity and sexual purity the way that Jesus does? Do you always want to make Jesus happy, or are you preoccupied with making yourself happy? We all know the answers to these questions, and it's not good.

But remember, when Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to us, He promises that the Spirit will bring to our remembrance all that Jesus has said to us (John 14:26). And Jesus doesn't just preach the Law to us, He gives us the promises of the Gospel! You are washed by Jesus' blood. Your Baptism has joined you to Christ's death and resurrection. The Heavenly Father loves you and has made His home in you. Jesus will feed you with His own Body and Blood to strengthen you unto everlasting life. And all of this is given to you as a Gift, by grace through faith, apart from any merit or worthiness in you.

If we love Jesus, we will love these words! In fact, that's pretty much what it means to be a Christian! We love the Gospel, and we live in the peace that Jesus promises, with hearts untroubled by the accusations of the Law (John 14:27). At the same time, in response to the Gospel, the Holy Spirit begins to create in us a love for the other words that Jesus has spoken to us, the words of His holy law, that we might obey them to the pleasure of God.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (Collect for Pentecost)

Pentecost Monday

MAY 25, 2026

Today's Reading: John 3:16-21

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 22:1-20; Luke 22:1-23

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:17)

In the Name of ✠ Jesus. Amen.

Why did Jesus come down from heaven to dwell on the earth? Easy, right? To die for the sins of the world. The familiar words of John 3:16 tell us that. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

But don't stop there! John 3:17 expresses the same thought but in the opposite way. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved." Why did Jesus come? Because God doesn't want to condemn the world, He wants to save it!

It seems so obvious, and yet the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature are constantly trying to convince us that God is sitting in heaven like a crabby old man just waiting to punish all those who disobey Him. But that couldn't be further from the truth. "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and He wants all people "to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," (1 Timothy 2:4).

This should be some of the most comforting news we've ever heard! God wants us to be saved. God does not want to condemn you or anybody else, for that matter. I don't know about you, but when I consider my own sins, and the terrible things that I've done and the awful things I've thought, I wonder how God could possibly not condemn me. Yet Jesus reminds us that He lived, suffered, and died precisely so that I wouldn't have to be condemned.

Sadly, not everyone will receive this salvation. Many will choose to live outside of God's love and condemn themselves. But this is not what God wants. He tells us that He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live,"(Ezekiel 33:11).

There are people that I know and love who are currently choosing to live without Christ's forgiveness. I'm sure you do too. And while that makes us sad, we can rejoice knowing that God doesn't want them to be condemned. He's given Jesus to the world because He doesn't want them to be condemned. This means that God will continue to reach out to them all with His love through His Means Of Grace, His Word and Sacraments, offering forgiveness and working through the Holy Spirit to bring them to faith. Therefore, we can rest assured that God won't give up on them, just as He hasn't given up on us.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

God would not have the sinner die; His Son with saving grace is nigh; His Spirit in the Word declares How we in Christ are heaven's heirs. (LSB 571:3)

Tuesday of the Third Week After Trinity

JUNE 23, 2026

Today's Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-17 or 1 Peter 5:6-11

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 27:1-24; Prov: 28:1-29:27; John 20:1-18

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost". (1 Timothy 1:15)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

St. Paul is not looking for sympathy. When he says he is foremost or chief of sinners, he is not self-deprecating. He is not looking for Timothy to say, "Oh, Paul, no, you aren't that bad. There are worse people than you. Don't talk about yourself that way." By no means! St. Paul is not looking for sympathy. Paul is not telling Timothy he is the chief of sinners to boast in himself. In fact, Paul's claim that he is the chief of sinners says more about Jesus than it does about Paul. Paul is proclaiming the gospel. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners - even him, who persecuted Jesus and His church.

God sought to be reconciled with His fallen creation. He sent His only son, Jesus, to do the reconciling. Jesus Christ did not wait until sinners worked hard enough to save themselves. He did not wait until they proved themselves worth saving. God stepped in because we can't save ourselves. And in this, St. Paul boasts and declares it trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.

This gospel is for you as much as it was for St. Paul or Timothy or anyone else. When your conscience is burdened by the knowledge of your sinful condition, take heart. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. When all seems lost and you have failed in your vocations, take heart. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. When death draws near, and you come face to face with your own frailty, take heart. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came into the world to save you.

Jesus took on our frail human flesh to redeem our inability to fulfill God's commands. Jesus fulfilled the law of God perfectly, that we might be restored. He died and rose, that sinners might die and rise as well, in Holy Baptism. He came into the world to forgive you of your sins and to rescue you from the power of death and the devil. It is trustworthy and worthy of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, to save you.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Sin, disturb my soul no longer; I am baptized into Christ! I have comfort even stronger: Jesus' cleansing sacrifice. Should a guilty conscience seize me since my Baptism did release me in a dear forgiving flood, sprinkling me with Jesus' blood? (LSB 594:2)

Monday of the Third Week After Trinity

JUNE 22, 2026

Today's Reading: Micah 7:18-20

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 25:1-22; Prov: 26:1-28; John 19:23-42

"He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities under-foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Satan's head is crushed by the bruised heel of Christ. That is where your iniquities lie - crushed into dust under the feet of a victorious God. Rotting in the belly of a great fish in the depths of the sea - that is where your sins are. The compassion of our God would put His Son in our place. We should be dead in the grave, punished for our sins. We should be dead in the belly of a fish. But we are not. Instead, Christ takes our iniquities and sins and rids us of them, taking them upon Himself. In His death, he destroys death, and in His rising from the dead, he brings you with Him. The wages of sin is death, but you have been brought into new life. Death cannot hold Christ, and it cannot hold you. God will again have compassion on us. He takes on what we cannot carry. He defeated sin, death, and the devil. He, the God of life and light, shines forth into the darkness of sin and death and cannot be overcome. Those things that seek to crush and drown us have come undone. In Holy Baptism, water, which would kill us, unites with God's Word to make us alive. Old Adam is drowned and dies, and the New Man is dragged out of the water, leaving the wages of sin to sink to the depths of the sea.

God looks upon sinners with compassion and love. We deserve to be crushed under His feet and thrown into the sea because we are sinful by nature. But instead, our sin and iniquity, which we have never lived without (in sin did my mother conceive me), is now dust and sand, cast into the sea. God looks upon us in love. He looks upon us and sees His Son. He does not consider your sin or iniquity. He forgives you and renews you. He is steadfast and immovable. He has made you His own, and He will not forget you.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

In a wat'ry grave are buried all our sins that Jesus carried: Christ, the Ark of Life, has ferried us across death's raging flood. (LSB 597:3)

Pentecost Tuesday

MAY 26, 2026

Today's Reading: John 10:1-10

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 22:21-23:3; Luke 22:24-46

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

In the Small Catechism, Luther names the sources of temptation as the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature (Lord's Prayer, 3rd Petition). Very often (if not always), these temptations to sin come as the promise that your life will be better or more pleasing if you just give in.

"You'll have much more fun if you just disobey your parents and lie about what you're really doing." "If you skip church every weekend to play ball, you could get a scholarship and eventually end up rich and famous. Going to church won't do that for you!" "You and your girlfriend will feel so much better and grow closer together if you quit fighting your urges and give in already."

But Jesus reminds us that these are always empty promises. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." The devil, the world, and our sinful natures are nothing more than thieves and robbers, which are opposed to God's will and design for our lives. Instead of making our lives better or more pleasurable, sin will always leave us in pain and misery and drive us away from God.

The truly good life isn't found outside of God's word, but in it! "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly," Jesus promised. (John 10:10). Jesus came, taking on our human likeness, to suffer under the law and die as the payment for our sins so that He could grant us life; life offered in His Word and Sacrament and received by faith. That is true life - the good and blessed life.

