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Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. *Hebrews 12:1*

The discipline of daily prayer is as old as Scripture itself. The Old Testament gives witness to God’s people at prayer in the morning and the evening (Psalm 55:17). The earliest Christian communities inherited the daily prayer patterns of ancient Judaism (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1). Over the centuries, the specific patterns of Christian daily prayer varied among community, region, and era, but that Christians were praying daily and in an ordered fashion was virtually a constant.

At the time of the Reformation, the monastic prayer offices of Matins and Vespers were retained in Lutheran lands. In larger cities, clergy and parish school students continued to pray these offices and observe the festivals and saints’ days as part of their daily routine. At home, Lutheran families were directed to their Bibles, catechisms, and hymnals for daily spiritual nourishment. Publications of Luther’s “House Sermons,” as well as martyrologies (“lives of the martyrs”) by Georg Major and other reformers, provided additional devotional material for the faithful. Thus, in stereo, the voice of Lutherans at daily prayer was carried on in church and school through the use of Matins and Vespers, as well as at home through the use of various devotional resources.

In the nineteenth century, a resurgence of interest in *Hausandacht* (“home devotions”) among Lutherans prompted a wealth of additional devotional publications from pastors and editors such as C. F. W. Walther, J. K. W. Lohe, August Crull, Georg Link, and many others. In the Missouri Synod, such a piety for daily devotions continued into the twentieth century with the advent of *Portals of Prayer* in 1937. And from 1870 until as late as 1940, even the calendar in the front of the *Lutheran Annual* and its parallel German edition carried on a rich commemoration of Old Testament, Early Church, medieval, and Lutheran saints.

Throughout the length and breadth of the Lutheran tradition, Scripture, psalmody, and hymnody have provided a core diet for Christ’s holy people—all within a Church Year calendar that observes the life and teachings of Christ, as well as remembers and gives thanks for the lives of faithful Christians who have gone before us and are now in the midst of that “great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1; Ap XXI 4–7). In this way, an observance of daily prayer finds itself integrally connected with the prayer life of the Church catholic—both in time and throughout the world today.
Treasury of Daily Prayer finds itself firmly rooted within this astonishingly rich tradition. At the heart and core of this volume is the Daily Lectionary. While based on ancient lectionary patterns that preceded it, this Daily Lectionary is unlike most in that it begins where the development of the Church Year began historically—with the Lent-Easter cycle centered in the celebration of Easter, the “Queen of Feasts.” Psalms, hymns, prayers, and selected writings from the Church Fathers or the Lutheran Confessions all find their orbit around the appointed Scripture for the day.

Additional resources in Treasury of Daily Prayer include the traditional orders of Matins and Vespers, as well as the full selection of prayer offices found in Lutheran Service Book. By offering a variety of possibilities, the Treasury provides an all-in-one resource for the family, individual, or small group.

The prayers we pray, we pray with one another—with those pilgrims who have gone before us and with those with whom we travel in this life to the next. And ahead of us all goes Jesus—the “founder and perfecter of our faith” and our Great High Priest who continues to intercede on our behalf (Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:34). And His Spirit intercedes for us when we are not able to pray (Romans 8:26). Thus we sing with Luther:

To God the Holy Spirit let us pray
For the true faith needed on our way
That He may defend us when life is ending
And from exile home we are wending.
Lord, have mercy!
(Lutheran Service Book 768:1)

Jon D. Vieker
Assistant Director
LCMS Commission on Worship
It is with personal joy and satisfaction that I welcome the publication of *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. I have firsthand knowledge of the sincerity with which it was envisioned, as well as the labor of love by which it has been carefully assembled. It grew out of the work of the Lectionary Committee of the Lutheran Hymnal Project, a group with which I was privileged to serve from the beginning of that project in December 1998 until the publication and reception of *Lutheran Service Book* in fall 2006.

The primary responsibility of the Lectionary Committee was the development of the lectionary for the Sundays and seasons of the Church Year, that is, the appointed readings of the Holy Scriptures, the Psalmody, and the prayers used in the Divine Service.

The Lectionary Committee also desired to serve the practice of daily prayer with readings of Holy Scripture throughout the year. Indeed, the readings of the Word of God are the principal foundation for the book now in hand. A number of criteria were considered in putting together a daily lectionary of the Scriptures. We wanted to include as much of the Bible as possible, but to limit the length of each reading to a reasonable number of verses. We wanted the selections to follow the seasonal movements of the Church Year, but without becoming too complicated or difficult in arrangement. We wanted to be sure that not only the great stories of the Bible were featured but also those portions that might otherwise be overlooked and forgotten. In short, the committee wanted to lead people into the full scope of the Holy Scriptures in a way that would be encouraging and manageable.

With those criteria in place, I was assigned the task of assembling a one-year cycle of daily readings. There were to be two readings for each day, one from the Old and one from the New Testament. Numerous daily lectionaries were reviewed, as well as the daily prayer practices of the medieval Western Church and the broad contours of the Eastern Orthodox approach to the reading of the Scriptures. The four Holy Gospels were placed first as the key foundational building blocks, as well as the inclusion of as much as possible from the five Books of Moses. Further, to choose what other Scripture should be read, and at what point in the year it should be read, a variety of historical precedents were consulted. Sunday School and Lutheran Day School curriculums, as well as various other catechetical materials, were consulted in order to make sure that all the most necessary stories were included. By that arrangement, it was possible to include almost the entire New Testament and about one third of the Old Testament. Everything was planned along the seasonal lines of the Church Year, but without attempting to coordinate specifically with either of the Sunday lectionaries.

In addition, the committee developed a calendar of commemorations of saints drawn from the history of the Church—from the Old Testament through the Reformation and
These commemorations have been recovered from broad historical precedent, and they are offered in Lutheran Service Book and in Treasury of Daily Prayer in renewed support of those past examples of piety and practice among Lutherans. These commemorations are intended especially for the observances of daily prayer, whether in the home and family or in the chapels of our Lutheran schools.

The daily lectionary was developed with the intention of providing a prayer book or manual. This became a goal for the committee. With this in mind, the Daily Lectionary was organized to make it as simple as possible for any Christian to pick up the prayer book and use it. The Daily Lectionary’s calendar begins with Ash Wednesday and continues through the entire Time of Easter according to the days of the Church Year. The remainder of the lectionary is assigned according to the civil calendar, from the earliest possible date that may follow Holy Trinity to the latest possible date that may precede Ash Wednesday. Another unique feature, envisioned to make the book easier to use, groups all the materials intended for each day in the same place. After all, busy parents with a family of active children cannot afford to lose everyone’s attention while they search the book for the component that comes next.

