

**Clergy of the ELDoNA,  
affiliated congregations and missions**

**Rt. Rev. James Heiser**

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

**Rev. Jeffrey Ahonen**

Good Shepherd L.C., Tony, WI; Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI; Peace L.C., Ironwood, MI; Pure Blessings Lutheran Church, Brandon, WI

**Rev. Jerald Dulas**

Sts. Peter & Paul L. C., Simpsonville, SC; All Saints Lutheran Mission, Myrtle Beach, SC; St. Michael & All Angels Lutheran Mission, Martinez, GA; St. Bartholomew Lutheran Mission, Fort Myers, FL; St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC, Ormond Beach, FL

**Rev. Douglas Handrich (Emeritus)**

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL

**Rev. Kent Heimbigner**

Charity Lutheran Church, Burleson, TX

**Rev. Benjamin Henson**

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL

**Rev. Michael Henson**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

**Rev. Martin Jackson**

Lamb of God Ev. Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR

**Rev. Mark Mueller**

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, MN

**Rev. John Rutowicz**

St. Boniface Lutheran Church, Niles, MI

**Rev. Josiah Scheck**

Christ Lutheran Church, Richmond, MO

**Rev. Eric Stefanski**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR; Emmanuel Lutheran Mission, Conway, AR

**Rev. Timothy Tolar**

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK  
Homer Lutheran Mission, Homer, AK

**Rev. Brandon Warr**

St. Patrick Lutheran Church, Chipley, FL

**Rev. Dcn. Gary Harroun**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin, IL

**Rev. Dcn. Jacob Henson**

St. Henry Lutheran Mission (WI and MI), especially Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI

**Rev. Dcn. Anthony Oncken**

Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, TX

**Rev. Dcn. Floyd Smithey**

Sts. Peter & Paul Lutheran Church, Simpsonville, SC; St. James Lutheran Mission, Knoxville, TN

**Rev. Daniel Mensing**

# THE LUTHERAN HERALD



ST. BONIFACE, BISHOP AND MARTYR (JUNE 5)

**JUNE 1–JULY 5, 2025**

**A PUBLICATION OF  
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## The Calendar

*The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941): TLH; 2022 Supplement: ASBH

(Monday: M; Tuesday: T; Wednesday: W; Thursday: R; Friday: F; Saturday: S)

June 1	Exaudi	ASBH 36
June 5 (R)	St. Boniface, Bishop & Martyr	ASBH 89
June 8	Pentecost	ASBH 37
(W)	Ember Wednesday in Pentecost	
(F)	Ember Friday in Pentecost	
(S)	Ember Saturday in Pentecost	
June 15	Feast of the Holy Trinity/David Henkel	ASBH 38/ASBH 90
June 19 (R)	1700 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Formulation of the Nicene Creed	
June 22	Trinity 1	ASBH 39
June 24 (T)	Nativity of St. John the Baptist	ASBH 91
June 25 (W)	Presentation of the Augsburg Confession	ASBH 92
June 29	Trinity 2/Sts. Peter & Paul, Apostles	ASBH 40/ASBH 93
July 2 (W)	The Visitation	ASBH 94

### Salem Lutheran Church Anniversary

Next year, Salem Lutheran Church in Malone will celebrate the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the congregation. Before *that* anniversary, this year the congregation is celebrating the **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the dedication of the current church building. The anniversary of the current church **will be celebrated on June 8**. (The present Salem is the fourth church to stand on this ground since the parish was established in 1886; the cemetery was established in 1888.)

### St. Ignatius Lutheran Seminary

Summer Quarter is about to begin, with the Liturgics Practicum Intensive running June 9 to 13. Regular classes will run from June 16 to August 22. Summer Quarter classes are: E000—Greek (3 hrs.); S003—Theology (Trinity) (2 hrs.); E002—Pentateuch (3 hrs.); and P002—Liturgics 2 (3 hrs.) St. Ignatius currently has two students, Duncan Geldenhuys (Australia) and Jonathan Teo Zin Han (Singapore).



## PSALTER FOR THE ASBH NOW AVAILABLE

A companion volume for the *Augustana Service Book and Hymnal* is now available. *The Psalter* provides all of the Psalms in the KJV, pointed and set to Gregorian Psalm tones in modern notation. In addition to the Psalms, *The Psalter* has the prayer offices (Matins, Vespers, Litany Office) and the diocesan and daily lectionary. (Note: the prayer office and various lectionaries will be published in the final edition of the ASBH. *The Psalter* was created as a resource for congregations and individuals who desire to have the prayer offices and Psalms available in a single volume. Matins, Vespers, and the Litany Office *will* be published in the ASBH, as well.) *The Psalter* is available for \$20 on Amazon; congregational cost is \$15/copy, delivered. For congregational orders, please contact Bishop Heiser.

