



QUASIMODO GENITI ("AS NEWBORN BABES") THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church
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WELCOME IN THE NAME OF OUR BLESSED LORD! We are pleased you are here, gathered around the Gospel in Preaching and the Sacraments! **GUESTS** – 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.

CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT: Concordia Lutheran Church confesses all the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired word of God without any errors. We also hold, without any reservation, to the teachings of the Evangelical-Lutheran Confessions contained in the 1580 Book of Concord. We confess these teachings to be the correct interpretation of Scripture and a true explanation of the one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic faith.

PASTORAL CARE AND GUESTS AT THE LORD'S SUPPER: Scripture and our Confessions teach that the Lord's Supper "is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine" (Small Catechism). 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 active members of sister churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and are not under church discipline in another congregation. In Christ, Pastor Lawson

APRIL 16, 2023 † 9:00 A. M.

† In the Name of Jesus †

Prayer before Worship: Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that of Your indescribable grace, for the sake of Your Son, You have given us the holy Gospel, and have instituted the holy Sacraments, that through these we may have comfort and forgiveness of sin: We beseech You, grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Your Word; and through the holy Sacraments day by day establish our faith, until we at last obtain eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Office of Preparation (Confession & Holy Absolution)

Hymn of Invocation: *350, He's Risen, He's Risen*

**C: He's risen, He's risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord;
He opened death's prison, the Incarnate Word.
Break forth, hosts of heaven, in jubilant song
And earth, see, and mountain the praises prolong. Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**The foe was triumphant when on Calvary
That Lord of creation was nailed to the tree.
In Satan's domain did the hosts shout and jeer,
For Jesus was slain, whom the evil ones fear. Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**But short was their triumph, the Savior arose,
And death, hell, and Satan He vanquished, His foes;
The conquering Lord lifts His banner on high;
He lives, yea, He lives, and will nevermore die. Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**O where is thy sting, death? We fear thee no more;
Christ rose, and now open is fair Eden's door.
For all our transgressions His blood does atone;
Redeemed and forgiven, we now are His own. Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**Then sing your hosannas and raise your glad voice;
Proclaim the blest tidings that all may rejoice.
Laud, honor, and praise to the Lamb that was slain,
Who sitteth in glory and ever shall reign. Have mercy on us, Lord!**

*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 1



Antiphon (**Pastor**) As newborn babes, `Alleluia!:/ Desire the pure milk of the Word. Alleluia!
`Alleluia!

Psalm (**All**) Sing aloud `to God our strength:/ make a joyful shout to the `God of Jacob.
You called in trouble, and I `delivered you:/ I answered you in the secret `place of thunder.
I am `the Lord your God:/ who brought you out of the `land of Egypt;
Open your mouth wide, and `I will fill it:/ With honey from the rock I would have
`satisfied you.

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**) As newborn babes, `Alleluia!:/ Desire the pure milk of the Word. Alleluia!
`Alleluia!

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.

The Collect for the Day

P: Grant, we beseech You, almighty God, that we who have celebrated the solemnities of the Lord's resurrection may, by the help of Your grace, bring forth the fruits thereof in our life and conduct; 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: *Ezekiel 37:1-14*

P: *In those days* Ezekiel prophesied: The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 'Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD." ' " So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.'

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

First Alleluia Verse (All)

Tone 1



Alleluia! Alleluia! He is ris`en from the dead:/ And behold, He goes before you into Galilee. `Alleluia!

Epistle: *1 John 5:4-10*

P: *Brethren:* whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Alleluia Verse

P: Alleluia! Alleluia! After eight days came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you! Alleluia!

C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sequence Hymn: *The Lutheran Hymnal 187, Christ Is Arisen*

P: **Christ is arisen From the grave's dark prison.**

We now rejoice with gladness; Christ will end all sadness, Lord, have mercy.

**All our hopes were ended Had Jesus not ascended From the grave triumphantly,
For this, Lord Christ, we worship Thee. Lord, have mercy.**

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We now rejoice with gladness;

Christ will end all sadness. Lord, have mercy.

Holy Gospel: *St. John 20:19-31*

P: The Holy Gospel according to † St. John, the 20th chapter:

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: *At that time* the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

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: Chief Hymn: 417, *“So Truly As I Live,” God Saith*

C: “So truly as I live,” God saith, “I would not have the sinner’s death,
But that he turn from error’s ways, Repent and live through endless days.”