With Treasury of Daily Prayer now in hand, readers may readily see that in addition to the daily selection of the Holy Scriptures, there are psalms, hymns, prayers, and writings from Church Fathers and the Confessions. The commemorations, as they occur throughout the year, are featured and supported with helpful information and additional resources for observation. All of this has been laid out with the utmost clarity and simplicity for the sake of allowing the Word of God to have free course among His people, lifting up their hearts and opening their lips in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

The goal and purpose of this book is that ordinary, everyday Christians are encouraged and assisted in the daily exercise of their faith, firmly grounded in God’s Word and expressed in prayer. No book in the world (not even the Bible itself) can actually do the believing and praying for you, but this treasury of the Word of God—for that is precisely what this book is—provides you with the very means by which the dear Lord Jesus Christ and His life-giving Holy Spirit strengthen your faith and teach you to pray to our Father in heaven.

D. Richard Stuckwisch
Feast of St. Mark, Evangelist
25 April 2008
From antiquity the church year, for very good reasons, has been divided into certain festivals, in order that the chief articles of the Christian doctrine can be taught to the people in a definite order and inculcated by annual repetition.

—Martin Chemnitz
Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F33)

Reformation Day

On October 31, 1517, an Augustinian monk posted ninety-five statements for discussion on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Dr. Martin Luther hoped that posting his theses would bring about an academic debate regarding repentance, the sale of indulgences, and other matters of concern within the Roman Catholic Church. However, Rome eventually excommunicated Luther, judging him to be a heretic. Luther’s reforms, centered on the teaching that a believer is justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, sparked religious reforms not only in the German states but also in many European countries. In 1667, Elector John George II of Saxony standardized the custom of observing Luther’s October 31 posting of the Ninety-five Theses.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 22–26

1 November

All Saints’ Day

Psalmody

1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary;* praise him in his mighty heavens!

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;*

3 Praise him according to his excellent greatness!

4 Praise him with the trumpet sound;*
   praise him with the lute and harp!

5 Praise him with the timbrel and dance;*
   praise him with the strings and pipe!

6 Praise him with sounding cymbals;*
   praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

7 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!*
   Praise the LORD!
—Psalm 150

Additional Psalm: Psalm 147

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 34:1–12

The Death of Moses

1 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3 the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, 6 and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. 7 Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. 8 And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the
The Time of the Church

The Triumphal Entry

1Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and she will send them at once.” 4This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

6The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. 7They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. 8Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” 10And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” 11And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

12And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

14And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant,

16and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “ ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?”

17And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

18In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. 19And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.


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20When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” 21And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. 22And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

Writing

Patriarchs of sacred story
And the prophets there are found;
The apostles, too, in glory
On twelve seats are there enthroned
All the saints that have ascended
Age on age, through time extended,
There in blissful concert sing
Hallelujahs to their King.

Thus the old funeral hymn . . . speaks of the church of all the perfected in heaven (cf. Heb 12:22–23). And this thought of the fathers of the church who have preceded us into heaven rings through the centuries down to Wilhelm Löhe’s hymn on the Sacrament, where it says of heaven: “There the angel host stands inflamed in your [God’s] light, and my fathers gaze upon your sight.” All the saints, from the beginning of the world who have died believing in the Redeemer, whether he was yet to come or had come in the flesh, all members of the people of God of all times to the present day—in this sense, all are fathers of the church. Whether Christians have found themselves in the loneliness of a Siberian prison camp or the isolation of the diaspora or suffering inner alienation within the great secularized “churches” of our century, it has become ever more the consolation of those who have suffered for the sake of the church and whom God has led on a “lonely path” to know that they are not alone in the one church of God. They who have been removed from every error and sin of the earthly church stand with us in the seamless fellowship of the body of Christ.

—Hermann Sasse

Hymnody

Let shouts of gladness rise
Triumphant to the skies.
Now comes the King most glorious
To reign o’er all victorious.
Hosanna, praise, and glory!
Our King, we bow before Thee.
—O Bride of Christ, Rejoice

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that, together with them, we may come to the unspeakable joys You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F34)

All Saints’ Day

This feast is the most comprehensive of the days of commemoration, encompassing the entire scope of that great cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded (Hebrews 12:1). It holds before the eyes of faith that great multitude which no
man can number: all the saints of God in Christ—from every nation, race, culture, and language—who have come “out of the great tribulation . . . who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9, 14). As such, it sets before us the full height and depth and breadth and length of our dear Lord’s gracious salvation (Ephesians 3:17–19).

It shares with Easter a celebration of the resurrection, since all those who have died with Christ Jesus have also been raised with Him (Romans 6:3–8). It shares with Pentecost a celebration of the ingathering of the entire Church catholic—in heaven and on earth, in all times and places—in the one Body of Christ, in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Just as we have all been called to the one hope that belongs to our call, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4–6). And the Feast of All Saints shares with the final Sundays of the Church Year an eschatological focus on the life everlasting and a confession that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). In all of these emphases, the purpose of this feast is to fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, that we might not grow weary or fainthearted (Hebrews 12:2–3).

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

2 November

Psalmody

22 The stone that the builders re-jected* has become the cornerstone.
23 This is the Lord’s doing;* it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 This is the day that the Lord has made,* let us rejoice and be glad in it.

—Psalm 118:22–24

Additional Psalm: Psalm 118

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 1:1–19

1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

The Call of Jeremiah

4 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

6 Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”
7 But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
8Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you, declares
the LORD.”

9Then the LORD put out his hand and touched
my mouth. And the LORD said to me,
“Behold, I have put my words in your
mouth.
10See, I have set you this day over nations
and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

11And the word of the LORD came to me,
saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I
said, “I see an almond branch.” 12Then the
LORD said to me, “You have seen well, for I
am watching over my word to perform it.”