## UPCOMING EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS

Bishop Heiser will conduct his annual visitation of Pr. Dulas and Sts. Peter & Paul Ev. Lutheran Church in Simpsonville, South Carolina on the weekend of June 28 and 29. He will visit Pr. Warr and the saints of St. Patrick Lutheran Church in Chipley, Florida on July 2.

More details for the 2025 visitations should be available in the next issue of *The Lutheran Herald*. Most of this year's visitations will take place in July, August, and September.

## UPDATE ON THE ASBH

During the recent synod, attending pastors and deacons offered their helpful input regarding hymnody for the forthcoming hymnal. Corrections and additions in keeping with the discussions at synod will take several months, but the service book and hymnal is substantially nearer to conclusion after the helpful developments at the synod.

Isaiah describes Christians as “those who wait on the Lord.” Waiting is hard. The man who can wait shows profound self-control. Whether he waits for something he wants, waits before speaking, or waits before making rash plans, even the world recognizes him as having great strength of character. This is a form of that virtue called “temperance,” which St. Paul praises, saying, “Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things” (1 Cor. 9:25). Consider the skilled athletes of our own time: it took years of patient training to get where they are, and they fasted from many bodily pleasures that would have interfered with their goals. And they do it, says St. Paul, “to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown” (1 Cor. 9:25). For the Christian, to “wait on the Lord” is both a virtue and a skill, and it requires faith, prayer, and the power of the Holy Ghost. But the Christian who has learned to wait possesses a strong faith indeed.

The Christian waits for something far more certain than the athlete. The athlete waits and trains for a prize, but he does not know what calamity may happen and, because of an accident, he may lose to someone weaker. But the Christian waits for a promise: “they shall mount up with wings like eagles.” That is, they shall be glorified with their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Collect: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love: Make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord Exaudi Sunday

### IX. Of Excommunication.

The greater excommunication [i.e., execution or banishment], as the Pope calls it, we regard only as a civil penalty, and not pertaining to us ministers of the Church. But the less [i.e., the so-called ‘lesser excommunication’] is true Christian excommunication, which prohibits manifest and obstinate sinners from the sacrament and other communion of the Church until they are reformed and avoid sin. And ministers ought not to confound this ecclesiastical punishment or excommunication with civil penalties.

—The Smalcald Articles, Part III

*The selections from the Book of Concord for the Sundays of the Church Year are from H. E. Jacobs’ translation of the Book of Concord, and are taken from the table of suggested lessons for Sundays and Festivals of the Church. (The table of appropriate lessons was originally found in Pipping’s Christliches Concordienbuch [Leipzig, 1734].)*

Of all of the things Jesus could have prayed for, what He wanted most was unity with Him and among believers. So we ask the inevitable question, “How was Jesus’ prayer answered?” First, the holy Christian Church is united and always will be. Those whom Christ knows to be true believers comprise the invisible Church. They are united in their faith in Christ. It is as we say at the conclusion of the Nicene Creed: “I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins...”

At the same time, we know there are many for whom Jesus died who spurn His salvation. There are many others who believe in some points of faith, but not all, or they add to what is already there. It’s plain for any eye to see that Christendom on earth has division. There are even divisions among the name “Lutheran.” The one true faith has been “edited” by false teachers, with deletions and add-ons. There is the influx of ‘reason,’ compromise, and sentiment. Therefore, there are a myriad of ‘flavors’ of Christianity, all claiming they’ve got it right. We know this checkerboard Christianity is not right. It is not what God intended for His Church. And so, the Church on earth will continue to endure persecution for her unyielding stance. May the Lord keep us always in His true unity.

Collect: Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Lord of the Church commands us to beware of false prophets. Too often, in today’s society of “tolerance”, it is taught that “loving our neighbor” means protecting the false teachings and evil practices of the wolves. Meanwhile, faithful pastors and their congregations are ridiculed because they do not share fellowship with those of false or mixed confessions. But the Lord Jesus Christ knows how best to love our neighbors and our enemies, and He says, “beware of false prophets,” meaning we are to mark and avoid them. This shows love for Christ’s sheep, because it protects them from false doctrine; it also shows love for the wolf, because it calls him to repentance in hope for his restoration, lest he die in his own lies.

The fact that on the Last Day the wolves will say, “Lord, Lord,” shows that even now there are wolves within the visible Christian Church. Those we must avoid, including not just the obvious heretics, but also the false “Christians” and false “Lutherans” within the visible Church. It takes courage and prayer to oppose false doctrine. But, if we do, it shows that we fear God more than man. And, if we love the doctrine of Christ more than the favor of man, we will actually love men the more, for Christ’s sake.