To us therefore Christ gave command: “Go forth and preach in every land;
Bestow on all My pardoning grace Who will repent and mend their ways.

“All those whose sins ye thus remit I truly pardon and acquit,
And those whose sins ye do retain Condemned and guilty shall remain.

**“What ye shall bind, that bound shall be; What ye shall loose, that shall be free;
Unto My Church the keys are given To ope and close the gate of heaven.”**

**They who believe when ye proclaim The joyful tidings in My name
That I for them My blood have shed, Are free from guilt and Judgment dread.**

**The words which absolution give Are His who died that we might live;
The minister whom Christ has sent Is but His humble instrument.**

**However great our sin may be, The absolution sets us free,
Appointed by God’s own dear Son To bring the pardon He has won.**

**When ministers lay on their hands Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;
He who by grace the Word believes The purchase of His blood receives.**

**This is the power of Holy Keys, It binds and doth against release;
The Church e’er has them at her side, Our Mother and Christ’s holy Bride.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to Thee For absolution full and free,
In which Thou showest forth Thy grace; From false indulgence guard our race.**

**Praise God the Father and the Son And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
As ’twas, is now, and so shall be World without end, eternally!**

Sermon

Pulpit Hymn: *348, He Is Arisen! Glorious Word! (Tune: 167)*

**C: He is arisen! Glorious Word! Now reconciled is God, my Lord;
The gates of heav’n are open.
My Jesus died triumphantly, and Satan’s arrows broken lie.
Destroyed hell’s direst weapon.
Oh, hear, What cheer! Christ victorious Riseth glorious, Life He giveth –
He was dead, but see, He liveth!**

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

Hymn of Preparation: 366, *Ye Sons and Daughters of the King*

**C: Ye sons and daughters of the King, Whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave hath lost its sting: Alleluia!**

**On that first morning of the week, Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek: Alleluia!**

**An angel bade their sorrow flee, For thus he spake unto the three:
"Your Lord is gone to Galilee": Alleluia!**

**That night the Apostles met in fear, Amidst them came their Lord most dear
And said: "Peace be unto you here": Alleluia!**

**When Thomas afterwards had heard That Jesus had fulfilled His word,
He doubted if it were the Lord: Alleluia!**

**"Thomas, behold My side," saith He, "My hands, My feet, My body, see;
"And doubt not, but believe in Me": Alleluia!**

**No longer Thomas then denied; He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"Thou art my Lord and God," he cried: Alleluia!**

**Blessed are they that have not seen And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal they shall reign: Alleluia!**

**On this most holy day of days To God your hearts and voices raise
In laud and jubilee and praise: Alleluia!**

**And we with holy Church unite, As evermore is just and right,
In glory to the King of light: Alleluia!**

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; but chiefly are we bound to praise You for the glorious resurrection of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; for He is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us and hath taken away the sins of the world. By His death He has destroyed death, and by His rising to life again He has restored to us 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 to the Faithful

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

Hymn of Thanksgiving: 354, *Like the Golden Sun Ascending*, sts. 1, 2, 5, 9, 10

**C: Like the golden sun ascending, Breaking through the gloom of night,
On the earth his glory spending So that darkness takes to flight,
Thus my Jesus from the grave And Death's dismal, dreadful cave
Rose triumphant Easter morning At the early purple dawning.**

**Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious! Thanks to Thee, O Lord of Life!
Death hath now no power o'er us, Thou hast conquered in the strife.
Thanks because Thou didst arise And hast opened Paradise!
None can fully sing the glory Of the resurrection story.**

**Thou hast died for my transgression, All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation, On the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise And shall meet Thee in the skies.
Death itself is transitory; I shall lift my head in glory.**

**Grant me grace, O blessed Savior, And Thy Holy Spirit send
That my walk and my behavior May be pleasing to the end;
That I may not fall again Into death's grim pit and pain,
Whence by grace Thou hast retrieved me And from which Thou hast relieved me.**

**For the joy Thy birth doth give me, For Thy holy, precious Word;
For Thy Baptism, which doth save me, For Thy blest Communion board;
For Thy death, the bitter scorn, For Thy resurrection morn,
Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee, And in heaven I shall behold Thee.**

The Collect of Thanksgiving: pp. 82-83

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

C: And His mercy endures forever.