13The word of the LORD came to me a
second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I
said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from
the north.” 14Then the LORD said to me, “Out
of the north disaster shall be let loose upon
all the inhabitants of the land. 15For behold,
I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms
of the north, declares the LORD, and they
shall come, and every one shall set his throne
at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,
against all its walls all around and against
all the cities of Judah. 16And I will declare
my judgments against them, for all their evil
in forsaking me. They have made offerings
to other gods and worshiped the works of
their own hands. 17But you, dress yourself
for work; arise, and say to them everything
that I command you. Do not be dismayed
by them, lest I dismay you before them. 18And
I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city,
an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the
whole land, against the kings of Judah, its
officials, its priests, and the people of the
land. 19They will fight against you, but they
shall not prevail against you, for I am with
you, declares the LORD, to deliver you.”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 21:23–46

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

23And when he entered the temple, the
chief priests and the elders of the people
came up to him as he was teaching, and
said, “By what authority are you doing these
things, and who gave you this authority?”

24Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you
one question, and if you tell me the answer,
then I also will tell you by what authority
I do these things. 25The baptism of John,
from where did it come? From heaven or
from man?” And they discussed it among
themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’
he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not
believe him?’ 26But if we say, ‘From man,’
we are afraid of the crowd, for they all
hold that John was a prophet.” 27So they
answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he
said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what
authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28“What do you think? A man had two
sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son,
go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29And
he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he
changed his mind and went. 30And he went
to the other son and said the same. And he
answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. 31Which
of the two did the will of his father?’ They
said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly,
I say to you, the tax collectors and the pro-
stitutes go into the kingdom of God before
you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

33“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34 When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ 39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

41 They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. 46 And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Writing

It is of the utmost importance that we highly esteem, honor, and rely upon the holy sacraments, which contain nothing but God’s words, promises, and signs. This means that we have no doubts about the sacraments or the things of which they are certain signs, for if we doubt these we lose everything. Christ says that it will happen to us as we believe. What will it profit you to assume and to believe that sin, death, and hell are overcome in Christ for others, but not to believe that your sin, your death, and your hell are also vanquished and wiped out and that you are thus redeemed? Under those circumstances the sacraments will be completely fruitless, since you do not believe the things which are indicated, given, and promised there to you. That is the vilest sin that can be committed, for God himself is looked upon as a liar in his Word, signs, and works, as one who speaks, shows, and promises something which he neither means nor intends to keep. Therefore we dare not trifle with the sacraments. Faith must be present for a firm reliance and cheerful venturing on such signs and promises of God. What sort of a God or Savior would he be who could not or would not save us from sin, death, and hell?
Treasury of Daily Prayer

Whatever the true God promises and effects must be something big.
—Martin Luther

Hymnody
My song is love unknown,
    My Savior’s love to me,
Love to the loveless shown
    That they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I
    That for my sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh and die?
—My Song Is Love Unknown
    (LSB 430:1)

Prayer of the Day
   Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
   (A80)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
   Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 30–34

3 NOVEMBER

Psalmody
1 O LORD, who shall sojourn | in your tent?*
    Who shall dwell on your | holy hill?
2 He who walks blamelessly and does | what is right*

   and speaks truth | in his heart;
   who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his | neighbor,*
   nor takes up a reproach a- | gainst his friend;
   in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who | fear the LORD,*
   who swears to his own hurt and | does not change;
   who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the | innocent.*
   He who does these things shall never be moved.
   —Psalm 15

   Additional Psalm: Psalm 26

Old Testament Reading:
   Jeremiah 3:6–4:2

Faithless Israel Called to Repentance

   6 The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? 7 And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not return, but she too went and played the whore. 9 Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. 10 Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”

   11 And the LORD said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than
treacherous Judah. 12Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever. 13Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the Lord. 14Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

15“ ‘And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. 16And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the Lord.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. 17At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. 18In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

19“ ‘I said, How I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. 20Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the Lord.’ ” 21A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel’s sons because they have perverted their way; they have forgotten the Lord their God.

22“Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness.” “Behold, we come to you, for you are the Lord our God. 23Truly the hills are a delusion, the orgies on the mountains. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.

24“ ‘But from our youth the shameful thing has devoured all for which our fathers labored, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.” 25If you return, O Israel, declares the Lord, to me you should return. If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver, 2 and if you swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’
in truth, in justice,
and in righteousness,
then nations shall bless themselves
in him,
and in him shall they glory.”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 22:1–22

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

1 And again Jesus spoke to them in
parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven
may be compared to a king who gave a
wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his
servants to call those who were invited to
the wedding feast, but they would not come.
4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell
those who are invited, See, I have prepared
my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have
been slaughtered, and everything is ready.
Come to the wedding feast.’ 5 But they paid
no attention and went off, one to his farm,
another to his business, 8 while the rest seized
his servants, treated them shamefully, and
killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent
his troops and destroyed those murderers
and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his
servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but
those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore
into the main roads and invite to the wedding
feast as many as you find.’ 10 And those
servants went out into the roads and gathered
all whom they found, both bad and good. So
the wedding hall was filled with guests.
11 But when the king came in to look
at the guests, he saw there a man who had
no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him,
‘Friend, how did you get in here without a
wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.
13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind
him hand and foot and cast him into the
outer darkness. In that place there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 For many
are called, but few are chosen.”

Paying Taxes to Caesar

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted
how to entangle him in his words. 16 And
they sent their disciples to him, along with
the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know
that you are true and teach the way of
God truthfully, and you do not care about
anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by
appearances. 17 Tell us, then, what you think.
Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”
18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why
put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show
me the coin for the tax.” And they brought
him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them,
“Whose likeness and inscription is this?”
21 They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them,
“Therefore render to Caesar the things that
are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are
God’s.” 22 When they heard it, they marveled.
And they left him and went away.

Writing

Children should be constantly urged and
moved to honor God’s name and to have it
always upon their lips for everything that
may happen to them or come to their notice
[Psalm 8:2; 34:1; Matthew 21:16; Hebrews
13:15]. For that is the true honor of His
name, to look to it and call upon it for all
consolation [Psalm 66:2; 105:1]. Then—as we
have heard in the First Commandment—the
heart by faith gives God the honor due Him
first. Afterward, the lips give Him honor by
confession.

This is also a blessed and useful habit
and very effective against the devil. He is ever
around us and lies in wait to bring us into sin
and shame, disaster and trouble [2 Timothy
The Time of the Church

2:26]. But he hates to hear God’s name and cannot remain long where it is spoken and called upon from the heart. Indeed, many terrible and shocking disasters would fall upon us if God did not preserve us by our calling upon His name. I have tried it myself. I learned by experience that often sudden great suffering was immediately averted and removed by calling on God. To confuse the devil, I say, we should always have this holy name in our mouth, so that the devil may not be able to injure us as he wishes.