Collect: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love: Make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

“I will... give You as a covenant to the people.” This promise is about the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard the saying, “The proof is in the pudding,” meaning you do not know how the dish is until you eat it. The proof of God’s goodness, His love, and His desire to be reconciled with all men is in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is spirit and cannot be touched. But, when the Son of God became man, he gave us the opportunity to experience Him in flesh and blood. Men heard Him with their ears; they saw Him in the flesh; after His resurrection, the disciples touched His wounds (John 20:20, 27). All this was to prove to us sinners that God loves us and desires our salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The same shows that Christ is truly present in the Lord’s Supper, for when Jesus took the cup He said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood” (1 Cor. 11:25). Isaiah says that the Christ Himself is the covenant. Likewise, if the cup is “the new covenant in My blood,” then His blood is truly present in the wine of the cup. For Christians the Lord’s Supper is the “proof” of Christ’s love, which is truly received by the mouth. Hence, article 13 of the Augsburg Confession: “the sacraments... [are] signs and evidences of the Divine will towards us.”

Collect: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love: Make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

In today’s reading we are told about two dominant world powers: Egypt and Assyria. In their heyday they were known for conquest and not compassion. They were rival empires who fought anyone who threatened them, especially each other. But according to Isaiah, this contention has completely disappeared. Why? Isaiah is speaking of their spiritual condition. There is a faithful remnant from each nation that not only believes in the one true God, but a “highway” exists that connects these once-warring nations. Isaiah emphasizes that Yahweh is a God for all people, even the once-despised Gentiles who were enemies of Israel. “In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’”

We recall the explosion of the New Testament Church at Pentecost in Acts 2, as people from everywhere were called to the faith. There’s also the ‘Close of the Age’ in Revelation 7, where people were gathered from “all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues.” What a joy to know that God has a plan to reach anywhere and everywhere with the Gospel. What a privilege that we are His instruments, directly or indirectly, to carry that message to the ends of the earth!

Collect: Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Yesterday we heard Isaiah preach of the impending doom of exile that awaited the unrepentant Israelites. He also preached a message of hope to those who would remain faithful, as well as to new converts among the Gentiles. By historical contrast, Ezekiel preached to a people who were already in exile. But interestingly, this writing from Ezekiel is quite similar to his predecessor of 150 years. Note the similar tone as the prophet records the words of God Himself: “Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.” The reward for their faithfulness would not only be God’s promised presence, but the exiles would return to restore Jerusalem to her proper place of worship. Those returning would form the core of the New Testament Church, continuing the line from which the Messiah would come.

God always promises forgiveness where there is repentance. Whether one be Jew or Gentile, it matters not. As David recorded in Psalm 51: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.”

Collect: Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The child of Elizabeth is the unborn John the Baptist. Later, when John is circumcised, his father Zacharias will prophesy of him, “you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways” (Luke 1:76). While yet unborn, John is already preparing the way of the Lord by testifying to the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary.

This passage is a powerful proof text for the baptism of children. The fact that John leaps for joy in his mother’s womb shows that it is possible for infants—even unborn infants—to have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, consequently, the Church baptizes infants because they are able to receive salvation by faith. We do not say that the child is saved by the faith of his parents, but that he is saved by his own faith, worked in him by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Baptism. Someone may object, however, that John the Baptist was an exception because Jesus was bodily present nearby. But Jesus is also present as Man and God in the Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, for He promises, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Collect: Almighty God, who hast dealt wonderfully with Thy handmaiden, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and hast chosen her to be the mother of Thy Son, and hast graciously made known that Thou regardest the poor and the lowly and the despised: Grant us grace in all humility and meekness to receive Thy Word with hearty faith, and so to be made one with Thy dear Son; who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



What is “wine on the lees”? During fermentation, yeast devours whatever sugars are in the grape juices, and then dies. Lees are the dead yeast particles left over. When wine is aged “on the lees,” the dead yeast is left to decompose in the wine, a process which puts a little sugar back in, resulting in a sweeter and more flavorful wine. But this requires patience and knowledge. The point is that, just as a skilled wine-maker knows how to make wine enjoyable to the human palate, God—who is the Maker and Redeemer of mankind—knows what is best and what is most enjoyable for human nature. That which is best and most enjoyable for mankind is the true God—to know Him and be saved by Him.

The “veil” that is over all the nations is the ignorance of unbelief. Because of unbelief, men seek happiness in all the wrong things—wealth, power, and bodily pleasures. But God has revealed through the Christ that human happiness is only found in the Triune God. In human history, God became man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has united the Divine Nature to our human nature, so that we, in Him, might have fellowship with God, in which is true and eternal happiness.