This is not a promise that we'll get everything we want; an easy life full of riches and fame with little pain or suffering. Remember, the things that our sinful flesh desires are likely to turn us away from God. The abundant life that Jesus promises is a life lived in communion with God. We live with the confidence that our sins are forgiven and that God loves us in Christ. We live with the hope that God cares for us and provides for all our needs of body and soul. We live with the promise that not even death will separate us from the love of Christ. And we live with eyes opened to see the emptiness in the promises of the thieves and robbers, and the goodness of God's will for our lives as expressed in His Commandments.

The devil, the world, and our sinful nature will try to convince us that our life in Christ is dull and dreary and that we must run away from God and His Word to find goodness and pleasure. But we know that our life in Christ is an abundant life, full of contentment, peace, and joy.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

I am content! My Jesus is my light, My radiant sun of grace. His cheering rays beam blessings forth for all, Sweet comfort, hope, and peace. (LSB 468: 3)

Wednesday of the Week of Pentecost

MAY 27, 2026

Today's Reading: Genesis 11:1-9

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 23:4-28; Luke 22:47-71

"Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth." (Genesis 11:9)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

When Noah and his family left the ark, God sent them forth with the blessing He had first given to Adam and Eve; "And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it," (Genesis 9:7). Maybe it was just sinful pride or perhaps it was out of fear that God would go back on His promise and send another flood upon the earth, Noah's descendants willfully disobeyed God's directions. Instead of multiplying on the earth, 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). In response to this sinfulness, God came down and confused their language, and He dispersed them across the earth. This event not only explains the origins of the different races and languages on the earth, it also teaches us an important lesson about the nature of sin. Sin always causes division. Sin divides us from God, and it divides us from one another.

Whether in sinful pride or because we fail to trust God as we should, every sin we commit is a crime against God or our neighbors, or both. We hurt ourselves and we hurt others. Our relationship with God is strained, and our earthly relationships are also hampered. Many of you have probably seen that sin has the power to destroy even the strongest bonds. Thankfully, on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit shows us that there is something even stronger than sin, with the power to heal broken relationships and bring us back together. That, of course, is the blood of Jesus, which covers all our sins. When the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles that day, He gave them the ability to preach the Gospel in different languages, so that each person might hear "in our own tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11). With that, the curse of Babel began to unravel. Today, as the Holy Spirit comes to us through God's Means Of Grace, He cleanses us in the blood of Jesus and reconciles us to God. That means that our relationship with God has been restored. God no longer regards us as enemies, but as His own beloved children (Romans 5:10, Ephesians 2:12-13). And with that, God also begins to reconcile us to each other. In forgiving our sins, the Holy Spirit is both teaching and empowering us to forgive others as we have been forgiven by God (Matthew 6:12, Colossians 3:13), so that we might live as God's children, united and at peace with those around us.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

O God, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, You reconciled the world to Yourself and have given to Your Church the ministry of reconciliation. Strengthened by Your forgiveness, grant that Your whole Church may live in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday After Trinity

JUNE 21, 2026

Today's Reading: Luke 15:1-10 or Luke 15:11-32

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 24:1-22; John 19:1-22

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

You would expect a father to be furious with his son. First, this son asks for his inheritance while his father is still living - implying that his father is better to him dead than alive. Then, he wastes all of his father's possessions and has the audacity to come home to his father. It's worth noting that the son wants to beg to be his father's servant rather than demanding his place as a son, but it is still insulting. You would expect the father to be angry with his son. But this is a parable told by Christ Jesus, and so it should be no surprise that things go differently than expected.

Notice what has happened. "While he was still a long way off," —the father kept an eye out for his son, waiting for him to return as if he knew the man would come back. The father looks for his son. We might think he'd be waiting to give his son a piece of his mind for trashing the good things he gave him. That's what we expect. But when the father sees his son, he feels compassion for him, not anger. He looks upon this starving, hurting son with mercy and love. And then the father runs to him. He does not wait for the wayward son to reach the house but meets him with love, hence the hugging and kissing. That's not the expectation. No self-respecting landowner would run, especially to a disgraceful son. But to the father, this is a joyous reunion and one of celebration. The father sends for fine clothes and a feast and for merriment because his dead son is alive again; he was lost and now is found.

Our Lord tells a parable full of unexpected actions to show how God is. God sees a sinful world full of sinners who take His good gifts and abuse them. He sees a world so broken it would kill His Son. But even while we were far off, not even seeking Him, He ran to us and sent for fine clothes, reinstating us as His children. You are made a son of the Father because He has compassion on you. You are clothed with righteousness won by Christ Jesus on the cross. In your Baptism, you were made His child. You were dead in your sins, and He has made you alive.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we all like sheep have gone astray and have allowed ourselves to be led from the right path by Satan and our sinful flesh. We implore You, graciously forgive us our sins for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Enliven our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that we may abide in Your Word in true repentance and steadfast faith, and so continue in Your Church to the end and obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 20, 2026

Today's Reading: Introit for Trinity 3 - Psalm 25:1-2a, 5b, 15, 20; antiphon: Psalm 25:16, 18

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 22:22-23:12; John 18:15-40

"Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins." (Psalm 25:16, 18)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Loneliness hurts. Suffering hurts. Having troubles hurts. Knowing I've sinned hurts. Being sinned against hurts. There is a lot of hurt in this broken world. Life can often hurt.

It is such a gift, then, to realize that God gives us the psalms to pray, sing, and meditate upon. In today's verses, we have the words we need to cry out to God. We get to admit that we are alone and bothered. We get to be honest about what is hurting us and causing us pain. We can share all that burdens us; we can call out when we feel troubled and are in need of forgiveness. We can say that we need help.

It is amazing to realize that just as God gives us these words to pray and use, He also promises to hear us when we talk to Him. In fact, He longs to hear our hurts and cares. He loves us and desires for us to bring all that we carry to Him. In fact, He would not have us carry our sins and our burdens at all. He gives them to His Son, our Savior Jesus. And Jesus willingly carries them all to the cross, where He pays for them with His life. He defeats all that is broken by defeating death. He pays the price for our sin and reconciles us to the Father. We died and rose with Jesus and are now mercied, loved, and forgiven. We pray with confidence and hope. We are not alone.

Every day, we live under the weight of sin. Luther's Small Catechism teaches us that our Old Adam must DAILY be drowned and die; we continue to struggle with sin and sadness. And yet, the grace that we have from our loving and merciful Heavenly Father is new every morning. We remember our Baptism and cling to the promises that we have in Jesus. We have an attentive, loving, and compassionate God. He hears our prayers and fulfills His promises. We go to the Divine Service and our hope is renewed; we hear our sins forgiven, we hear of the promises and works of God, we eat Jesus' Body and Blood. We are given good Gifts from our loving, Heavenly Father, who hears our prayers and promises to never leave us nor forsake us.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Sing praise to God, the highest good, The author of creation, The God of love who understood Our need for His salvation. With healing balm our souls He fills And ev'ry faithful murmur stills: To God all praise and glory! (LSB 819:1)

Thursday of the Week of Pentecost

MAY 28, 2026

Today's Reading: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer - 2nd Petition

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 24:1-25; Luke 23:1-25

"What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also." (Small Catechism- The Lord's Prayer- Second Petition)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

There are really only two kingdoms in the world. One is the kingdom of Satan, whom Jesus calls the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31). The other is the Kingdom of God, the rightful ruler of all creation. The devil's kingdom is defined by pride, selfishness, anger, jealousy, hatred, lust, and every other evil you can think of. God's kingdom is defined by love, righteousness, holiness, goodness, patience, forgiveness, and all that is beautiful. To be in the devil's kingdom is to be in a kingdom of misery and pain, leading to everlasting death with even more misery and pain. To be in God's kingdom is to know true peace, joy, freedom, and blessedness, leading to everlasting life with pleasures beyond description. As our baptismal liturgy reminds us, "we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own," (LSB, pg. 268). We are born needing to be rescued from the devil's kingdom and brought safely into God's kingdom. And, since our sinful nature is always fighting against God and urging us back into Satan's kingdom, we need God's help to keep us in His Kingdom forevermore. That's what we're praying for in the 2nd Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

