



THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY
FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
(AUGUST 15)

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
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WELCOME TO ALL! We are pleased you are here!

GUESTS – welcome to our Divine Service! If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

PASTORAL CARE AND GUESTS AT THE LORD'S SUPPER: We are concerned about the spiritual welfare of all who commune at the Lord's Table. If you are a guest and desire to commune, please speak to the pastor before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are members of our congregation or sister congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and are not under church discipline in another congregation. In Christ, Pastor Lawson

† In the Name of Jesus †

Prayer before Worship: Lord God, heavenly Father, You have bountifully given us Your blessing and our daily bread: We beseech You, preserve us from covetousness, and so enliven our hearts that we willingly share Your blessed gifts with our needy brethren; that we may be found faithful stewards of Your gifts, and abide in Your grace when we shall be removed from our stewardship, and shall come before Your judgment, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

AUGUST 14, 2022 † 11:00 A. M.

The Divine Service: Rite Two
Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary: p. 60

The Office of Preparation
(Confession & Holy Absolution)

Hymn of Invocation: 23, *Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now* (Tune: 50)

C: Lord Jesus Christ, be present now, And let Thy Holy Spirit bow
All hearts in love and fear today To hear the truth and keep Thy way.

**Unseal our lips to sing Thy praise, Our hearts in true devotion raise,
Our faith increase, our minds enlight That we may know Thy name aright**

**Until we join the host that cry, “Holy art Thou, O Lord most high!”
And ’mid the light of that blest place Shall gaze upon Thee face to face.**

**Glory to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To Thee, O blessed Trinity, Be praise throughout eternity!**

*At the Invocation and Absolution all **may** make the sign of the †
in remembrance of their Baptism.*

The Invocation: p. 60-61

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Confession of Sin (form I): pp. 60-62

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

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: Who made heaven and earth.

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;

C: And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

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

P: I ask each of you, in the presence of God who searches the heart: Do you confess that you have sinned, and do you repent of your sins?

C: I do.

P: Do you believe that Jesus Christ has redeemed you from all your sins, and do you desire forgiveness in His name?

C: I do.

P: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

May He comfort your heart by His holy Absolution,
and strengthen you by His Sacraments,
that your joy may be full.

Peace be with you!

C: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Introit

Tone 2



Antiphon (**Pastor**) Behold, God `is my helper:/ The LORD is with those who `uphold my life.
He will repay my enemies `for their evil:/ Cut them off in `Your truth, O LORD.

Psalm (**All**) Save me, O `God, by Your name:/ And vindicate `me by Your strength.

Hear `my prayer, O God:/ Give ear to the `words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen `up against me:/ They have not set `God before them.

He has delivered me out `of all trouble:/ And my eye has seen its desire upon `my enemies.

Gloria Patri (All) Glory be to the Father `and to the Son:/ and to `the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the be`ginning, is now:/ and ever shall be, forever`more. Amen.

Antiphon (All) Behold, God `is my helper:/ The LORD is with those who `uphold my life. He will repay my enemies `for their evil:/ Cut them off in `Your truth, O LORD.

The Kyrie Eleison (form I): p. 63

C: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria in Excelsis: pp. 64-66

P: Glory be to God on high:

C: And on earth peace, good will toward men.

We praise You, we bless You, we worship You,

we glorify You, we give thanks to You, for Your great glory.

O Lord God, heav`nly King,

God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

You take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

You take away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.

You are seated at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For You only are holy. You only are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Salutation: p. 66

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

Collect for the Day: p. 66

P: Let Your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Your humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Collect for the Feast of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary

P: O God, You have taken to Yourself the blessed Mary, Mother of Your only Son: Grant that we who have been redeemed by His Blood may share with her the glory of Your eternal kingdom; through the same, Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament: *1 Chronicles 29:10-13*

P: *In those days David* blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: “Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours in the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gradual (All)

Tone 2



O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is Your Name `in all the earth:/ Who have set Your glory a`bove the heavens.