Collect: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love: Make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The key to the Beatitudes is the word “blessed”. After all, it appears nine times in the text. Let us look at the first four Beatitudes. There is a common theme of humbleness in them. We see four different ways to describe contrition. It means to be poor. It means to mourn. It means to hunger and thirst. It means to be repentant—to be miserable about our sinful condition. No, it’s not about being born on the “wrong side of the world’s tracks.” It’s about being born on the wrong side of the spiritual tracks—God’s holy tracks. No matter how bad a physical plight we may have, it is only temporal, not eternal. It is serious, but not consuming.

“Blessed”, then, means first of all to be spiritually poor—to be “contrite in heart.” But there is still more to this word. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “Kingdom of heaven” refers to the very presence of God and all the riches of His kingdom. We pray for His kingdom to come in the Lord’s Prayer, and so it does. God Himself promises His kingdom comes to us in His Word. His riches come attached to word, water, bread, and wine. So, how about this word “blessed” that goes with “kingdom”? If you are blessed, it means to have God’s kingdom—that kingdom of forgiveness—as your very own.

Collect: O God, who dost guide Thy Church through the faithful ministrations of Thy servants, grant that Thy ministers, like St. Boniface, stand steadfast against those who would work iniquity; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

What a dilemma. The poor and unprepared host has a late-arriving guest: a man who is hungry after a long and exhausting journey. Since it's his duty as host to provide a meal, he goes to great lengths to do so. But the daily bread supply has been exhausted, so the only option is to go for aid. He goes to his neighbor's house, regardless of the hour, and asks for help.

The request is not only bold in asking for another's bread, it is also audacious because of the late hour—doubly so because of how people slept in that culture's context. Most homes consisted of only one room, with the family sleeping close together for warmth. You can imagine that if just one person would rise, it would inevitably disturb the whole family. So is it any wonder that the man who was in bed did not want to get up? But the determined borrower knocked on the door with a "shameless persistence" (that's what the Greek word *anaideian* in our text means). After a while the friend finally gets up, for by now the whole household is disturbed, and he gets the man what he asks for.

In this parable, Jesus isn't comparing God the Father to a sleepy, selfish, or angry neighbor. Rather, He's contrasting the two. He's telling His disciples that if a neighbor can be persuaded by sheer persistence to give aid, how much more will your Father in heaven meet the daily needs of His beloved children!

Collect: Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The fact that our knee-jerk reaction to this text is to think of all the times we asked and did not receive demonstrates that we are, as the Lord says we are in verse 11, "evil". It is evil to make our selfish and ignorant desires the standard of whether or not God is good. That is why our Lord emphasizes "good gifts." If God Himself is truly good, He knows the difference between a good gift and a bad gift, and knows the right time to give it. By faith, the Christian trusts God's judgment over his own. The Large Catechism explains that to "have no other gods" means to "look to Him and expect from Him naught but good" (1st Commandment). Therefore, take all your desires to God in prayer, trusting that He will do what is good, even if you do not know what that is.

What guarantee do we have that God is good? Our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the guarantee. The proof of God's goodness is that, in the person of the Christ, God became man to die for our sins. Compared with the gift of the Christ, all other things are insignificant. Christ is the proof that God does give what is good: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Collect: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love: Make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



# Lesson from the Book of Concord

## The Second Sunday after Trinity

### ARTICLE XIII.

Of the Use of the Sacraments, they [the Lutheran theologians] teach, that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

—The Augsburg Confession

SATURDAY, JUNE 7: JOHN 8:12–19

EXAUDI

As Jesus declares Himself to be the Light of the World, He is claiming in no uncertain terms that He is the fulfiller of Isaiah's Messianic prophecies. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined" (Isaiah 9:2). And again in Isaiah 60: "Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you" (v. 1).

The Pharisees, whom Jesus was addressing, would of course have no part of this. They claimed that, according to Jewish law, you cannot make a case based on your own testimony alone. Jesus responds by claiming He is not alone; the Father Himself bears witness to Him. But they cannot know the Father because they do not believe the testimony of the Divine Word, nor do they recognize that the Father reveals Himself in the person of His beloved Son. "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." If you want to get to know someone, you listen to his words. If you want to know someone even better, you encounter him in person. May we always be attentive to Jesus' words, that He may richly dwell within us.

Collect: Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

# Lesson from the Book of Concord

## Pentecost Sunday

### THE THIRD ARTICLE.

#### Of Sanctification.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen.

*What is meant by this Article?*

Answer. I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church He daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

—The Small Catechism, Part II

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SATURDAY, JUNE 28: LUKE 12:13–21

1ST S. A. TRINITY

Our Lord's Word and truth are more important than our wealth. His Word and truth are also more important than our loved ones. His Word and truth are more important than our bodily life, as well. These things are important, but they are not more important than what our Savior teaches and commands. We can lose our wealth, our loved ones, and our bodily life, but if we are faithful, God will still give us a new life in eternity, which is more precious than all other blessings.