We are not praying that God would establish His kingdom; Jesus has already taken care of that. By living a perfectly holy life in the flesh and offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, Jesus has disarmed the devil, broken down the doors of his phony kingdom, and established His own holy Kingdom. As Luther said, "the Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself." What we are asking is that God would bring us into His Kingdom that He has established by the blood of Christ. We pray that He would rescue us from the clutches of the devil and make us His children, with all the benefits and blessings thereof. But how does God bring us into His kingdom and make us His children? Through faith in Christ. And how does He create this faith in us? It's just as Paul said, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). The Holy Spirit creates faith by coming to us in God's Word. So we pray that God would continue to send us His Holy Spirit and help us believe His word, so that we would be kept safely in His Kingdom, now and forever. And, since Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and desires that each person come into His kingdom, we pray this Petition not just for ourselves, but for every one of our neighbors.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Draw us to Thee Unceasingly, Into Thy kingdom take us; Let us fore'er Thy glory share, Thy saints and joint heirs make us. (LSB 701:5)

Friday of the Week of Pentecost

MAY 29, 2026

Today's Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 27:12-23; Luke 23:26-56

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Act 2:21)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, and they went out and began to preach the Gospel in languages that they'd never learned. That's amazing! Not just the fact that they instantaneously learned new languages, but the fact that they went out and spoke at all! Remember, these are the same guys who had locked themselves in a room because they were afraid of the Jews (Jn. 20:19). They were barely willing to be seen in public, and now they're standing in a huge crowd proclaiming that Jesus was God and that He had risen from the dead. What changed? It wasn't the ability to speak new languages that gave them this newfound courage. It was their faith in Jesus. That's what the Holy Spirit does; He creates faith in Jesus. The apostles had spent three years with Jesus. They watched Jesus do countless miracles. They listened to Him preach dozens of sermons. They even saw Him alive after He had died. They knew the facts, but none of it made any sense to them. They didn't believe it. But then the Holy Spirit came and did exactly what Jesus promised He would. He brought to their remembrance everything Jesus had said to them (John 14:26), and guided them "into all truth" (John 16:13). Their hearts and minds were opened, and they believed. Now, they all had confidence that since Jesus had risen from the dead, their sins had been washed away and everlasting life was theirs. Which meant there was nothing left to fear, not even death itself. And they were so excited about this that they immediately went out and began preaching the Gospel, because they wanted everyone else to have the same confidence they had. And that's how the Holy Spirit comes to you today. He comes through the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. When your pastor preaches to you, the Holy Spirit descends on you, just like He did with the apostles. And as He comes to you, He doesn't just teach you the facts about Jesus' life and death, He also opens your heart and mind to believe it. Now it's your tongue that is affected. No, you aren't given the ability to speak in languages you've never learned; you have been given the ability to do something even greater – call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Acts 2:21). The Holy Spirit works the same miracle in us that He worked in the Apostles. He takes sinners who "cannot by their own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord or come to Him," (SC, 3rd Art.), and He gives us new life by creating faith in our hearts. And by that faith in Jesus, we not only receive eternal salvation, we are emboldened to share this news with others, that they too might call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, And make our hearts Your place of rest; Come with Your grace and heav'nly aid, And fill the hearts which You have made. (LSB 498:1)

Friday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 19, 2026

Today's Reading: John 18:1-14

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 22:1-21; John 18:1-14

"So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?'" (John 18:11)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Whenever Peter is involved, I usually end up cringing, feeling embarrassed on his behalf, or trying to justify his choices (because I see myself in them). Here's the thing. Peter always seems to try. He walks out of the boat and onto the water to Jesus...only to look down and start to panic. He declares that Jesus is the Christ...and then suggests that Jesus shouldn't go to the cross. He's so sure that he is going to boldly claim his connection to Jesus...only to deny Jesus three times (just like Jesus foretold). And here, in this moment in the garden, he 'tries again.' He cuts off the ear. Of a servant. Yikes, Peter.

And here is where I would love to try and justify Peter's actions - all of them. 'At least he's trying.' Or 'he did his best.' Or 'he didn't get things all the way wrong... all the time.' Yeah, I don't believe these excuses either. And here's the thing - the reality is, sinners trying...usually results in failure. We sure do try our best (well, some of the time), and yet nothing works out perfectly. Life is still usually messy. And hard. And awkward. And not quite right. Yeah, now we are starting to get it...

Look at the rest of the statement that Jesus says to Peter: Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? Here's the thing. God had a plan for salvation, and it doesn't involve us trying. There is no 'cooperation' or 'partnership.' God's plan. God's work. For us.

When we 'try,' specifically in our salvation, we are always going to be wrong. In fact, the idea that we even could try is wrong. God's Word clearly teaches us that we were dead in our trespasses - dead things can't try. So, what does this mean? Are we just stuck being a bunch of awkward Peters - trying and (usually) failing?

Rest, dear redeemed one. Your salvation is perfectly complete in Jesus. God the Father poured out His wrath on Jesus, and Jesus took it. Jesus died. Jesus rose. Jesus lives. For you. There is no trying or needing to try as you look in faith to Jesus. You have been reconciled. It is a gift. It is yours in your Baptism. It is yours in Jesus' Body and Blood. So now, you do get to try - but it's for your neighbor and it isn't to earn anything. Out of the love and mercy that you receive from God, through Jesus, you try, and you love those around you. It won't be perfect on this side of glory, but it will be redeemed. Thanks be to God.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives all sins which you have done; And justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest good. (LSB 571:4)

Thursday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 18, 2026

Today's Reading: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer - 5th Petition
Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 20:5-25; Proverbs 21:1-31; John 17:1-26

*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
(The Fifth Petition, The Lord's Prayer)*

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus taught us to pray boldly. We are coming to the Father with these words "forgive us our trespasses." We aren't bartering. We aren't conjoining. We aren't suggesting that 'we'll get the tab next time.' Nope. We are begging that our sins be forgiven. We are stating it plainly: I have sins. A lot of sins. Forgive me.

It is only from the mercy of God that we can continue to live and breathe and enjoy what He has given us. Without it, we would easily succumb to the weight of shame, despair, guilt, or even arrogance that our sins would demand. When we pray this Petition, we are rightly acknowledging that we have sinned and we need something outside of ourselves to get rid of our mess.

It is such a gift, then, to know that Jesus taught us to pray this way because He knows God will hear us and answer our prayer! Jesus is our rescuer! He is the payment for our sins. He is the only one who can tell the Father: yep, that person is covered. I paid for her sins. He is one of mine, so he is one of yours.

In Baptism, your Old Adam was drowned and died; a New Man was created. You, dear saint, belong to Christ and are therefore holy before God the Father. You get to come to Him in your darkest hour and trust in Jesus' Death and Resurrection for you. You get to pray with confidence; in Jesus, your sins are forgiven, and your prayers are heard.

It is from that overflowing well - that unending grace and mercy - that we then turn to our neighbor and forgive them, too. We trust, we believe, and, in faith, we cling to the truth that our Father hears this prayer and does indeed forgive our sins. We then turn to those who have hurt us and share it with them, too. We know the power of sin, shame, and guilt - and we declare to those who are under it: there is forgiveness. Jesus paid for that sin. You are mercied. You are loved. You are forgiven - just like I am.