P: Almighty God, who gives the true Bread which comes down from heaven, even Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we beseech You, that we who received the Sacrament of His Body and Blood may abide in Him, and He in us, that we may be filled with the power of His endless life; 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: Dismissal Hymn: 357, *The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done*

C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph hath begun. Alleluia!**

**The pow'rs of death habve done their worst
But Christ their legion hath dispersed.
Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!**

**The three sad days have quickly sped,
He rises glorious from the dead.
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!**

**He closed the yawning gates of hell;
The bars from heaven's high portals fell.
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell. Alleluia!**

**Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee.
From death's dread sting Thy servants free
That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia!**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Bible Studies: In Bible Study today after the Service at Bethany we continue the lesson: *The Unreality of the LGBTQ+ Agenda vs. The Reality of Male & Female Made in the Image of God*. After an in depth discussion of a number of introductory matters, we will cover the four chapters of Ruth in the Thursday study at Bethany. ***All members of the parish are invited and encouraged to attend one or the other studies (or both) in person or via the google hangouts link.***

Pastor's Conferences Coming Up: Next week (April 26-29) Pastor will be in Port Orchard, WA attending the annual Pastors' Conference for ELS Circuits 11 & 12. The following week (May 3-5) Pastor will be traveling to Bakersfield, CA to present a paper at the annual conference of the Orthodox Lutheran Confessional Conference.

The Dalles & Hood River Hope Medical Clinic Fundraiser Event *Spring Legacy: Youth Art Gallery, Dessert & Fellowship*

When: Friday, April 28, from 7-9pm
Where: Gateway Church, The Dalles

Tickets

Single (\$15)
Couple (\$20)
Family (\$40)

Tickets may be purchased until April 24th (or when sold out) at hopemedicalclinic.org/support or by calling the clinic at (541) 386-1050.

Needs for Hope Medical Clinic: The clinic in The Dalles is still looking for a receptionist. The position is three days a week and they are accepting applications until April 30. If you know anyone who might be interested, call Sharon, The Dalles Center Director, at (541)-296-0650. In terms of material items, the clinic is in need of crib mattresses and is always in need of diapers (all sizes) and wipes.

A New ELS Apologetics & Worldview Article is available on the table in the entryway next to the weekly prayer sheet. It is the one that was published for January by Dr. Ryan McPherson entitled: *What If I'm Not Good Enough to be a Christian?* Dr. McPherson teaches at Bethany College and is the Director of the ELS's Center for Apologetics & Worldview.

Take a copy for yourself. Take 2-3 and pass them out to anyone you know who is struggling.

Expert Guests, Expansive Topics, Extolling Christ...Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in Collinsville, IL and hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken. *This week's teachings include: Putting Children at the Center of Family Policy, Responding to Unanswered Bible Questions, The Doctrine of the Trinity & the Bible, Lies about Human Nature, The Sacrifice of the Mass and more.* You can listen at your convenience at issuesetc.org, or download the free LPR mobile app on your cellphone. You can also find Issues Etc. on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Tune In, Podbean, Spotify, and iHeartRadio.

Feasts, Commemorations, and Events Easter Week

Monday: Pastor Off

Tuesday: Pastor at Bethany

Wednesday: Pastor at Concordia;

Thursday: *Commemoration of Blessed Johannes Bugenhagen, Luther's Pastor & Confessor*; Pastor at Bethany; Bible Study at Bethany, 10:00am

Friday: *Commemoration of St. Anselm of Canterbury, Doctor of the church*;
Pastor at Bethany

Saturday: Pastor's Day Off

Next Sunday: *Misericordias Domini: Second Sunday After the Resurrection*

Concordia Service of the Word, 9:00am

Bethany Holy Communion, 11am

Bible Study for the Parish at Bethany, 12:45pm

Explaining the Divine Service Communing with God: The Intercessions

After the Sermon, during the singing of the Offertory or Pulpit Hymn the pastor goes back to the altar for the *Intercessions*.

Lack of space prohibits quoting even a fraction of the Bible passages that call for Christians to pray for a variety of needs. A common prayer *for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs* has been a standard part of the Christian liturgy from the earliest days. Simply consider the most familiar passage, from 1 Timothy 2: *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence* (vv. 1-2).