It is also useful that we form the habit of daily commending ourselves to God [Psalm 31:5], with soul and body, wife, children, servants, and all that we have, against every need that may arise. So also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals [Mark 8:6] and other prayers, morning and evening, have begun and remained in use [Exodus 29:38–43]. Likewise, children should continue to cross themselves when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard. They can shout, “Lord God, protect us!” “Help, dear Lord Jesus!” and such. Also, if anyone meets with unexpected good fortune, however trivial, he says, “God be praised and thanked!” or “God has bestowed this on me!”

—Large Catechism I 70–74

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A81)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 35–40

4 November

Psalmody

1 The Lord says to my Lord:
   “Sit at my | right hand,*
   until I make your enemies
   your | footstool.”

2 The Lord sends forth from Zion
   your mighty | scepter.*
   Rule in the midst of your | enemies!

3 Your people will offer themselves freely
   on the day of your power,
   in holy | garments;*
   from the womb of the morning,
   the dew of your youth | will be yours.

4 The Lord has sworn and
   will not | change his mind,*
   “You are a priest forever
   after the order of Mel- | chizedek.”

5 The Lord is at your | right hand;*
   he will shatter kings
   on the day | of his wrath.

6 He will execute judgment among the
   nations, filling them with | corpses;*

Hymnody

You see my sin yet seat me at Your table;
   Lord, as a guest, I surely am the least:
Unclean, unfit, of worthy deeds unable—
   My heart prepare for this most holy feast,
My heart prepare for this most holy feast.

—O Gracious Lord, I Firmly Am Believing (LSB 635:3)
he will shatter chiefs
over the wide earth.
7 He will drink from the brook by the way;* 
therefore he will lift up his head.
—Psalm 110

Additional Psalm: Psalm 108

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 5:1–19
Jerusalem Refused to Repent
1 Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,
look and take note!
Search her squares to see 
if you can find a man, 
one who does justice 
and seeks truth, 
that I may pardon her.
2 Though they say, “As the Lord lives,” 
yet they swear falsely.
3 O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth?
You have struck them down, 
but they felt no anguish; 
you have consumed them, 
but they refused to take correction.
They have made their faces harder than rock; 
they have refused to repent.
4 Then I said, “These are only the poor; 
they have no sense; 
for they do not know the way of the Lord, 
the justice of their God.
5 I will go to the great 
and will speak to them, 
for they know the way of the Lord, 
the justice of their God.”
But they all alike had broken the yoke; 
they had burst the bonds.
6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall strike them down; 
a wolf from the desert shall devastate them.
A leopard is watching their cities; 
everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces, 
because their transgressions are many, 
their apostasies are great.
7 “How can I pardon you?
Your children have forsaken me 
and have sworn by those who are no gods.
When I fed them to the full, 
they committed adultery 
and trooped to the houses of whores.
8 They were well-fed, lusty stallions, 
each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.
9 Shall I not punish them for these things? 
declares the Lord; 
and shall I not avenge myself 
on a nation such as this?
10 “Go up through her vine rows and destroy, 
but make not a full end; 
strip away her branches, 
for they are not the Lord’s.
11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah 
have been utterly treacherous to me, 
declares the Lord.
12 They have spoken falsely of the Lord 
and have said, ‘He will do nothing; 
no disaster will come upon us, 
nor shall we see sword or famine.
13 The prophets will become wind; 
the word is not in them. 
Thus shall it be done to them!’ ”

The Lord Proclaims Judgment
14 Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts:
“Because you have spoken this word, 
behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire, 
and this people wood, and the fire shall consume them.
15 Behold, I am bringing against you
a nation from afar, 

O house of Israel, declares the Lord. 

It is an enduring nation; 

it is an ancient nation, 

a nation whose language you do not know, 

nor can you understand what they say. 

Their quiver is like an open tomb; 

they are all mighty warriors. 

They shall eat up your harvest and your food; 

they shall eat up your sons and your daughters; 

they shall eat up your flocks and your herds; 

they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; 

your fortified cities in which you trust 

they shall beat down with the sword.” 

But even in those days, declares the Lord, I will not make a full end of you. 

And when your people say, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?’ you shall say to them, ‘As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, 

so you shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.’”

New Testament Reading: 

Matthew 22:23–46

Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection 

The same day Sadducees came to [Jesus], who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.’” 

Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. 

So too the second and third, down to the seventh.

After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.” 

But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” 

And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

The Great Commandment 

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. 

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Whose Son Is the Christ? 

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” 

He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 

‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 

until I put your enemies under your feet’?"
45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Writing

[Luther] taught that good works do not save a person, but only faith, without good works. . . . He did not say that, to be saved, a person must have faith and, in addition to that, good works, or love; but he did teach that those who would be saved must have a faith that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works. That does not mean that faith saves on account of love which springs from it, but that the faith which the Holy Spirit creates and which cannot but do good works justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold of Christ. It is active in good works because it is genuine faith. The believer need not at all be exhorted to do good works; his faith does them automatically. The believer engages in good works, not from a sense of duty, in return for the forgiveness of his sins, but chiefly because he cannot help doing them. It is altogether impossible that genuine faith should not break forth from the believer’s heart in works of love. —C. F. W. Walther

Prayer of the Day

O God, You have commanded us to love You above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. Grant us the Spirit to think and do what is pleasing in Your sight, that our faith in You may never waver and our love for one another may not falter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A83)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 41–51

Psalmody

9 O Lord, all my longing is before you;* my sighing is not hid- en from you.
10 My heart throbs; my strength fails me,* and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.
11 My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague,* and my nearest kin stand far off.
12 Those who seek my life lay their snares; those who seek my hurt speak of ruin* and meditate treachery all day long.
13 But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear,* like a mute man who does not open his mouth.

Hymnody

I am content! My Jesus ever lives,
In whom my heart is pleased.
He has fulfilled the Law of God for me,
God’s wrath He has appeased.
Since He in death could perish never,
I also shall not die forever.

I am content!
I am content!
—I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives (LSB 468:1)
I have become like a man who does not hear,*
and in whose mouth are no rebukes.

But for you, O LORD, I do I wait;*
it is you, O Lord my God,
who will I answer.

For I said, “Only let them not rejoice over me,*
who boast against me when my foot slips!”

For I am ready to fall,*
and my pain is ever before me.