Pray this Petition with boldness and humility; cling to the promises that are yours in Jesus, remembering that it is through Him that you get to approach the Father and know that His Gifts are for you. And then? Share that Good News with those around you!

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

I, a sinner, come to Thee With a penitent confession. Savior, mercy show to me; Grant for all my sins remission. Let these words my soul relieve: Jesus sinners doth receive. (LSB 609:4)

Saturday of the Week of Pentecost

MAY 30, 2026

Today's Reading: Introit for Trinity - Psalm 8:1-2a, 3-5; antiphon: Liturgical Text
Daily Lectionary: Numbers 32:1-6, 16-27; Luke 24:1-27

"Blessèd be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity. Let us give glory to him because he has shown his mercy to us." (Antiphon for the Introit on Trinity Sunday)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Tomorrow, we celebrate Trinity Sunday. It's very likely that you'll confess the Athanasian Creed in church tomorrow. The Athanasian Creed describes (in not a few words!) the relationship between the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit - the Three in One and One in Three. And while it may be hard to understand how God can be three Persons in one God, we can believe it by faith, knowing that this is exactly what Jesus has revealed to us. Not only can we believe it, we must believe it. As the creed says, "whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith...And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity." There is no salvation without faith in the Trinity, because there is no God beside Him. Which also means there is no salvation apart from Him. And that's really where the rubber hits the road. We must believe and trust that God is triune, but we do not come to that faith by learning about God's omnipotence or His eternal nature, or even that He is Three in One. We come to faith through the Gospel, by hearing what God has done for us in Christ. In fact, I would argue that it is through the Gospel that we learn about the Trinity most clearly. Perhaps that's why Trinity Sunday was placed here at the end of the festival half of the Church Year. The year began with Advent and the Christmas season, in which we are reminded that the Father's love for His creation compelled Him to send His Son, the second Person of the Trinity, to become flesh and blood for us. Next came the Epiphany season in which we heard of Christ's Baptism, fasting, temptation, and Transfiguration - all things He underwent on our behalf to fulfil God's will for our salvation. Then came Lent and Easter, which focus our attention on Jesus' suffering and dying to atone for our sins, and His victorious defeat of death and the devil. Finally, we celebrated the Ascension and Pentecost - Christ's enthronement at the Right Hand of the Father, and the giving of the Holy Spirit who creates and sustains faith in us so that we can believe in Jesus and be saved. Only after learning of all these things that God has done to have us as His people can we truly see who God is. That is, we see beyond the outward characteristics of God (His omnipotence, omniscience, eternal nature, etc.) and we begin to see God's very heart. We see from the Gospel that God, the Three in One, is more than a mysterious power in the heavens, but is in fact our loving Lord, united in nature and essence as well as in our life and salvation.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, because of Your tender love toward us sinners You have given us Your Son that, believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in this faith to the end and finally come to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Holy Trinity

MAY 31, 2026

Today's Reading: John 3:1-15 (16-17)

Daily Lectionary: Numbers 35:9-30; Acts 1:1-7:60; Luke 24:28-53

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'" (John 3:5-6)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

When Jesus speaks of a second birth, Nicodemus is quite confused. And if we are honest, we can understand why. His response makes sense; after all, it's not as though someone can enter a second time into his mother's womb. But what does Jesus really mean? He explains it. He means that this second birth is different. Yes, the first birth was from the womb of the mother, but that was the birth of flesh from flesh. But is the problem that this was the birth of the human body from a human body? Not in itself. The birth of flesh from flesh, yes, occurs in the human body, but the problem isn't that body. What is it? It's the sinful flesh. It's the draw to sin. It's the guilt of our first parents. It's our agreement with that sin every time we ourselves sin. Every thought we have contrary to love. Every doubt. Every hateful inclination. Every action opposed to love of God and neighbor. All of it is this sinful flesh. And what does this sinful flesh beget? What does it give birth to? More sin. But ultimately death. As James says, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

This is where we see the need for this new life. It is the need of the new life begotten not of sinful flesh, but of the Spirit. You might know that in Greek, the language the Gospel of John was first written in, that the word for Spirit is the same as the word for wind and also for breath. So the Spirit breathes the wind of life into the sinful flesh. He brings that flesh out of death. How? Because He brings the death of Jesus, hanged on the cross for sin, to that sinful flesh, and raises it to new life in Jesus' resurrection.

And He has done this for you in the waters of Baptism. As the waters were poured over you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit gave you new birth in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Father, who lifted up His Son on the cross, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life, through the Spirit breathed new birth into you that you would have life as a child of God. That blessed truth guard and keep you in the newness of life in Him to the eternal Kingdom of Jesus. Amen.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank you for the new birth which you have given to me in the waters of baptism. Guard and keep me in that life until I walk with you raised in the Spirit on the Last Day, as You live and reign, One God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 17, 2026

Today's Reading: John 16:17-33

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 17:1-28; Proverbs 18:1-20:4; John 16:17-33

"For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." (John 16:27-28)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

How amazing are these words!?! Jesus is vouching FOR US! He is claiming us before our Heavenly Father. The Creator of the world. The Holy and Perfect God. The Author of Life. This is an amazing gift.

God the Father loves YOU. YOU belong to Jesus. In your Baptism, you are covered with Jesus - holy, blameless, and perfect. When God the Father sees you, He sees His Son, our Savior Jesus, and loves. In Communion, you are given Jesus' Body and Blood for your salvation. You are a guest at God's Table and get to feast on His gifts!

Jesus was at the creation of the world; Jesus is the Word. Jesus knew what the cost would be once sin entered into the world. Jesus knew He would have to leave His Father, take on flesh, live a blameless life, die a terrible death, and rise again. He knew this was the plan to save sinners from eternal death. And in these verses, as He talks with His disciples before His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Jesus is declaring that it is going to happen. He is declaring that you are loved.

As we live in this sin-broken world, it can be hard to remember that we are loved. It seems as though all around us, everything is coming apart. We sin daily. We are daily sinned against. Something always hurts. Something always seems to go wrong. Our feelings lie to us. The world would have us focus on just today and wallow in despair. The devil would have us believe the lies that we aren't enough. But the Truth is not found in our feelings, the world, or in the lies of the devil. We are not without hope.

In your moments of brokenness, remember your Baptism. Remember that you are not alone. You are covered by Christ and are seen by God the Father. You have the Holy Spirit, and in faith, you pray and cry out to a listening and faithful God. You are loved. Cling to the Truth, even if (and when) your feelings would want to declare something else. Be in God's Word; rejoice in the gift that is God's Law and Gospel for you. Remember that you have been claimed by Jesus, and God the Father rejoices that you are His.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Christ, the way that leads unfailing To the Father's house on high, Christ, the truth that frees the captive, Christ, the life that cannot die. Mediator to the Father, Sacrifice and great High Priest: Lead us to Your heav'nly mansions, There to share Your wedding feast. (LSB 540:5)

Tuesday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 16, 2026

Today's Reading: Ephesians 2:13-22 or 1 John 3:13-18

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 16:1-24; John 16:1-16

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (Ephesians 2:13)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Have you ever been excluded? Perhaps you were picked last for a game or event. Maybe your interests aren't ones that are seen as 'cool.' Or maybe the issue is bigger than that. Your parents are divorced, and you always seem to be back and forth - not really able to settle into one place. Or, you have had to move away from your friends, your school, and your familiar community. Separation is hard. If you aren't 'in,' then you are 'out,' and that is difficult.

Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus. And these words—these bold statements of inclusion—are pretty shocking. Paul is declaring that the Gospel is for Gentiles, too. He is saying that Jesus' Blood covers all people; God's love ties together that which was broken or segmented. He is reminding the Jews and the Gentiles that their focus needs to be on the promises of God, which are for all people. The Gentiles had always been 'out,' but the Jews had had their seasons of exile and separation, too. And yet now, all is united. Now, the promises have been fulfilled, Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world, and there is no need for separation anymore.