Sin and vanity makes us desire to rank and order our earthly blessings according to what seems right in our own eyes. But to be "rich toward God," as our Lord says in today's reading, is to be faithful. All of our good blessings come from the Lord. If wealth, or family, or bodily things pull us away from our Maker and Redeemer, then they become idols or false gods. We must cling to all His Words and truth by the power of His Spirit. As He says in Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." He knows our needs, and He will give us those things that will bless us forever, not just in this mortal life.

Collect: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Lord intended for households to be a blessing, but Satan works to destroy those, as well. The first family in God's good creation was quickly attacked by the enemy. Eve listened to Satan's lies and did as she pleased. Adam listened to his wife's error and followed her lead. And Cain was rebellious and self-willed, even to the point of murdering his brother. Our Savior did not come desiring to cause division in families and households. He came to teach the truth, and because the enemy convinces people to believe lies, households are divided because some are faithful to Christ and some are not.

Our mortal nature is weak in its sinfulness. But our Lord Jesus comes to strengthen us by His Word and Spirit. We are called to walk in the faith that rejoices in His cross of our salvation. Sometimes walking in faith also means bearing the cross of difficult work, sacrifice, and even grief, because loved ones may be weak or even faithless. Nevertheless, we are called to confess the truth of our Lord's Word, and do the work that loves our enemies and helps those who need to repent and believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ's forgiveness and righteousness.

Collect: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

We describe Jesus' suffering and death as His state of humiliation. We describe Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and enthronement as His state of exaltation. St. Peter explains that the resurrection of Jesus was witnessed by the Apostles over a period of forty days. The plan from the beginning was for the heavenly Father to send His Son to secure the atonement price for the whole world. The prophet David foretold Christ's ascending and being seated at the Father's right hand in Psalm 110. Once exalted, Jesus would send out the Holy Spirit, the Helper, the Spirit of truth from the Father to testify about His person and His work for us (John 15:26, 16:7).

St. Peter confesses in the Pentecost sermon that, despite the nation having rejected Jesus, He is both "Lord and Christ." The human nature of Jesus is both our divine Lord and the promised Christ. These facts are abundantly clear from the Old Testament Scriptures of Joel and David, from the resurrection, and now from the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

With those facts assuredly known, the human response should be repentance for sins and the faith-filled reception of holy Baptism for the remission of sins. The gift of the Holy Spirit and this promise of salvation through faith in Jesus works salvation and is gladly received by believers called by the Word.

Collect: O God, who didst give Thy Holy Spirit to Thine Apostles: Grant unto Thy people the performance of their petitions, so that on us to whom Thou hast given faith, Thou mayest also bestow peace; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The return of Christ on the Last Day is preached in two ways. On the one hand, it is a day of wrath and fear as Jesus comes to punish the unrepentant wicked. However, it is also a day to which believers look forward in their salvation. Jesus returns to bring salvation and eternal life.

In today's reading, St. John speaks of the first coming when the Father sent His Son into the world. That first coming could also be understood as a coming for either condemnation or salvation. That first coming did arouse quite a bit of fear and trembling. The demons cried out, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29). At the beginning of His life Herod sought to kill Jesus, as He was viewed as a threat. The religious authorities finally did have him killed, lest He take away their position before the people. For those practicing evil, the coming of the Light required an executed plan to extinguish that Light.

Nevertheless, Jesus' first coming was not to condemn the world, but to save the world. The world was already condemned by its sin; He came to live perfectly for us and to die sacrificially, that "the world through Him might be saved." Belief in Jesus Christ rescues from condemnation and secures everlasting life after death.

Collect: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

As children of God, we are called to confess all that He has commanded. We are to do the work and fulfill the callings that He has given us according to His Spirit and Word. We have the privilege of being called together in remembrance of the holy Sabbath rest in the Divine Service, where He renews us with teaching and strengthens us with His Holy Supper. But as we receive that Word in our ear and that holy food on our tongue, we are to then go forth and show His Gospel blessings in all aspects of our life.

Satan despises it when we fulfill our vocations. The enemy taught our first parents to do what seemed right in their own eyes. Suffering and death came from their self-centered weakness. Disciples of the enemy continue to hate God's work and truth. They hate us if we try to speak or do the things that our Lord has taught us. They hate good order and faithful service that comes from God. And if they can't kill our bodies they try to poison our souls with their vain treachery.

Our Savior comforts us, saying we are not to fear the enemy. We fear, love, and trust in our merciful Lord above all things, because He first loved us by the grace of Christ crucified. By His Spirit we are given strength to live and confess His truth!

Collect: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

True righteousness only comes through Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus is the one who lived according to the Law and kept it perfectly for our sake. As we are made alive in Him, by His grace and Holy Spirit, He continues to do the work of His love through us.