Hymn: 263, *Jesus, Priceless Treasure*

C: **Jesus, priceless Treasure, Fount of purest pleasure, Truest Friend to me.
Ah, how long in anguish Shall my spirit languish, Yearning, Lord, for Thee?
Thou art mine, O Lamb divine! I will suffer naught to hide Thee,
Naught I ask beside Thee.**

**In Thine arms I rest me; Foes who would molest me Cannot reach me here.
Though the earth be shaking, Ev’ry heart be quaking, Jesus calms my fear.
Lightnings flash And thunders crash; Yet, though sin and hell assail me,
Jesus will not fail me.**

**Satan, I defy thee; Death, I now decry thee; Fear, I bid thee cease.
World, thou shalt not harm me Nor thy threats alarm me While I sing of peace.
God's great pow'r Guards ev'ry hour; Earth and all its depths adore Him,
Silent bow before Him.**

**Hence, all earthly treasure! Jesus is my Pleasure; Jesus is my Choice.
Hence, all empty glory! Naught to me thy story Told with tempting voice.
Pain or loss Or shame or cross Shall not from my Savior move me
Since He deigns to love me.**

**Evil world, I leave thee; Thou canst not deceive me, Thine appeal is vain.
Sin that once did blind me, Get thee far behind me, Come not forth again.
Past thy hour, O pride and pow'r, Sinful life, thy bonds I sever,
Leave thee now forever.**

**Hence, all fear and sadness! For the Lord of gladness, Jesus, enters in.
Those who love the Father, Though the storms my gather, Still have peace within.
Yea, whate'er I here must bear, Thou art still my purest Pleasure,
Jesus, priceless Treasure!**

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

P: Brethren: Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia Verse

P: Alleluia! Alleluia! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD: Who delights greatly in His commandments. Alleluia!

C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Holy Gospel: *St. Luke 16:1-13*

P: The Holy Gospel according to † St. Luke, the 16th chapter:

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

At that time Jesus also said to His disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.” Then the steward said within himself, “What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” So he said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.” Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?” So he said, “A hundred measures of wheat.” And he said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.” So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

P: This is the † Holy Gospel.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

*At the words “And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
And was made man” all **may** bow out of reverence for Christ's Incarnation.*

Nicene Creed: p. 69

**C: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
Begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
Very God of Very God,
Begotten, not made,
Being of one substance with the Father,
By Whom all things were made;
Who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven
*and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man;*
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the living and the dead;
Whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped
and glorified,
Who spoke by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
And I look for the Resurrection of the dead
and the Life † of the world to come. Amen.**

Chief Hymn: 182, *One Thing Needful*, sts. 1, 2, 5-8, 10

**C: One thing needful! This one treasure Teach me, Savior, to esteem;
Other things may promise pleasure, But are never what they seem;**

**They prove to be burdens that vex us and chafe us,
And true lasting happiness never vouchsafe us;
This one precious treasure that all else exceeds,
Gives joy above measure and fills all my needs.**

**Seekest thou the one thing needful, Leave all cares that hind'ring prove;
Be of earthly joys unheedful, Fix thy heart on things above;
For where God and man both in one are united,
With God's perfect fullness the heart is delighted;
There, there is the worthiest lot and the best,
My one and my all, and my joy, and my rest.**

**Wisdom's fountain ever-flowing Has its highest source in Thee.
By Thy grace confine my going In Thy footsteps, trod for me;
In which I with lowly and perfect submission
May bend to Thy wisdom my will and ambition
And when, O my Savior, I know Thee aright
I Then shall have risen to wisdom's great height.**

**I have naught, my God, to offer, Save the blood of Thy dear Son;
Graciously accept the proffer; Make His righteousness mine own.
His holy life gave He, was crucified for me;
His righteousness perfect He now pleads before Thee;
His own robe of righteousness, my highest good,
Shall clothe me in glory, through faith in His blood.**