During the first three centuries the common Intercessions at this point of the liturgy were known as the *Prayers of the Faithful*. At the time the *arcane discipline* was practiced everywhere. Everyone was invited to attend the first half of the Service, up to the end of the sermon. After the sermon only those eligible to take communion were allowed to stay. Everyone else was dismissed after some prayers had been said for them. Then the communion liturgy would begin with *the faithful* praying for all the needs of the church and the world.

St. Justin the Martyr, writing in about 150 A.D. gives us a window into the order of Service in his first *Apology*:

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, **in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized person, and for all others in every place. ... Having ended the prayers**, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; ...

The prayers of the various Eastern liturgies usually took the form of a litany, prayed at the beginning of the Service and then at other times throughout the liturgy, for example: *In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy,** etc.* That's still the case today in Eastern Orthodox churches.

The *Solemn Prayers* of Good Friday (TLH 116-117) are an ancient *Bidding*

Prayer of one form or another. Prior to each prayer the congregation is *bidden* to pray for whatever concern the prayer addresses. For example: “**Let us pray** also for the Ministers of the Word, for all vocations of men in the Church, and for all the holy people of God.” “Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: Receive the supplications and prayers which we offer before Thee for all Pastors and other servants of Thy holy Church, ... through Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

By the end of the 5th century the *arcane discipline* was no longer practiced. In the Western Church, by the time of Pope Gregory the Great (early 6th century), the *Intercessions* were being duplicated in the *Canon of the Mass* (i.e., the Eucharistic Prayer). In order to shorten the Service, the Prayers were simply dropped in favor the Canon.

This wasn't the case everywhere. Especially in France, England, and Germany something called the *Prone* (a French word) was widely used on Sundays and Festivals. The *Prone* was a ceremony conducted after the sermon. The priest would make announcements and give instructions to the congregation. He would also offer various intercessions and prayers in the language of the people.

By the time of the Reformation, the liturgy that Luther and most others were familiar with had no *Intercessions*. When Luther first revised the Mass in 1523, he made no reference to it. But in his *German Mass and Order of Service of 1526* he introduced, following the sermon, a series of prayers based on each petition of the Lord's Prayer before the start of the communion liturgy.

Other reformers such as John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli used this space as a time for “free prayers” (free prayers also became popular in later Lutheranism under the influence of the pietistic movement). Many Lutheran liturgies that appeared during the 16th century made an effort to develop specific *Intercessions* after the sermon. Others also used the ancient *Great Litany* (see hymnal, p. 137-138).

Historically, the *Intercessions* seem to be one of the most non-uniform portions of the Service, and thus one of the most misused. It's often been one of those things where you never know what you're going to get. Too often it becomes an opportunity to “re-preach” the sermon (a no-no) or even worse, offer flowery, emotive meanderings that have little to do with genuine prayer and more to do with proving what a gifted “prayer” the pastor is.

No part of the liturgy is a place for improvisation. So, even just an outline of what to pray for seems unwise. There should be a written text that the prayer may be offered *decently and in good order* (to quote St. Paul)

The *Intercessions* we have been using for about a year now, are written by the

Director of Worship for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and are available on the LCMS Worship Page. Intercessions are crafted for each Sunday, festival and special occasion of the church year using the lessons for the day as the context in which to pray for the various vocations, needs and people the church is called to pray for. I find that the texts of these prayers to be well written for the most part, and consistent in terms of what and who we are praying for, while reinforcing the themes of the liturgical day.

Whatever text is used, it is best to remember what one of the old liturgists of the Lutheran Church has written:

This prayer includes the fundamentals and the universals in its grasps. Like the Creed it lifts the individual and the local congregation out of personal and parochial consideration. It is a “prayer for all sorts and conditions of men.” It reveals true concern for the church in all its operations, the state and its governance, and the home and its welfare, while it remembers before God all men in their several callings and necessities. It is one of the outstanding elements in the liturgy and probably the one above all others which illustrates the congregation’s active exercise of its functions as the priesthood of all believers.

Easter 2: Our bodily life matters so much to God that He incarnated human flesh Himself. Even after accomplishing atonement by His body’s brokenness, He did not discard it but inhabits it by resurrection as His eternal instrument (John 20:27). When we are physically suffering sin’s consequences, our Savior’s words of forgiveness breathe healing (John 20:21-23), and His ways of faith bring peace into our very bodies.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, let me take hold of You by faith until Your wounded and resurrected body redeems my own. Amen.*

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