It would seem that everyone then and now would rejoice at these words. God has brought all to Himself, and there is no need to distinguish or separate. And yet, we sinners like putting each other in boxes. Whether it's by interests, looks, heritage, or some other artificial measurement that we've constructed, we like to compare and contrast. We want to be accepted - even if that means excluding someone else.

Repent, dear chosen ones! For God has more forgiveness than you have sin. Jesus' Blood does indeed cover all. He has brought you to Himself - and there is room for more. Rest in your Baptism; Jesus has covered you and claimed you as His. Invite and include those around you - for God's desire is for all to be saved. You get to look at your neighbors, even in their differences, with joy and love. God has destroyed all that would separate or keep others 'far off.' Share the Good News that Jesus is for all sinners - for those far off, and for you too.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

In Baptism we now put on Christ Our shame is fully covered With all that He once sacrificed And freely for us suffered, For here the flood of His own blood Now makes us holy, right, and good Before our heav'nly Father. (LSB 596:4)

Monday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 1, 2026

Today's Reading: Isaiah 6:1-7

Daily Lectionary: Ecclesiastes 9:1-17; John 9:24-41

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:3)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

It can be easy to read Isaiah chapter six and gloss over just how intense the vision of Isaiah would have been. As the Lord called Isaiah to speak His Word, there is a lot going on. There are the Seraphim with their wings and their flying. There is the shaking of the thresholds at the voice of the One calling. There is the angel with the smoke and the coals. But what might have been the most intense was the realization of those words, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

We don't think of holiness all that much in our day and place. For us, God is sort of a spiritual therapist. He's there for when we might need something. He's sort of in the background, just sort of letting the movie play out as it does. In short, He's a buddy who's there when we need Him, but otherwise He just sort of lets us be.

I don't think that's how Isaiah felt standing in the presence of the angels and the company of heaven. I don't think that was the thought floating in his head when the angel brought the coal. In fact, I know it wasn't. How? Because of Isaiah's own words: "And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'" Isaiah wasn't excited to see his buddy. He was nervous. Why? Because he knew of his sin. He knew of the sin of his people. He knew that this Lord of hosts, this Yahweh Sabaoth, was holy. He was not sin. He was perfection. He was the perfection that no imperfection can stand before. And so Isaiah was scared. He needed atonement.

But that's what the angel brought to Isaiah. He brought it from the altar of the Lord Himself. This thrice holy God is good and perfect. But He is loving. This Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, He is holy and hates sin. But He is loving and desires people to have the cleansing from sin that they would become the objects of His love.

You, Christian, are the object of His love. He has sent Jesus to the cross to bear your unholiness. He has sent His Spirit into your heart through the Word, through the promise of Baptism, that you would know that you are His beloved. He has taken your unholiness and poured out His wrath against it on the cross, that He could give you His holiness that you could stand before Him in His heavenly temple forever. Thanks be to God.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna. Save us. Bless us with your holiness, that we would ever remain your beloved and holy children. Amen

Tuesday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 2, 2026

Today's Reading: Romans 11:33-36

Daily Lectionary: Ecclesiastes 10:1-20; John 10:1-21

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

This week is the week of the Holy Trinity. This week we meditate on what is perhaps the most unsearchable things of God. How can God be one and yet also be three? When I was in college, I had some friends who said He couldn't. They said you really have what we would call the Father as God, but then the Son is maybe more than human, but not quite divine—at least not like the Father. Then the Spirit, well, He is sort of just God's activity.

I really wrestled with this. A God who is one and three isn't very logical. And every time I found a verse that I thought really proved that Jesus was God, they had a response. Of course, this whole conversation is just what happened with the Arians at the Council of Nicea in 325 (where we get the Nicene Creed). They said the same thing, that Jesus isn't quite God like the Father. In the end, the Council said that Jesus IS God like the Father. He is homoousias (homo – same, ousias – substance) with the Father. He's of the same divine stuff. But He's also man, too. How does all of that work? I always tell my confirmands that I have a very technical term for that: idunno.

But how, then, did I become convinced that Nicea was correct? Ultimately, it was John 8:58: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'" At first, it was just because Jesus said that He existed before Abraham that I found it convincing. However, it was pointed out to me that 'I AM' is the Name that God tells Moses to call Him at the burning bush. "God said to Moses, 'I AM who I AM... Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" This meant that Jesus was saying that He was (is) that I AM that had spoken to Moses at the bush. But here He was in human flesh. And in that human flesh, He was going to the cross to die for sins. A God-man (that is, 100% human and 100% divine, not 100% mix of human and divine), dying for sins so that we could be saved. From there, I could see the Holy Spirit was also God. This, after all, was the Name into which I was baptized: the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; one Name, three persons.

How does that work? I still dunno. God's ways are unsearchable. But they are good. I can see it in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Blessed Lord, Your ways are unsearchable. Give us faith in all circumstances to trust in you, until we live before You eternally, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Monday of the Second Week After Trinity

JUNE 15, 2026

Today's Reading: Proverbs 9:1-10

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 15:1-29; John 15:12-27

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." (Proverbs 9:10)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Have you ever had a conversation with a toddler? They are sure of everything. They know how to put on their shoes. They know how to get dressed. They know what they want to eat. They KNOW!

And yet, would you eat a meal that was prepared by a toddler? Would you feel safe with a doctor who was a toddler? You see what I mean, right? Being two or three years old does not make you an expert in, well, anything.

Here's the truth, though. You aren't an expert either. You may be older than two, but are you still a sinner? (Martin Luther, in the Small Catechism, invites us to consider our lives according to the Ten Commandments...how's that going for you?) You make mistakes. You still hurt yourself and your neighbors. Age doesn't mean maturity or expertise. So how do we become wise? How can we know what is true? Those are great questions. And our reading today teaches us: start with God and His Word.

When we start with God, we realize that we are dependent, humble, begging creatures who, without merit or worthiness, implore their Creator for mercy. In fact, Romans 5 teaches us that we were enemies of God - we were dead - when He chose us, redeemed us, and saved us. Indeed, when we start with God, we realize that we are nothing on our own. We have no knowledge. We have no skills. We have no wisdom.

God's Word teaches us who He is and who we are. Start there. Be reminded that God is just, compassionate, and merciful. Be reminded that He made you and sustains your body and life. Be reminded that in Baptism, you are covered by Jesus' Blood and have been given the Holy Spirit. When you start there, you are then equipped to serve your neighbors. Rejoice as a student! Celebrate the roles you have in your family. Recognize the gifts you have to be on a team, in a class, or at a job.

Rest in the knowledge that God is God and you are not; receive what He gives and use those gifts to love those around you (whom He has also given). Wisdom is indeed fearing and trusting God.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave My body, soul, and all I have In this poor life of labor. Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place May glorify Thy lavish grace And help and serve my neighbor. Let no false doctrine me beguile; Let Satan not my soul defile. Give strength and patience unto me To bear my cross and follow Thee. Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord, In death Thy comfort still afford. (LSB 708:2)

Second Sunday After Trinity

JUNE 14, 2026

Today's Reading: Luke 14:15-24

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 14:1-27; John 15:1-11

"And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses." (Luke 14:17-18a)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Have you ever really looked forward to a celebration or a meal? Perhaps it's your birthday - you just KNOW that your mom is going to make your favorite foods and you will get an awesome cake; you cannot contain your excited anticipation for that day. Or maybe it's Thanksgiving - you can't wait to enjoy your grandma's homemade pie and your uncle's stuffing!

Look again at the reading for today; a banquet has been prepared. There is literally nothing to do except come! And yet EVERYONE who was invited made excuses. That seems ridiculous. Surely they know a good thing when they are given it - a free banquet! Who says no to that?