**In Thine image then awaking, May my soul be all Thine own;
Of Thy holy life partaking, Sanctified to Thee alone.
For all that I need here, to serve and obey Thee,
In Thee I receive – and my Savior, I pray Thee:
From things transitory, absorbing my love,
Withdraw mine affections, and fix them above.**

**Jesus, in Thy cross are centered All the marvels of Thy grace;
Thou, my Savior, once hast entered Through Thy blood the holy place:
Thy sacrifice holy there wrought my redemption,
From Satan's dominion I now have exemption;**

**The way is now free to the Father's high throne,
Where I may approach Him, in Thy name alone.**

**Henceforth Thou alone, my Savior, Shall be all in all to me.
Search my heart and my behavior, Cast out all hypocrisy.
Restrain me from wand'ring in pathways unholy,
And throughout life's pilgrimage keep my heart lowly;
I'll value but lightly earth's treasure and store:
Thou art the One needful, and mine evermore!**

Sermon

Offertory: pp. 70-71

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

The Intercessions: *each petition concludes:* Lord, in Your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Hymn of Preparation: 328, *Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness*, sts. 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

**C: Soul, adorn thyself with gladness, Leave behind all gloom and sadness.
Come into the daylight's splendor; There with joy thy praises render
Unto Him whose grace unbounded Hath this wondrous Supper founded.
High o'er all the heav'ns He reigneth, Yet to dwell with thee He deigneth.**

**He who craves a precious treasure Neither cost nor pain will measure,
But the priceless gifts of heaven God to us hath freely given.
Though the wealth of earth were proffered, Naught would buy the gifts here offered:
Christ's true body, for thee riven, And His blood, for thess once given.**

**Ah, how hungers all my spirit For the love I do not merit!
Oft have I, with signs fast thronging, Thought upon this food with longing,
in the battle well-nigh worsted, For this cup of life have thirsted,
For the Friend who here invites us And to God Himself unites us.**

Human reason, though it ponder, Cannot fathom this great wonder,

That Christ's body e'er remaineth Though it countless souls sustaineth,
And that He His blood is giving With the wine we are receiving.
These great mysteries unsounded Are by God alone expounded.

Lord, by love and mercy driven, Thou hast left Thy throne in heaven
On the cross for me to languish And to die in bitter anguish,
To forego all joy and gladness And to shed Thy blood in sadness.
By this blood redeemed and living, Lord, I praise Thee with thanksgiving.

Jesus, Bread of Life, I pray Thee, Let me gladly here obey Thee.
By Thy love I am invited; be Thy love with love requited.
From this Supper let me measure, Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure.
Through the gifts Thou here dost give me As Thy guest in heav'n receive me.

The Liturgy of the Holy Communion

The Preface: p. 72

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do.

The Proper Preface & Sanctus: pp. 73-76

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;

Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He
who come in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

The Lord's Prayer: pp. 77-78

P: Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed by Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
† but deliver us from evil;

C: **For Thine is the kingdom and the pow'r and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

The Words of Institution: pp. 78-79

*When the Pastor turns and elevates the Host and Cup, the congregation **may** bow as an act of reverent worship toward the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.*

The Pax Domini (The Peace of the Lord): p. 79

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

The Agnus Dei: pp. 79-80

C: **O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**
**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**
**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
grant us Your peace. Amen.**

The Distribution of the Holy Communion

*Prayers for “**Before Holy Communion**” and
for “**After Holy Communion**” are found on page 40 in ELH.*

The Nunc Dimittis: pp. 81-82

C: **Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word.
For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face**

of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.
Glory be the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

The Collect of Thanksgiving

P: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.

C: And His mercy endures forever.

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

C: Amen.

The Salutation: p. 84

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

The Benedicamus: p. 84

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Benediction: p. 84

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.