I confess my iniquity;*
I am sorry for my sin.

But my foes are vigorous,
they are mighty,*
and many are those who hate me wrongfully.

Those who render me evil for good* accuse me because I follow after good.

Do not forsake me, O Lord!* O my God, be not far from me!

Make haste to help me,*
O Lord, my salvation!

Additional Psalm: Psalm 38

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 7:1–29

Evil in the Land
The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’

For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?

Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things, declares the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.

As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings
to other gods, to provoke me to anger. 19 Is it I whom they provoke? declares the LORD. Is it not themselves, to their own shame?
20 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched."

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. 22 For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. 23 But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ 24 But they did not obey or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

25 “So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

26 “Cut off your hair and cast it away; raise a lamentation on the bare heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 23:1–12

Seven Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees
1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, 3 so practice and observe whatever they tell you—but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, 6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues 7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. 8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Writing
Moses is a minister of the Law, sin, and death; for he teaches and stresses works, and through the rays of the Law he makes everyone guilty of death and subject to punishment for sin. He demands, but he does not give what he demands. However, since this Prophet finds Moses teaching this and is Himself set up as a Teacher next to him, His Word must teach something else. But He cannot teach anything else than sin, wrath, and death unless He teaches righteousness, grace, and life. Therefore it is
necessary that He be a teacher of life, grace, and righteousness, just as Moses is a teacher of sin, wrath, and death. But both teachings must be heard just as they have been raised up by God; for through the Law all must be humbled, and through the Gospel all must be exalted. They are alike in divine authority, but with respect to the fruit of their ministry they are unlike and completely opposed to each other. The sin and wrath which Moses arouses through his ministry that Prophet cancels through righteousness and grace by His ministry. This Prophet, therefore, demands nothing; but He grants what Moses demands.

In this passage we have those two ministries of the Word which are necessary for the salvation of the human race: the ministry of the Law and the ministry of the Gospel, one for death and the other for life. They are indeed alike if you are looking at their authority, but most unlike if you are thinking about their fruit. The ministry of Moses is temporary, finally to be ended by the coming of the ministry of Christ, as he says here, “Heed Him.” But the ministry of Christ will be ended by nothing else, since it brings eternal righteousness and “puts an end to sin,” as it is said in Dan. 9:24. . . .Thus this Prophet can be none other than Christ Himself.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Come, very Sun of truth and love;
Pour down Thy radiance from above
And shed the Holy Spirit's ray
On all we think or do or say.
Alleluia!

—O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright
(LSB 874:2)

Prayer of the Day

Merciful and gracious Lord, You cause Your Word to be proclaimed in every generation. Stir up our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may receive this proclamation with humility and finally be exalted at the coming of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A84)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 52–59

6 November

Psalmody

25 Save us, we pray, | O Lord!*
O Lord, we pray, give us success!

26 Blessed is he who comes
in the name | of the Lord!*
We bless you from the house | of the Lord.

27 The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine up- | on us.*
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
up to the horns of the | altar!

28 You are my God,
and I will give | thanks to you;*
you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.

29 Oh give thanks to the Lord,
for | he is good;*
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
—Psalm 118:25–29

Additional Psalm: Psalm 118
Treasury of Daily Prayer

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 8:18–9:12

Jeremiah Grieves for His People

18 My joy is gone; grief is upon me; my heart is sick within me.
19 Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land:
   “Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?”
   “Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?”
20 “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”
21 For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded; I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.
22 Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

9:1 Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!
2 Oh that I had in the desert a travelers’ lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them!
For they are all adulterers, a company of treacherous men.
3 They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares the LORD.

4 Let everyone beware of his neighbor, and put no trust in any brother, for every brother is a deceiver, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.
5 Everyone deceives his neighbor, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies;
   they weary themselves committing iniquity.
6 Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, declares the LORD.

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them and test them, for what else can I do, because of my people?
8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceitfully; with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor, but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.
9 Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD, and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?

10 “I will take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled and are gone.
11 I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a lair of jackals, and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.”
Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through?

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 23:13–39

[Seven Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees]
13[Jesus said,] “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. 15Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.
16Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ 17You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 18And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ 19You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.
23Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 24You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!
25Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.
27Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. 28So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
29Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, 30saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. 33You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? 34Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will fllog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Lament over Jerusalem
37O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered
your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

38See, your house is left to you desolate. 39For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Writing

[Jesus] directs His speech to the city, in this way also being mindful to correct His hearers, and says, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” What does the repetition mean? This is a way of expressing His pity for her and bemoaning her and greatly loving her. Like a woman ever loved by Him, but she has despised the One who loved her, and therefore she is on the point of being punished. Being now about to inflict the punishment, He pleads with her. This is also the pattern of the prophets, who said, “Turn to me, and she returned not.”

Then having called her, Jesus tells of her blood-stained deeds, “You who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, and you would not.” In this way He is also explaining His own dealings with her. Not even with these things has He turned her aside nor withdrawn His great affection toward her, but it was His desire even so, not once or twice but often, to draw her to Himself. “For how often would I,” says He, “have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks, and you would not.” He says this to show that they were ever scattering themselves by their sins. He indicates His affection by similitude; for indeed the hen is warm in its love toward its brood. Everywhere in the prophets it is this same image of the wings, and in the song of Moses and in the Psalms, indicating God’s great protection and care.

—John Chrysostom

Hymnody

A glorious band, the chosen few,
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints—their hope they knew
And mocked the cross and flame.
They met the tyrant’s brandished steel,
The lion’s gory mane;
They bowed their necks their death to feel—
Who follows in their train?
—The Son of God Goes Forth to War (LSB 661:3)

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, the holy city of Jerusalem rejected the prophets and stoned those who were sent to her, killing Your Son, the final prophet sent to redeem her and the whole world from their sins. Through His innocent suffering and death, gather Your Church into His loving embrace that we may truly be the Body of Christ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1103)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 60–67

Psalmody

1 I lift up my eyes | to the hills.*
   From where does my | help come?
2 My help comes | from the LORD,*
   who made | heaven and earth.
The Time of the Church

Psalm 121

3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
7 The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
8 The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

—Psalm 121

Additional Psalm: Psalm 135

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 11:1–23

The Broken Covenant

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 2You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not hear the words of this covenant 3that I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, 4that I may confirm the oath that I made with their fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day." Then I answered, "So be it, LORD."

6 And the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words of this covenant and do them. 7For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice. 8Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not."