Well, let's be honest with ourselves. How many Sunday mornings have you wished to just keep sleeping? How many times have you sat in church and thought, "Why is this taking so long?" How often have you skipped Bible study because the teacher is really boring? Repent, dear invited one. You are making excuses.

Our Lord prepares a banquet for us - a feast for us - every time we are in the Divine Service. He has equipped and called men to be our pastors; they stand in the stead of Jesus and pronounce our sins forgiven. Our Lord has given us His Word to hear, read, speak, and sing; the Word that points to His mercy and our rescue. He pours out His Blood and sacrifices His Body for our eating and drinking. Indeed, every time we attend church, we are at a banquet! We receive the most perfect, holy, beautiful Gifts from God: we are reminded of His adoption of us in Baptism, we are forgiven of our sins, and we literally feast on Jesus' Body and Blood for our salvation.

Maybe you are still going to drag yourself to church, hurt, broken, and tired from the week. God's Gifts don't depend on how you feel about them - they are real and they are yours. Attend the banquet. Receive the feast that has been prepared for you. Rest where you are safe, holy, and loved.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

O Lord, since You never fail to help and govern those whom You nurture in Your steadfast fear and love, work in us a perpetual fear and love of Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 3, 2026

Today's Reading: John 10:22-42

Daily Lectionary: Ecclesiastes 11:1-10; John 10:22-42

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

"I and the Father are one." What does Jesus mean by those words? As we are reflecting on the Triune Nature of our God, is this one of those places where Jesus is pointing us to the reality that He and the Father are homoousias, one in substance? Well, substance is what a thing is. Jesus says that He and the Father are one, so just by the words alone, we have to understand that Jesus is talking about their unity of substance.

But as He is talking about that unity, what is He talking about? He's talking about security. He is telling His people that they are His sheep and He is their Shepherd. He is telling them that as He is their Shepherd, they are protected and secure. They are secure because no one can snatch them out of His Hand. In fact, the Father has given these sheep to Jesus, and no one can snatch them out of the Father's Hand.

At this point, if we think too hard about the unity of substance, about the oneness of the Trinity, we can get really confused. How can the Father have a hand and the Son have a different hand if they're one? Back to that question of how can one be three? Idunno.

But in this case, that's not the main point. The main point is to tell you, His beloved sheep, that you have no need to fear. You are safe in the hands of your God. You are safe in the hands of the Son. You are safe in the hands of the Father. Which hands, the Father's or the Son's? It doesn't matter, you're safe. Your One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cares for you, guards you, and protects you.

You can see this in the Son, who is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life on the cross to defend you from the wolves of sin, death, and the devil. You can see it in the Father who sent His Son into this world that you would be saved. You can see it in the work of the Spirit who has called you by the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctified, and kept you in the true faith. This God has pursued you with His rod and staff, and He has picked you up in His ever-loving hands. The whole world around you might appear to fall away, but this unified God is working monolithically to save, guard, and keep you.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Have no fear, little flock, for the Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom, have no fear little flock! (LSB 735:1)

Thursday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 4, 2026

Today's Reading: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer 3rd Petition
Daily Lectionary: Ecclesiastes 12:1-14; John 11:1-16

"God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will." (The Small Catechism, The Lord's Prayer, The Third Petition)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Those are words you hopefully speak daily at least. But when it comes to the will of God, do you actually reflect on it? How often do you act or even pray for things without reflection on God's will? It's pretty easy to go through our day-to-day activities without thinking much about what God's desire is for us. Or we can overcomplicate it. We can pray about every minute detail as though if we make a left turn instead of a right turn because we left our house at 8:35 instead of 8:37, we have deviated from God's will and now He must be angry with us.

But what is God's will? As Luther explains it so well, he shows that it relates to breaking and hindering every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. And what do these enemies do that is deviant from God's will? They seek that we would not hallow His Name, nor let His Kingdom Come. They seek that the Word of God would not be taught in its truth and purity, and that we as Christians would not lead holy lives according to the Commandments. Likewise, they seek that God's Spirit would not bring faith in God's Word to those people in order that they would lead holy lives here in time and there in eternity.

So what are we praying for? We are praying for God's defense of us in the faith. We are praying that God would guard and keep us from the devil, who would seek to destroy our faith, and our own sinful temptations, which would be drawn to unholy living contrary to God's will revealed in the Ten Commandments.

So, how does God work this protection? Thankfully, by how He operates in the world. However, we can certainly be assured of protection in His Word. It is in that Word where He continues to speak faith into ears, to feed faith to us in His Supper. By these, He strengthens us in our daily struggles with sin, and gives us rest always in the forgiveness of the cross of Christ. Amen.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Your gracious will on earth be done, as it is done before Your throne, That patiently we may obey, Throughout our lives all that You say. Curb flesh and blood and every ill That sets itself against Your will. Amen. (LSB 766:4)

Saturday of the First Week After Trinity

JUNE 13, 2026

Today's Reading: Introit for Trinity 2 - Psalm 18:1-2a, 27, 30a, 49; antiphon: Psalm 18:18b-19
Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 13:1-25; John 14:18-31

"I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer," (Psalm 18:1-2a)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

These are words of witness. They speak of who God is and what He does for His people.

The Lord is our strength. And yet, I get caught in the lie of independence and self-reliance. I want to believe that *I* am strong. I want to believe that *I* can be brave, powerful, and mighty. And yet, in my most quiet thoughts - I know that I am not. I know that I am weak, I struggle, and I am not enough.

When I look at myself, when I rely on myself, when I think only of myself - I cannot be strong. The Third Article of the Creed teaches us that we 'cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him.' We are weak. In fact, in sin, we are dead. So this first verse in Psalm 18 is a gift - it reminds us that we don't have to be strong. In fact, we have the Lord who is strength. It is in Him that we are brought to new life and are made holy. We lean on Him and trust in Him; we are indeed strong in God. His might is given to us.

The next verse speaks of God as our rock, fortress, and deliverer. Living in this broken world is hard. Sin hurts. This week has been rough. I have sinned, and I have been sinned against. It can often feel like there is no safe place to go. And yet, we are reminded that we are in Christ. He is our safe place. Church is where we receive His Gifts; we are forgiven, redeemed, loved, and shown mercy. We are delivered from evil and kept safe in God's House. Indeed, God is immovable - His character does not change. He is the protection that is needed from all that would hurt, harm, or kill. He is the only one who can deliver us, who can rescue us, from the brokenness of sin.

God is your strength, your rock, your fortress, and your deliverer. When you attend the Divine Service, rest in the safety of God's Word and His promises. Trust that your Baptism is your identity and God's Word of Absolution is for you. Jesus' Body and Blood is yours; eat and drink His promise. You are not alone, but are protected, loved, and safe in Jesus.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

"Fear not! I am with you, O be not dismayed, For I am your God and will still give you aid; I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand, Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand. (LSB 728:2)

Friday of the First Week After Trinity

JUNE 12, 2026

Today's Reading: Catechism: The Lord's Prayer - 4th Petition

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 10:1-23; Proverbs 11:1-12:28; John 14:1-17

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

We need to be reminded to be grateful. Ouch. A quick 'thanks,' is sufficient, right? I do have other things to get done - I have money to make, groceries to buy, errands to run...I'm taking care of my life! Hmmm. Maybe this Petition is worth some time and reflection.

In the Lord's Prayer, we are given the Petition 'Give us this day our daily bread.' This is not some type of magic incantation that allows pizza to softly float down to our dinner tables. No, this is a reminder that God DOES give us what we need. Our daily needs are met. Furthermore, none of this is done with our control or effort. As Luther explains, God certainly gives without our prayers. We are given this Petition so we might pause and reflect on God's character. God is merciful, abundant, and loving. He gives more than we can even imagine. He had a plan for our salvation before the world even existed. He certainly provides for our needs of body and soul.