As mentioned yesterday, Satan would have us forget God's work of love and focus on a twisted, self-serving gospel. We are forgiven and saved from sin only by faith in Christ. But if we ignore the ongoing work of God's love through us, and rebel against His commandments to walk faithfully, then we return to sin and transgression. We are saved by His free gift of grace and justified through faith. Faith then does the work of love according to God's good and wise Law. The whole counsel of God's Word and truth is believed, taught, and confessed when we faithfully remember the Law and the Gospel, observing all that our Lord has commanded.

It is not enough to call oneself 'Lutheran'. Nor is it enough to pay 'lip service' to the Augsburg Confession and the rest of the Book of Concord. If we are to properly celebrate the confession of the Lutheran Reformers, then we must first be faithful to all that our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us in His Word, according to the proper understanding of the Law and the Gospel.

Collect: Almighty God, who, through the preaching of Thy servants, the blessed Reformers, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine forth: Grant, we beseech Thee, that, knowing its saving power, we may faithfully guard and defend it against all enemies, and joyfully proclaim it, to the salvation of souls and the glory of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Jesus' words, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him," does not mean that God only draws some or only desires to save some. God wants all men to be saved. However, all men due to their sinful nature are unable to come to the knowledge of salvation without the true teaching come from God. The Apostle Paul explains, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, God sent Jesus to accomplish our salvation and be the Bread of Life. God also sent forth prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers to proclaim Jesus to be "the living bread." It is the teaching of the Gospel which draws men to believe in Jesus Christ.

God has not restricted this message only to certain people. The message was sent out "to all nations." The invitation is wide open; "he who believes in Me has everlasting life." The atonement is valid "for the life of the world." If anyone eats of this Bread—the proclaimed good news of forgiveness in Jesus—he will live forever. Despite the negative reaction of some, the coming and teaching of Jesus is the proof that the Father wishes to draw all men through the Holy Spirit-infused Gospel message.

Collect: O Lord, may the Comforter, who proceedeth from Thee, enlighten our minds, we beseech Thee, and guide us into all truth, even as Thy Son hath promised; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

It was a common misconception that the Triune God was partial to the nation of Israel and prejudiced against other nations. Almighty God chose Abraham and fulfilled His promise to make him into a nation. God had formed a nation from the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob into the nation of Israel. And finally, God had brought His specially chosen people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

However, God desired that all nations would be blessed through Abraham (Genesis 12:3, 18:18, etc.). God intended that the Israelite nation would be “a light to the Gentiles ... for salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 42:6). Most of all, that Jewish nation was to be the nursery to which the Savior would be born, so that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). Thus, God was not showing partiality. That salvation, which is from the Jews, is the result of the promised Savior’s death by hanging on a tree. The Father confirmed salvation through faith in His Son by raising Him from the dead on the third day. No one gets a pass because of one’s nationality, or any other earthly reason. Without faith in Jesus Christ there is no salvation.

Those who confess their sins and believe in Jesus “will receive remission of sins.” The Old Testament describes faith as fearing God. The New Testament describes faith as loving God. Dr. Luther summarizes and says that believers “fear and love God.”

Collect: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The pinnacle of God’s mercy is shown in the Gospel of our forgiveness in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Our salvation from sin and His promise of eternal life in glory is the utmost focus of what we believe, teach, and confess as His people. But Satan also lies and twists this powerful Gospel message. The enemy encourages us to selfishly turn inward on our feelings of freedom and to neglect the further work and witness of what Christ would accomplish through us. Our gracious Lord saves us from sin and death, but He does not want us to sit around in idleness, thinking, “I’m forgiven and I’m going to heaven, so now I can just focus on me and how I’m going to kill time until then...”

God sends His faithful children as servants, called to obey His commandments and do the work of love, so that His truth and righteousness may be given as a witness to all others. This is the wonderful message that He proclaimed in the song of Zacharias at the birth of John. Zacharias and his miracle son were part of God’s merciful work to declare our salvation in Jesus Christ, but their lives were also examples of faithful action and duty.

Collect: O Lord God, Heavenly Father, who, through Thy servant John the Baptist, didst bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world and that all who believe in Him shall inherit eternal life: We humbly pray Thee to enlighten us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may at all times find comfort and joy in this witness, continue steadfast in the true faith, and at last with all believers attain unto eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.



"You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious." Satan's lies are powerful and not to be underestimated. Our weak, sinful mortal nature tells us the satanic lie: "I have my reasons; I'm going to do what's right in my own eyes, regardless of what God has clearly said..."

True faith in God does what is objectively right according to His Word, even when we don't "feel" like doing it. God is gracious when He keeps sending His Word and His servants who teach that Word. We all fall into rebellions, great or small. Sometimes we feel like being self-serving and we refuse, saying, "I'm not going to Church today," or "I'm not going to fulfill my responsibilities," or "I'm not going to love my enemy..." These are rebellions against His commandments.