C: Amen. Amen. Amen.

Dismissal Hymn: 261, *Who Trusts in God, a Strong Abode*

C: **Who trusts in God, a strong abode In heav'n and earth possesses,**
 Who looks in love to Christ above, No fear his heart oppresses.
 In Thee alone, dear Lord, we own Sweet hope and consolation,
 Our Shield from foes, our Balm for woes, Our great and sure Salvation.

Though Satan's wrath beset our path And worldly scorn assail us,
While Thou art near, we will not fear; Thy strength shall never fail us.
Thy rod and staff shall keep us safe And guide our steps forever;

Nor shades of death nor hell beneath Our souls from Thee shall sever.

**In all the strife of mortal life Our feet shall stand securely;
Temptation's hour shall lose its pow'r, For Thou shalt guard us surely.
O God, renew with heav'nly dew Our body, soul, and spirit
Until we stand at Thy right hand Through Jesus' saving merit.**

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Bible Studies: Today we continue our study of 1 Peter. The Thursday study will cover Joshua 6 & 7: *The Conquest of Jericho and Defeat at Ai.*

Sanctuary Renovation: The renovation project gets into full swing this week. Tomorrow the furniture will be moved into the social hall. ***Worship Services will be held in the social hall the next Three Sundays.*** We are hoping to complete the lights and get the painting done this week. ***Please talk to Nate Larson to find out how you can help moving forward.***

Daily Matins: Morning Prayer will not be live streamed until the sanctuary is put back together for worship again. Daily prayers will still be sent out as usual during the hiatus.

Bartels Funeral: On Saturday, Pastor Lawson will be conducting the Funeral Service for Rev. Harry Bartels at Saved By Grace Lutheran Church in Gresham at 11:00. A lunch is planned for after the Service. The Service will also be live streamed, which can be accessed at the Facebook and Youtube icons on the church website: savedbygracelutheranchurch.org.

New Meditations: If you have not done so yet, please take your copy of the new *Meditations*. They are available on the white cabinet in the back of church.

Hope Medical Clinic: The Open House at the clinic in The Dalles is Friday, August 26th, from 5-7pm. There are exciting things happening at Hope these days. Long-time Executive Director, Cindy Brunck is retiring in a couple of weeks. The Director of the Hood River sight, Joni Sohal, will be stepping into the role of Executive Director of both sights. The *Walk for Hope* will take place on Saturday, October 8. Our team Facebook page will soon be up and ready to receive pledges and sign-ups for walking. We hope you can stop by the clinic on the 26th to meet the staff and get the grand tour!

Women's Missionary Rally will be held this year in Grants Pass, OR after having been postponed the last two years. The dates are September 23 & 24. *The registration deadline is September 1.* Please see the flyers on the back table.

Divine Service Articles: In 2020 Pastor started a bulletin insert series on the Divine Service. The point of the series was to provide historical, theological, and practical instruction on each part of the Service and its ceremony. We got through about half of the Service in a year's time before stopping. We will now take up this series again. While the new articles are being written, the old ones will appear in the weekly service folder to provide a review.

Family Fun Nights: Please talk to Pastor if you are interested in resurrecting the *family fun nights*. If we do so, we should think about having a more structure for the events, perhaps scheduling a specific activity each time.

Feasts, Commemorations, and Events Easter Week

The Office of Matins ("Morning Prayer") will not be live streamed during the renovation project

Monday: FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
Pastor's Day Off

Tuesday: *Commemoration of Old Testament Patriarch, Isaac;* Pastor at Bethany all day

Wednesday: *Commemoration of Blessed Johann Gerhard, Teacher & Confessor*
Pastor at Concordia

Thursday: Pastor at Bethany; Bible study, 10:00am

Friday: *Commemoration of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot, Hymnwriter & Teacher*
Pastor at Concordia

Saturday: *Commemoration of Old Testament Prophet, Samuel;*
Pastor at Bartels Funeral in Gresham