9 Again the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy exists among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. 11 Therefore, thus says the LORD, Behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them. 12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they make offerings, but they cannot save them in the time of their trouble. 13 For your gods have become as many as your cities, O Judah, and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to shame, altars to make offerings to Baal. 14 Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their trouble. 15 What right has my beloved in my house, when she has done many vile deeds? Can even sacrificial flesh avert your doom? Can you then exult? 16 The LORD once called you "a green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit." But with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed. 17 The LORD of hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you, because of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done,
provoking me to anger by making offerings to Baal.”

18The Lord made it known to me and I knew; then you showed me their deeds.
19But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.”
20But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

21Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, “Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand”—
22therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.”

Additional Reading: Jeremiah 12:1–19:15

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 24:1–28

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple
1Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Signs of the Close of the Age
3As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” 4And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. 5For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. 6And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.
9Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. 10And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The Abomination of Desolation
15“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 16Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 17and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 18And
Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

Writing

Although the factions in Christendom have different beliefs, there is none that does not accord Christ His rightful place as the author and authority of its doctrines. . . . [The Church] even appears to be flourishing. Thus the person who regards the present as the horrible end times is thought to be greatly mistaken. But appearances can be deceiving. The cry of “Here is Christ! There is Christ!” that resounds from so many pulpits is precisely what makes our age so dangerous and abominable, and it demonstrates that the final, evil days of the world are approaching. For it is mostly a false Christ who is now being preached and praised in order to deceive even the elect.

There are now many preachers and laity, both learned and unlearned individuals, who no longer believe the Bible is God’s Word and faith in Christ is the only way to salvation. With their own imagined virtue and good works, they believe that they have made God their debtor, that He must rightfully receive them into heaven after their death, and that He must eternally reward them. They do not want to think of themselves as sinners who are in need of a Savior. The Word of the cross is foolishness and a stumbling block to them. . . .

For wherever one preaches Christ as a mere man and not as the true God, fully of the same substance, power, and glory as the heavenly Father, one preaches a false Christ. Wherever one presents Christ only as an example and as a teacher of wisdom and virtue, and not as the Lamb of God who died on the cross for the sins of the world and thereby reconciled mankind with the heavenly Father, one preaches a false Christ. And whoever accepts this Christ of the unbelievers has forsaken the true Christ and placed his confidence in a dream being, one who never existed except in the imagination of unbelieving fools. Christ Himself says, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), “Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9), and “all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (John 5:23).

—C. F. W. Walther

Hymnody

O Thou, whose coming is with dread
To judge the living and the dead,
Preserve us from the ancient foe
While still we dwell on earth below.

—Creator of the Stars of Night

(LSB 351:5)
Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, when You were lifted up on the cross, the entire world experienced birth pains as the cosmos was rocked as Your death gave birth to a new creation. Focus our eyes on Your holy cross that we may see it as a tree of life preparing us for Your final coming in judgment as the Son of Man; for You live and reign with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1104)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 68–77

8 November

Johannes von Staupitz, Luther's Father Confessor

Psalmody

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!* In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

2 Enter not into judgment with your servant,* for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground;* he has made me sit in darkness like those who long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints with me;* my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done,* I ponder the work of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;* my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

7 Answer me quickly, O LORD! My spirit fails!* Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

8 Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in You I trust.* Make me know the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!* I have fled to you for refuge!

10 Teach me to do your will, for You are my God!* Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

11 For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!* In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

12 And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies,* and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant.

—Psalm 143

Additional Psalm: Psalm 144

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 20:1–18

Jeremiah Persecuted by Pashhur

1 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. 2 Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the LORD. 3 The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD does not
call your name Pashhur, but Terror On Every Side. 4For thus says the LORD: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall strike them down with the sword. 5Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them and seize them and carry them to Babylon. 6And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. To Babylon you shall go, and there you shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely."

7O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. 8For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. 9If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. 10For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! "Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" say all my close friends, watching for my fall. 11But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. 12O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. 13Sing to the LORD; praise the LORD! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers. 14Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! 15Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, "A son is born to you," making him very glad. 16Let that man be like the cities that the LORD overthrew without pity; let him hear a cry in the morning and an alarm at noon, 17because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever great. 18Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?
New Testament Reading:
Matthew 24:29–51

The Coming of the Son of Man

Matthew 24:29–51

The Coming of the Son of Man

29“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

32“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day and Hour

36“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 42Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

45“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Writing

Hence, not only are sins forgiven in baptism, but we are also made sure and certain that God is so well pleased with it that he, together with Christ and his Holy Spirit, proposes to be present when it is administered and he himself will be the baptizer; although this glorious revelation of the divine majesty does not now occur visibly, as it did at that time on the Jordan, since it is sufficient that it occurred once as a witness and a sign.

Therefore we should diligently accustom ourselves to look upon these things with eyes of faith and to interpret this glorious
revelation and divine radiance and splendor which shone forth above the baptism of Christ as happening to us; for all this did not happen and all this was not recorded for Christ’s sake, for he himself did not baptize [John 4:2], but rather for our comfort and the strengthening of our faith, for the sake of which he also accepted baptism. Therefore wherever anybody is being baptized according to Christ’s command we should be confidently convinced that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is present there, and that there is pure delight, pleasure, and joy in heaven over the fact that sin is forgiven, the heavens opened forever, and that now there is no more wrath but only grace unalloyed.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Christians, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
In His Father’s glory,
With His angel train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.
—At the Name of Jesus (LSB 512:6)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty, everlasting God, for our many sins we justly deserve eternal condemnation. In Your mercy, You sent Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who won for us forgiveness of sins and everlasting salvation. Grant us a true confession so that dead to sin we may hear the sweet words of Absolution from our confessor as Luther heard them from his pastor, Johannes von Staupitz, and be released from all our sin; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1105)

Johannes von Staupitz, Luther’s Father Confessor

Johannes von Staupitz (ca. 1469–1524), vicar-general of the Augustinian Order in Germany and friend of Martin Luther, was born in Saxony. He studied at the universities in Leipzig and Cologne and served on the faculty at Cologne. In 1503, he was called by Frederick the Wise to serve as dean of the theological faculty at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. There Staupitz encouraged Luther to attain a doctorate in theology and appointed Luther as his successor to professor of Bible at the university. During Luther’s early struggles to understand God’s grace, it was Staupitz who counseled Luther to focus on Christ and not on himself.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 78–88

9 November

Martin Chemnitz (birth), Pastor and Confessor

Psalmody

1 Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God;*
   for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.
2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;*
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

3 He heals the broken-hearted* and binds up their wounds.

4 He determines the number of the stars;* he gives to all of them their names.

5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;* his understanding is beyond measure.