When we are tempted to think about our own efforts in 'meeting our needs,' we should repent. We must remember that it is God who provides the sunshine, air, dirt, and seeds that will one day be wheat for flour (for that pizza!). It is God who equips farmers, truck drivers, and store owners - all those who help us find the food that is necessary for sustaining our bodies (which are also Gifts from God). And this Petition reminds us that God gives us ALL that is needed for our body and life - not *only* the food that we daily receive.

Indeed, this part of the Lord's Prayer is a powerful and humbling reminder that God is in control, and this is good. God knows our needs and meets them - without our asking, our assistance, or even our thanks. We get to reflect on all that God gives and all that He is, and then give Him thanksgiving. We are reminded of who He is: the One who sent His own perfect Son to die in the place of sinners. The one who defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil for us. The one who calls us His own in Baptism and feeds us Jesus' Body and Blood. Yes! We have so much to give thanks for - we have a generous and loving God!

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

God makes the clouds rain goodness, The deserts bloom and spring, The hills leap up in gladness, The valleys laugh and sing. God fills them with His fullness, All things with large increase; He crowns the year with blessing, With plenty and with peace. (LSB 893:2)

Friday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 5, 2026

Today's Reading: John 11:17-37

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 1:8-33; John 11:17-37

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

If you've been to a Lutheran Funeral, you have likely heard those words. In the Funeral order, the pastor speaks the words, the congregation speaks the Nunc Dimittis (Lord, now you let your servant go in peace), and then the pastor repeats them. What a blessed comfort. Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Of course, as Jesus said these words, He proved how true they were by raising Lazarus from the tomb just moments after speaking them. Lazarus had been sick, and the people came to tell Jesus so that He could heal the poor man. Jesus dawdled, Lazarus died. And now Martha, to whom Jesus said this confession, calls Jesus on his delay. "Lord if you had been here my brother wouldn't have died." "Lord if you had come when we called you, I wouldn't be in this sorrow right now." "Lord, if only you had done what we asked, this would all be a lot easier."

But then Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus, and what does He do? First, He weeps. Why? He's already told Martha who He is. He's already made the point to Martha that He's going to raise Lazarus. What is this? It's sorrow at death. Death isn't the way it's supposed to be. Death is the consequence of sin and Man not doing what God has told him to do. So death hurts. And Jesus feels it in that moment. He feels it to His core.

As I've spoken those words at funerals, I've spoken them in the hearing of loved ones who feel death to their core. I've spoken them to children who have lost parents who have been suffering for years and so are relieved, but still hurt to their core. I've spoken them to parents who lost children far, far too soon, and were rocked to their core. And in all of the cases, the words were still true. This Man who called Lazarus from the tomb entered the tomb for us that first Good Friday, carrying the burden of our sins to that tomb so that He could leave them there on the First Easter, and we could have victory over death by His resurrection.

Christian, when death hurts you to your core, know that it is defeated. Christ is the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Him, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Him will never die.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ the death of death our foe, Who, Thyself for me once giving, To the darkest depths of woe; Through thy sufferings, death, and merit, I eternal life inherit, Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee! (LSB 420:1)

Saturday of the Week of Holy Trinity

JUNE 6, 2026

Today's Reading: Introit for Trinity 1 - Psalm 13:1-4; antiphon: Psalm 13:5-6
Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 3:5-24; John 11:38-57

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him,' lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me." (Psalm 13:1-6)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

If you read the Psalms carefully, you find some amazing things. For example, you find what praise is. You see that it is not just saying "I praise You!" it is also talking about the good God that He is and the good things He has done. You also see the writers reflect the whole gamut of human emotion and experience. You find expressions of happiness. You find expressions of sorrow. You find expressions of dismay.

In Psalm 13, we have this dismay. Obviously, the psalmist experienced the feeling that God wasn't still there. He felt like God was turning His face away from him and letting evil people take over. He felt like things were so bad, he was going to die. As a note, this psalmist is King David, so it seems this is one of those times where David is on the run, afraid that the person he's running from is going to catch up and kill him. Who? It doesn't matter. Why? Because the point is the worry that God isn't there. The worry is that death is at hand.

I can imagine you have been shaken as well. Maybe you haven't worried that you were going to die. Maybe you haven't been pursued by evil people, but you have been shaken. And in that moment, you felt like God had turned away from you. But He hasn't. I can promise you that. How? Because He promises it. He tells you in Hebrews 13:5, "Never will I leave you nor forsake you." And you can be sure this is true because any forsaking you might deserve, Jesus took that for you on the cross when He cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Your sin does deserve forsaking, but you have been washed in the blood of the lamb who was forsaken for you. Now God will not leave you or forsake you.

Therefore, you can trust in God's steadfast love. You can rejoice in His salvation. You can sing to the Lord who has dealt bountifully with you, just like David in the Psalm.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Lord, in the midst of hardship, You promise never to leave me nor forsake me. Bless me to trust in your steadfast love for you have dealt bountifully with me in Jesus. Amen.

St. Barnabas, Apostle

JUNE 11, 2026

Today's Reading: Mark 6:7-13
Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 9:1-18; John 13:21-38

"And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits." (Mark 6:7)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Disciples are followers of Jesus - literally. Before Jesus' ascension, the disciples went where He went. They did what He did. He taught, they listened. In this account in Mark, Jesus sends out the Twelve apostles. These men were disciples, but being an apostle meant that they were sent out to teach and to preach. They were given authority by Jesus and were given directions by Jesus.

Today, we remember the Apostle Barnabas. This is the guy who 'vouched' for Saul. In the early church, after Jesus ascended into heaven, there was a lot of persecution. You may remember that Saul was a high-ranking Jewish leader who had made it his mission to hunt disciples of Jesus and punish them, even to death. And yet, Jesus comes to Saul and confronts him about his sins. Jesus calls Saul to be one of His disciples—and even more—to be an apostle. Saul (later named Paul) was going to preach about Jesus; he was called out of darkness into God's light.

We sinners tend to be skeptical; the disciples in the early church did too. Did Paul *really* meet Jesus? Was he *actually* a believer? The disciples in Jerusalem, at the time of Paul's conversion, were afraid. Paul wants to join these disciples, but they don't believe him. However, Barnabas is not going to stay silent. Barnabas greets Paul, brings him to the other disciples, and witnesses to what he knows happened. He teaches his fellow disciples (and apostles) the truth that Jesus does indeed change hearts and minds. He declares that Jesus did, in fact, call Paul to be an apostle.

You probably aren't an apostle, but you are a disciple of Jesus. You get to continue learning from His Word, receiving His Gifts, and witnessing about what is true. In your Baptism, you are safely tucked into God's family, and nothing can take that away. From that place, then, you can be bold to speak about Jesus. You can declare that He does forgive sins, He does keep His promises, and He is the Savior of the world. You can be like Barnabas - speak of what is true and real. Point to Jesus' Death and Resurrection. Speak of yourself as a redeemed sinner. Speak to the neighbors you have been given - in your school, your home, your neighborhood, your community - and tell the Good News of Jesus for sinners. You get to be a disciple; you receive God's good Gifts, and you get to then share His love with all that you meet.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

How clear is our vocation, Lord, When once we heed your call: To live according to Your Word And daily learn, refreshed, restored, That You are Lord of all, And will not let us fall. (LSB 853:1)

Wednesday of the First Week After Trinity

JUNE 10, 2026

Today's Reading: John 13:1-20

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 8:22-36; John 13:1-20

"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (John 13:1)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Do you get anxious before a big event? Maybe you get really excited; all those butterflies of anticipation are fluttering in your stomach. You have a big test, a big game, a fancy dinner, or a presentation... something big is coming, and you know that it matters.