Next Sunday: *The Tenth Sunday After Trinity*
Concordia Holy Communion, 9:00am
Bethany Holy Communion, 11:00am
1 Peter Bible Study for the Parish, 12:30pm

The Divine Service

Why Do We Do the Things We Do? Or *What Does This Mean?*

When Christians gather together on Sunday mornings and at other times they most often call what they do **worship**. They speak of going to church to *worship God* and they speak of the Service as the *Worship Service*. *Worship* is an old English word that literally means “Worth-ship.” To worship God is to ascribe worth to Him. We worship God by glorifying Him for who He is and for what He does.

Worship is the first expression of faith. The 1st Commandment in Exodus 20:2-3 commands us to worship God: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.” ***Christian faith is worship.*** Faith believes everything God says. Faith relies on every promise God makes and depends on God for every good thing. Faith expects God to provide every need. Such faith is the purest and holiest form of worship. ***Such faith is the very essence of true worship.***

Martin Luther’s co-worker, Philip Melancthon, put it this way in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*: “Faith is that worship that receives the benefits that God offers; ... God wants to be honored by faith so that we receive from him those things that he promises and offers. ... This is how God wants to become known and worshiped, namely, that we receive blessings from him, and indeed, that we receive them on account of his mercy and not on account of our merits.”

Receiving blessings from God is the unique thing that sets Christian worship apart. Our praising God, confessing faith in Him, and honoring and glorifying Him is a **response** to the blessings that we first receive from Him. Receiving what God has to offer us is the very first and most important reason why Christians gather together for *worship*. It’s why we go through a set of rituals at each Worship Service.

There’s nothing uniquely Christian about gathering with other like-minded people on a regular basis to go through religious rituals. Folks of all religions gather together at set times to do the same. What is unique about Christian worship is its **source**. The source of Christian worship is the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the God Who is three Persons in one God and one God in three Persons. This is the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier God Who has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity Who is true God and true Man.

What is also unique about Christian worship is the **blessing** we receive from God in worship. In Jesus Christ, God has entered our human flesh and saved us from sin, death and hell by His own innocent birth, life, and death on the cross, and by His glorious resurrection from the dead. In Christ, God offers us the benefit of Christ's work, namely, forgiveness for all our sins, eternal life with Him, and salvation from hell and eternal damnation.

The forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are the greatest benefits that God offers us. These blessings are the heart and center of our life in Christ. They are what make life worth living. **The Worship Service is all about receiving these benefits from God.** Worship of God and faith in God comes from receiving the gracious forgiveness of all our sins from God.

The *Worship Service*, then, **is first God's Service to us sinners.** The main thing in worship is not what we offer God, but what God offers and gives to us. In the Divine Service heaven opens and God descends to earth in the preaching of His Gospel and in the Lord's Supper to **justify us sinners,** that is, to forgive us, to declare us righteous, and to bestow upon us all the treasures of heaven. How can we but glorify God in response to these gifts, sing praises to Him and confess our faith in Him?

Through the words of Jesus preached and read, and through the Sacrament of the Altar God serves us in our need and we receive what faith needs. We receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. In church God does His work for us and in us. He purifies us and cleanses us of our sins and He makes us holy that we may live as His holy people. All of this is what we receive every time we come to church, for this is what our Savior wishes to give us. He does not leave us wounded and impure. He sends us on our way clean and righteous. He also accepts our thanksgiving. He, who serves us in the Divine Service, enables us to then glorify Him both in church and in our daily lives.

Now, the reality of what is happening in the Divine Service is invisible to the naked eye. It's covered in the veil of words and rituals and ceremonies, all of which make up *the Liturgy of the Divine Service.* In some sense, the sublime, heavenly mysteries taking place in the Service can't be adequately explained by mere words. These things must be experienced. It's like in John 2 when Philip told his brother Nathaniel that he had found the Christ – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathaniel doubted, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip was at a loss for words. All he could say to Nathaniel was: "Come and see" (John 2:43-46).