Nevertheless, God is merciful. He still calls us to repent, to hear, to obey, and to love. He always loves us, and He always works to build us up in faith and true righteousness according to the power of His Spirit and His Word in the works of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Collect: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Due to their sin, the land had been made desolate by means of a famine and four kinds of locusts sent as punishment from God. It had caused man and beast to suffer. God told them in Joel 2:12, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." He connected a promise with it, "Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm" (Joel 2:13). Evidently, they trusted in God's Word, and returning to Him they held Him to His promise. Today's text announces a Gospel promise of good news. "Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God."

God promises to take away their sin and shame. He promises to replace the devastation with plenty. But more importantly, the Lord promises to be their God and live with them. Jesus Christ was the teacher for righteousness. The Son of God left His rightful throne and, taking on human flesh, came and dwelt in their midst. He lived a righteous life for us. He taught righteousness through faith in Him. We receive both the former blessings and the latter blessings. Pentecost is only the beginning of the abundant harvests which will come to God's people. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit many will come to learn about Jesus and receive His righteousness.

Collect: O merciful God, we beseech Thee that Thy Church, which was gathered together by the Holy Ghost, may nowise be troubled by hostile attack; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First, we received the gift of Jesus Christ, the teacher of righteousness, who secured our salvation. And then “it shall come to pass afterward” that we receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is a double blessing. Actually, it is the same blessing. First, the blessing is purchased or won for us. Second, the blessing is delivered by the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent to testify of Himself (John 15:26).

Dr. Luther alluded to Joel’s prophecy, “the remnant whom the Lord calls,” when he wrote in the Small Catechism, “The Holy Spirit has called us by the Gospel...” This salvation through the Holy Spirit’s calling happens when the Word of God is preached. Jesus preached the good news of salvation and sent out His Apostles to do the same. Today’s pastors follow in the Apostolic train as they are divinely called to deliver the good news of salvation.

Finally, to those who received the message of forgiveness is given faith to rely upon Jesus, our righteousness. “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Until the Last Day comes, that “great and awesome day of the Lord,” believers will be found in worship and prayer.

Collect: O Lord, we beseech Thee, deign to pour forth into our minds the Holy Ghost, by whose wisdom we were created, and by whose providence we are guided; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass taketh away the sins of the living and the dead, by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning, that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ’s passion was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all sins, as it is written to the Hebrews (10:10), “We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ, once for all.” Also, 10:14: “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Scripture also teaches that we are justified before God through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. Now if the Mass take away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act, justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow.

But Christ commands us [Luke 22:19]: “This do in remembrance of Me”; therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefit it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For, to remember Christ, is to remember His benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. Nor is it enough only to remember the history, for this the Jew and the ungodly also can remember. Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament [Communion] may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: “Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine.”

Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holyday, and also other days, when any desire the Sacrament it is given to such as ask for it. And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass they speak very much. Chrysostom says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others. And it appears from the ancient Canons, that someone celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons receive the Body of the Lord, for thus the words of the Nicene Canon says: “Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter.” And Paul [1 Cor. 11:33] commands concerning the Communion: “Tarry for one another,” so that there may be a common participation.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since the public ceremonies are retained for the most part, like those hitherto in use; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses, doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chapt. 33) testifies: “Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday, the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except only the celebration of the Eucharist.”

—The Augsburg Confession

# Lesson from the Book of Concord

## The First Sunday after Trinity

### ARTICLE XXIV.

Falsely are our churches accused of Abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone, that the unlearned be taught. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the Church a language understood by the people [1 Cor. 14: 2, 9], but it has also been so ordained by man's law.

The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first proved. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries, than among us.

But it is evident that for a long time, it has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men, that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. For it is unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches, by what manner of men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist, when he says [1 Cor. 11:27]: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." When, therefore, our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake.

Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, by their own negligence, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain of the troubles of the Church, seeing that this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses, which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer. Great dissensions have arisen concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass, as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries, by the very men who were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For, in the Ten Commandments, it is written (Exodus 20), "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely, that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the

# Lesson from the Book of Concord

## Trinity Sunday

### ARTICLE I.

Our Churches, with common consent, do teach, that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet that there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" they use as the fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans who assumed two principles [gods], one Good, the other Evil; also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that "Word" signifies a spoken word, and "Spirit" [Ghost] signifies motion created in things.

—The Augsburg Confession

*The selections from the Book of Concord for the Sundays of the Church Year are from H. E. Jacobs' translation of the Book of Concord, and are taken from the table of suggested lessons for Sundays and Festivals of the Church. (The table of appropriate lessons was originally found in Pipping's Christliches Concordienbuch [Leipzig, 1734].)*

“I have heard it all before.” Many of us are familiar with these words and the tone of frustration that often comes along with them, whether we say them, or we are hearing them from employees, or children, or even younger siblings. In many cases, when words are repeated there is a good reason for it, and there certainly was when Moses repeated the Law to the nation of Israel.