Sometimes, in our desire to focus, we forget about other people or other things. Washing the dishes? Later, I have a paper to finish. Walking the dog? Later, I have an important dinner to get ready for. We focus on our next big moment and nothing else.

In today's reading, Jesus knows what is coming; His 'big event' is His crucifixion. This has been the plan of salvation since before the world was created, and now the time had come. And yet, who is His focus? Where does He spend His last hours before death? Jesus "loved them to the end." Jesus, knowing all that is about to happen, stays focused on those whom He loves.

In John 13, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. He shows, yet again, what it means to love sacrificially. He shows what it means to love and care for your neighbors. He continues to teach and to serve His disciples. He knows what His next hours are going to include, but He continues to love. He teaches the disciples that this is an example to them (and to us) - that we are to serve others.

Jesus says in John 13:20 that, 'truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.' You have received the one whom Jesus sends - you have been given the Holy Spirit! In your Baptism, you are made clean and declared holy; you are covered by Jesus and bear God's name. You are one of Jesus' own. On the cross, it was for you that Jesus willingly hung and willingly died. In the Resurrection, it is you that He brings into new life and unto life eternal. You are one for whom Jesus died. You are loved. And Jesus will indeed love you to the end.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

"Yes, Father, yes, most willingly I'll bear what You command Me. My will conforms to Your decree, I'll do what You have asked Me." O wondrous Love, what have you done! The Father offers up His Son, Desiring our salvation. O Love, how strong You are to save! You lay the One into the grave Who built the earth's foundation. (LSB 438:3)

First Sunday After Trinity

JUNE 7, 2026

Today's Reading: Luke 16:19-31

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 4:1-27; John 12:1-19

"He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16:31)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

At first glance, today's reading seems to suggest that life is the luck of the draw. The rich guy had it good during his earthly life, while Lazarus had it rough. And, because it is only fair then, the rich guy has to suffer in eternity, but Lazarus gets to be in comfort. It seems to make sense, right? It's only fair.

And yet, this isn't about being poor or rich. This isn't a 'fair picture' of who gets to have what. Instead, this teaches about the lie of independence and the idolatry of wanting to be your own god. This speaks to the heart of every sinner. The rich man had nice clothes and plenty of food; he lived lavishly. To us sinners who love control, comfort, and excess, this sounds great! Lazarus, by contrast, suffers continuously. He wishes for crumbs. And yet, all he has are the dogs. When death comes, Lazarus is brought to heaven, and the rich man suffers in torment. Ephesians 2 teaches us that it is, "by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing, it is a gift from God." We learn that Lazarus had faith. He trusted in His Savior, even in suffering.

In Hades, the rich man still wants to control his destiny. He wants a drop of water - he wants some relief; he is told no. He begs that Lazarus be raised from the dead to give his brothers a warning about this eternity of torment. But, his brothers already have the Law - they have the words of Moses and the Prophets. If they will not repent when the Law is taught, they will have no use for someone being risen from the dead.

Repent, dear sinner. Do not be deceived by independence, control, or the ability to chase your desires. God's Word of Law is for your good. It reminds you that you are a sinner. Remember that in your Baptism, your Old Adam daily drowns and dies; the New Man daily rises and celebrates the boundaries given by God. The New Man daily rejoices, even in suffering, because even in trials there is hope. Cling to the promises of Jesus, who has risen from the dead for you. In excess and in suffering, you need God's Law and His Gospel. You need to be reminded of your sin and your dependence on God. Rejoice in that reminder - for you have a God who does not spare His only, perfect Son, but abandons Him on the cross for you. You have a Risen Savior who daily forgives your sins and meets your needs. You are not without hope.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

O God, the strength of all who trust in You, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing, grant us Your grace to keep Your Commandments that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday of the First Week After Trinity

JUNE 8, 2026

Today's Reading: Genesis 15:1-6

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 5:1-23; Proverbs 6:1-7:27; John 12:20-36a

"But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'" (Genesis 15:2)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Perhaps Abram has a point. At age 75, he was called by God to leave his home and travel to a new land, but life has been fraught with problems. There was a famine, so Abram found himself in Egypt, where that (first) awkward encounter between the Pharaoh and Sarai happened. And then, Abram has to rescue his nephew Lot from war in Sodom and Gomorrah. What about the promises of being a great nation, being blessed, and having his name be great? Ever since Abram listened to God, it has been one issue after another; there doesn't seem to be any follow-through on those promises. In today's reading, God is making promises again: Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram pushes back: But God...what will you give me? I don't even have an heir of my own!

Here's the thing. We sinners like to develop our own timelines and our own measuring sticks. Abram wanted those promises fulfilled now. He wanted what was coming to him. He wanted proof and assurance that this was going to be worth it. Abram is having doubts; he and Sarai hadn't had a child yet - how could they possibly be the great nation that God had promised?

Abram doubts. You and I doubt too. Why is my life full of suffering? Why is the Christian life hard? When will I receive what God has promised? The rest of today's reading is the comfort we need. Abram expresses his doubts, and God hears them! God's character is one of mercy and patience. While Abram had no 'right' to question God or worry about what was going to happen, God met Abram's question with assurances. God gave Abram more promises - Abram, you will have your own son. You will have more descendants than stars in the sky. And even more amazing - when Abram believes these words from God, God counts his belief as righteousness!

What about for you? What about when you ask questions, worry, and doubt? God answers you, too. Remember your Baptism. You are named as a Child of God and covered by Jesus. Go to the Divine Service and hear God's Word of Law and Gospel for you. Be reminded that you are a sinner - one for whom Jesus bled and died. Rejoice that you are a saint and that Jesus' resurrection is yours also. Take and eat Jesus' Body and Blood. Believe in the One who always keeps His promises and always hears your prayers. God is faithful.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

God gives me my days of gladness, And I will Trust Him still When He sends me sadness, God is good; His love attends me Day by day, Come what may, Guides me and defends me. (LSB 756:3)

Tuesday of the First Week After Trinity

JUNE 9, 2026

Today's Reading: 1 John 4:16-21

Daily Lectionary: Proverbs 8:1-21; John 12:36b-50

"We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

I have to admit, I like to be first. In school, I liked it when I was done with my homework first, and I liked it when I ran a race and got first place. Even now, I like it when my favorite team gets first. I want to win. I want to be the best, and being first is definitely the best.

And yet, this short verse in 1 John says that someone else was first. This verse says that I can love, can know love, and can give love only because someone else did it first. This verse says that He loved me and He loved you. This verse is clear - I wasn't the first to love.

When I stop and think about it, this verse tells me that being first isn't really the point. When I admitted to liking to be first, to always winning, I was also admitting that my mindset is selfish. If I am winning, then everyone around me has to be losing. I'm not thinking about them; I am only thinking about me. Maybe I don't know what love is, because that definitely isn't love.

These verses in 1 John teach us about what love is - about who love is. It isn't about winning, and it isn't about me (or you) being the best. Instead, love is sacrificial. Love is reassuring and is hope without fear. There is no competition in love.

God is love. Love lays down His life so that others (sinners...you...me) can live. Love is given freely and is good. Love looks like something - it looks like Jesus on the cross. Love looks like an empty tomb. Love looks like God's Word and water. Love is in, with, and under Bread and Wine. God's plan to love is shown in the mercies and grace that are ours every day.

It's a good thing that God loved us first. It's a good thing that before we were born or could even think about what love is and how we might have it, God loved and planned for our rescue. Now, I can know and you can know that love is resting in God, in His promises, and in His work, not our own. Then, out of that love, comes love for our neighbors. We get to look around, not at ourselves, and see the needs of those around us. We get to rejoice in the love we have and then share it with others. God loved you first, and that is very good. And, now you get to love too.

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so. (LSB 588:1)