On the other hand, God saves us through words (Matt. 28:18-20; John 8:47 & 51; John 14:23-24; Rom. 10:14-15; etc.). **He teaches us His Word and thus He**

imparts to us His heavenly treasures. We should learn to understand what's going on in the Divine Service and why the Service itself is so vital for our faith and life. It's good that we spend time learning why we do the things we do and say the things we say in church. Deepening our understanding will only serve to deepen what we are experiencing and receiving in church. It will strengthen our faith in our Savior Who is truly present and active, serving us in the Divine Service through His Word and Sacraments.

In that spirit, then, over the next several months I want to cover the words, rituals, and ceremonies of the Divine Service. Why do we do this or that ceremony? What do these words, or this or that action mean? I'll start from the very beginning and explain everything (by the way, if there's something particularly in the Service that puzzles you and you would like me to explain it, tell me. I'll put it on the list of items to talk about). Stay tuned. ...

Trinity 9: Temptations to idolatry exist today as they did in biblical times. The great idol "Death" draws many to its altar. They look to death for rescue from a crisis pregnancy or chronic disease or pain. Death's allure is so great it even tempts Christians to bow before it. But we have a way out of such temptations to faithlessness: "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 10:1-13). Christ our "Rock" never leaves us (10:4). We can trust in Him.

Prayer: *Rock of our salvation, may Your faithful service to us through Your cross and resurrection move us to be faithful to You. Amen.*

Life Thoughts in the Church Year/One Year Lectionary – Lutherans For Life



Trinity 9 Hymns: The Christian life is different from those around us on account of what our treasure is; on account of whom we serve: Jesus. This is the emphasis of today's CHIEF HYMN, *One Thing Needful* (ELH 182). The hymn was written by the Lutheran Pietist Johann H. Schroeder (1667-1699), who served as pastor in Meseberg. It was published in 1697 under the title: *One thing is needful, Luke 10:42*. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and

sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). The Biblical basis is in general as indicated above. The various stanzas follow the references in detail as follows: 1. But one thing is needful, Luke 10:42; 2. Where this is to be sought, in the Son of God, Col. 2:9; 3 and 4. How it is to be found, John 6:63 and the following; 5-9. The treasure we have in this one thing: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1:30; 10. How we are to strive after it with all our soul, Ps. 139:23-24; Phil. 3:8-9. Using the example of Mary and Martha, the hymn shows Christ as our Treasure, our true source of life. Sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing His teaching, "Mary's heart burning with fervent emotion, was quickened to serve [Him] with perfect devotion; And there filled with love for her Savior and Lord, Was, with the One needful, in blessed accord" (st. 3). So also, in Christ, Christians put aside anything that keeps us from His Word and Sacraments: "Thus, O Jesus, my endeavor Is to be forever Thine" (st. 4). For Christians, all time and responsibilities revolve around our Treasure: The Divine Service, daily prayer, and life in God's Word. For it is from here that "[Jesus'] own robe of righteousness, my highest good, shall clothe me in glory, through faith in His blood" (st. 6). The Word and Sacraments deliver to us all the gifts of Jesus' cross. Through faith in Jesus "the way is now free to the Father's high throne" (st. 8). In Jesus God's people are the possessors of "joys unnumbered, peace and blessing [and] comforts full and free" and sweetest communion which lasts eternally (st. 9). This hymn is truly one of the marvels of Lutheran hymnody. Stanzas 6 and 8 in particular are worthy of learning by heart and repeated meditation. The pleasing and easy-to-sing tune make this hymn a true treasure indeed! Today's HYMN OF INVOCATION *Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now* (ELH 23) reflects the words of Psalm 51:15 "O Lord, open my lips: and my mouth shall show forth Your praise," a fitting beginning to the Divine Service.