All of the ceremonies and civil laws were to govern their lives and guide them as they awaited the Christ, who was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to them. In the midst of all these laws, it could be easy to forget the greatest and most important commandment: to love the Lord God (who is one God) with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. If we understand this Law correctly, we understand that we are unable to follow it, and that to seek salvation by the Law is vain and futile. But salvation comes to us by grace, through faith—Christ has kept this, and all of the rest of the Law, for us. And now that we stand in grace, the Holy Spirit will help us to live in that grace and do good works according to it.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

At this point in St. Paul’s apostolic journeys and ministry he wanted to preach more in Asia. But just before this reading, Luke tells us that “the Spirit did not permit them.” Rather, it was time for St. Paul and his company to go to Macedonia, which they understood to mean that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel there. This statement of Scripture makes it plain that the Holy Spirit is God—in this case, He is identified as “the Lord” in the way that we normally speak of God.

This call and the preaching of the Gospel also bore much fruit. A woman named Lydia, who already was a worshiper of God, heard the Gospel, was baptized along with her household, and invited Paul and his company to stay at her house. It was to the congregation that was formed here that Paul wrote his epistle to the Philippians, which speaks at length of Paul’s joy to see God’s Word spread among them, and to see the evident fruits of faith in their generosity. At the time St. Paul wrote this letter, there were evidently many more believers there, as St. Paul also writes to the bishops and deacons.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

These verses use the closeness of human relationships to show us how God desires salvation for us and to keep us strong and steadfast in it. At the same time, it gives us some glimpse into how united the persons in the Trinity are. This closeness and unity is precisely the way that God identifies Himself and wants us, His people, to think of Him.

As close as the Father and the Son are, they were united in purpose that the Son should take on humanity and fulfill for us the Law that we cannot, so that we could be redeemed from sin, death, and the power of the devil. This work required the Son to die, but He did so willingly and without complaint. Now that He has called us to faith, He also sends us the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts and cries out, not in fear or terror, but as one pleads with a loving father, "Abba!" It is this work of God which converts us from slaves of the Law into His sons under grace, that is, members of God's immediate family and heirs of those heavenly benefits.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

Our reading for today contains the Benediction that is familiar to us, since every Divine Service closes with the pastor saying these words. This Benediction points to the Trinity. There is clearly a three-fold blessing, which is to be delivered as a single blessing. The Lord Himself connects His name to this blessing, not just once but three times, and further makes it clear that this is how the priests of the nation of Israel (that is, Aaron and his sons) are to put God's name on the children of Israel.

God frequently declares that He is a merciful and gracious God, and we can see that so clearly in this blessing. This blessing calls for God to bless us, to be gracious to us, to look upon us with favor, and to give us peace. What greater blessing can we have beyond God's name? What greater thing can we hope for in this life but that when He turns His face to us, when He looks upon us with favor and gives us peace? By His own grace, and through the merit of Jesus Christ His Son, this is exactly how God views those who trust in Him for their salvation.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

These days, it seems we overuse the word “awesome”. In older English, “awe” reflected a sense of wonder and excitement, but also a little bit of dread. In particular, it could include the kind of dread that one might experience when seeing a vision of God sitting on a throne and attended by His angels. And the angels were singing a hymn that reminds us of the Benediction in Numbers—it is threefold, like that Benediction. Yet, it is a hymn to the one God. This shows us again that God is revealed as triune also in the Old Testament—we see “Holy, Holy, Holy” and we immediately think of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Isaiah, of course, is terrified; but because God is gracious and merciful, one of the seraphim assures Isaiah that his sin is purged and touches his mouth with a live coal. Isaiah then fulfilled his calling as a prophet for many years, going into exile in Babylon and providing some of the clearest and most beautiful prophecies to point to the Christ who was to come. Isaiah faithfully preached that hard times were coming, but that God had not forgotten, and would not forget, His people.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

John the Apostle and Evangelist records the words of Christ speaking of the unity of the Father and the Son. Clearly the Father is God and the Son is God—but in this case, our Lord also explicitly includes the Holy Spirit. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and also knowing that He proceeds from the Father, might by itself be enough to know that the Holy Spirit is a person in the one God. These verses are a key testimony from our Lord Christ Himself as to how we should think of the relationship between the three persons in the Godhead—He will send the Holy Spirit from the Father, so we can say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son. They are one in purpose and will. That purpose and will is to comfort and help us here on earth as we await our final salvation, whether that be to see our Lord return in glory, or whether we rise with the dead on Judgment Day. Either way, our Lord loves us and wants to keep us strong in faith until the end.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.