6 The Lord lifts up the humble;* he casts the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the Lord with thanks-giving* make melody to our God on the lyre!

8 He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth;* he makes grass grow on the hills.

9 He gives to the beasts their food,* and to the young ravens that cry.

10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,* nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,* in those who hope in his steadfast love.

—Psalm 147:1–11

Additional Psalm: Psalm 147

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 22:1–23

[Message to the House of David]

1 Thus says the Lord: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, 2 and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. 3 Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. 5 But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation. 6 For thus says the Lord concerning the house of the king of Judah:

“You are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, yet surely I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city.

7 I will prepare destroyers against you, each with his weapons, and they shall cut down your choicest cedars and cast them into the fire.

8 And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, “Why has the Lord dealt thus with this great city?” 9 And they will answer, “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and worshiped other gods and served them.”’”

10 Weep not for him who is dead, nor grieve for him, but weep bitterly for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land.

Message to the Sons of Josiah

11 For thus says the Lord concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went away from this place: “He shall return here no more, 12 but in the place where they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again.”

13 Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,
and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages, who says, ‘I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms,’ who cuts out windows for it, paneling it with cedar and painting it with vermilion.

14 Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him.

15 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the Lord.

16 But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.”

17 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

“They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’ They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’ With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”

18 “Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers are destroyed. I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, ‘I will not listen.’ This has been your way from your youth, that you have not obeyed my voice.

22 The wind shall shepherd all your shepherds, and your lovers shall go into captivity; then you will be ashamed and confounded because of all your evil.

23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, nested among the cedars, how you will be pitied when pangs come upon you, pain as of a woman in labor!”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 25:1–13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

1 [Jesus said,] “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”
Writing

[“But deliver us from evil.”] We are taught in the petition to lift up our heads, to think upon, and to desire the blessed life to come. This life is eternal where there will be full deliverance from all evil. Because we are too occupied and immersed in the matters and affairs of this world and of this life, we also request that God would inspire, excite, kindle, generate, and preserve in us this thought and desire. The death of the godly is their deliverance from all evil and a beginning of everlasting happiness.

Therefore, when we say, “Deliver us from evil,” we desire that our heavenly Father would keep us from an evil death. We ask for His deliverance so that we may not die . . . the death of sinners. . . . We ask that we may not die carelessly in our sins, unprepared without repentance (John 8:24), but that He would grant us a godly and saving end of this life. We ask to die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13). . . .

Furthermore, we pray that God would put into us a concern and desire to prepare ourselves in advance for those things that are necessary to be properly prepared for death. This is done so that we may be prepared for death, because we do not want to be like those who do not have oil in their lamps when the bridegroom comes and calls us (Matt. 25:3). We ask that in the last hour of this life we may have true repentance, the Word, the Sacraments, faith, hope, and the spirit of grace and prayer. These things we ask so that when we are to die, we may be found in Christ. . . . In this we rightly commend our souls into the hands of our Father. If we are found improperly prepared, we pray that He would not allow this to happen by a sudden unannounced death, but would mercifully grant us time for such preparation. We ask that our death may be a deliverance from all evil and a passage out of this vale of misery to eternal life.

—Martin Chemnitz

Hymnody

“Wake, awake, for night is flying,”
The watchmen on the heights are crying;
“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!”
Midnight hears the welcome voices
And at the thrilling cry rejoices:
“Oh, where are ye, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes, awake!
Your lamps with gladness take!
Alleluia!
With bridal care
Yourselves prepare
To meet the Bridegroom, who is near.”
—Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying
(LSB 516:1)

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the teaching of Martin Chemnitz, You prepare us for the coming of Your Son to lead home His Bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1106)

Martin Chemnitz, Pastor and Confessor

Aside from Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz (1522–86) is regarded as the most important theologian in the history of the Lutheran Church. Chemnitz combined a penetrating intellect and an almost encyclopedic knowledge of Scripture and
The Time of the Church

the Church Fathers with a genuine love for the Church. When various doctrinal disagreements broke out after Luther’s death in 1546, Chemnitz determined to give himself fully to the restoration of unity in the Lutheran Church. He became the leading spirit and principal author of the 1577 Formula of Concord, which settled the doctrinal disputes on the basis of Scripture and largely succeeded in restoring unity among Lutherans. Chemnitz also authored the four volume Examination of the Council of Trent (1565–73), in which he rigorously subjected the teachings of this Roman Catholic Council to the judgment of Scripture and the ancient Church Fathers. The Examination became the definitive Lutheran answer to the Council of Trent, as well as a thorough exposition of the faith of the Augsburg Confession. A theologian and a churchman, Chemnitz was truly a gift of God to the Church.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 89–95

10 November

Psalmody

1 The earth is the LORD’s and the full- ness thereof,* the world and those who dwell therein, 2 for he has founded it upon the seas* and established it upon the rivers. 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?* And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,* who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD* and righteousness from the God of salvation. 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,* who seek the face of the God of Jacob. 7 Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,* that the King of glory may come in. 8 Who is this King of glory?* The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! 9 Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors,* that the King of glory may come in. 10 Who is this King of glory?* The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! —Psalm 24

Additional Psalm: Psalm 25:12–22

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 23:1–20

The Righteous Branch

1 “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. 3 Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4 I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no
more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord.

5"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’

7"Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

Lying Prophets

9Concerning the prophets:
My heart is broken within me;
all my bones shake;
I am like a drunken man,
like a man overcome by wine,
because of the Lord
and because of his holy words.

10For the land is full of adulterers;
because of the curse the land mourns,
and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up.
Their course is evil,
and their might is not right.

11Both prophet and priest are ungodly;
even in my house I have found their evil,
declares the Lord.

12Therefore their way shall be to them
like slippery paths in the darkness,
into which they shall be driven and fall,
for I will bring disaster upon them

in the year of their punishment,
declares the Lord.

13In the prophets of Samaria
I saw an unsavory thing:
they prophesied by Baal
and led my people Israel astray.

14But in the prophets of Jerusalem
I have seen a horrible thing:
they commit adultery and walk in lies;
they strengthen the hands of evildoers,
so that no one turns from his evil;
all of them have become like Sodom to me,
and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

15Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets:
“Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink,
for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land.”

16Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. 17They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

18For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord
to see and to hear his word,
or who has paid attention to his word
and listened?

19Behold, the storm of the Lord!
Wrath has gone forth,
a whirling tempest;
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 25:14–30

The Parable of the Talents

[Jesus said,] 14 “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. Here you have what is yours. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 21 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ 22 But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 23 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 24 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 25 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 26 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Writing

If one asks what the one characteristic feature of the Christian faith is, distinguishing it from all religions in the world, then we would have to say: It is the forgiveness of sins. The pious Jew and even a pious Mohammedan may hope for God’s pardon. Forgiveness as a real gift, the full assurance of forgiveness, that is the gift of the Gospel. To proclaim the Gospel of forgiveness, to declare to repentant sinners the forgiveness of their sins, to distribute the Sacraments with all the gifts of divine grace contained in them, this and nothing else, is the proper task of the minister of Christ as it was the officium proprium [proper office] of Christ Himself. This the Church had to learn in the great crisis of the second century. . . . The church administration in Europe follows
the patterns of the administration of the state, while in America the great business organizations seem to be unknowingly imitated by the churches. The consequence is that also the parish minister becomes more and more of an administrator and organizer who rushes from meeting to meeting and has not enough time for his proper calling as a shepherd.

—Hermann Sasse

Hymnody

May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,
To Thee our firstfruits give!
—We Give Thee But Thine Own

(LSB 781:2)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A86)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 96–99

11 November

Martin of Tours, Pastor

Psalmody

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my pleas for mercy!*
in your faithfulness answer me,
in your righteousness!

2 Enter not into judgment with your servant;*
for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;*
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;*
my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;*
I ponder the work of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;*
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

7 Answer me quickly, O Lord!
My spirit fails!*
Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

8 Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.*
Make me know the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord!*
I have fled to you for refuge!

10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!*
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!
—Psalm 143:1–10

Additional Psalm: Psalm 105:1–10
Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 23:21-40

[Lying Prophets]
21“I did not send the prophets, yet they ran;
I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.
22But if they had stood in my council,
then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,
and they would have turned them from their evil way,
and from the evil of their deeds.
23“Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? 24Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord. 25I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ 26How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, 27who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? 28Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. 29Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? 30Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who steal my words from one another. 31Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who use their tongues and declare, ‘declares the Lord.’ 32Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the Lord, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their

recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the Lord.
33“When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of the Lord?’ you shall say to them, ‘You are the burden, and I will cast you off, declares the Lord.’ 34And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, ‘The burden of the Lord,’ I will punish that man and his household. 35Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, ‘What has the Lord answered?’ or ‘What has the Lord spoken?’ 36But ‘the burden of the Lord’ you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man’s own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God. 37Thus you shall say to the prophet, ‘What has the Lord answered you?’ or ‘What has the Lord spoken?’ 38But if you say, ‘The burden of the Lord,’ thus says the Lord, ‘Because you have said these words, “The burden of the Lord,” when I sent to you, saying, “You shall not say, “The burden of the Lord,”’ 39therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. 40And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.’”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 25:31-46

The Final Judgment

[Jesus continued,] 31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33And he will place
the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick in prison and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**Writing**

Now Scripture sets forth two kinds of teaching—Law and Gospel. The Law, in condemning sins and setting forth the gravest threats of God, is that hammer (Jer. 23:29) through which God breaks rocks, that is crushes the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humbles it, so that truly and earnestly acknowledging the multitude and magnitude of sins and of the wrath of God over sin, the mind begins to hate and detest sin, to fear the wrath and judgment of God so that it is unwilling to perish eternally under them but sighs and struggles with groaning that it may be freed from them. There the Law indeed has and sets forth promises of life, but on condition of perfect fulfillment. . . . The Gospel, however, teaches that what was impossible for the Law on account of the flesh, God provided by sending His Son (Rom. 8:3). Therefore it shows Christ, the Lamb of God, born under the Law for us, in order that He might make satisfaction to the judgment of God, revealed in the Law, by His obedience and suffering on our behalf. This Mediator the Father sets before us in the Gospel as a propitiation by faith in His blood through the remission of sins (Rom. 3:25). “For this is the will of the Father, that everyone who believes in the Son should not perish but have eternal life” (John 6:40). Thus the Gospel proclaims, offers and sets before contrite and terrified consciences the grace of God, reconciliation and remission of sins freely on account of the merit of Christ; and it is His will that everyone should lay hold of and apply this benefit of the Mediator to himself. The ministry of private absolution applies this general promise of the Gospel to the penitent individually, in order that faith may be able to state all the more firmly that the benefits of the passion of Christ are certainly given and applied to it. Moreover, in the use of the Lord’s Supper, Christ offers, applies, and seals, to all who receive it in
faith, the New Testament with the precious pledges of His body and blood, namely, that God wants to be gracious with respect to our sins and to remember our iniquities no more.
—Martin Chemnitz

Hymnody

The day is surely drawing near
When Jesus, God’s anointed,
In all His power shall appear
As judge whom God appointed.
Then fright shall banish idle mirth,
And flames on flames shall ravage earth
As Scripture long has warned us.
—The Day Is Surely Drawing Near
(LSB 508:1)

Prayer of the Day

Lord God of hosts, Your servant Martin
the soldier embodied the spirit of sacrifice.
He became a bishop in Your Church to
defend the catholic faith. Give us grace
to follow in his steps so that when our
Lord returns we may be clothed with the
baptismal garment of righteousness and
peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who
lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. (1107)

Martin of Tours, Pastor

Born into a pagan family in what is now
Hungary around AD 316, Martin grew up in
Lombardy (Italy). Coming to the Christian
faith as a young person, he began a career
in the Roman army. But sensing a call to a
church vocation, Martin left the military
and became a monk, affirming that he was
“Christ’s soldier.” Eventually, Martin was
named bishop of Tours in western Gaul
(France). He is remembered for his simple
lifestyle and his determination to share the
Gospel throughout rural Gaul. Incidentally,
on St. Martin’s Day in 1483, the one-day-
old son of Hans and Margarette Luther
was baptized and given the name “Martin”
Luther.

Suggested Reading from
the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg
Confession XXVII (XIII) 1–8

Psalmody

1 By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,*
when we remembered | Zion.
2 On the | willows there*
we hung | up our lyres.
3 For there our captors required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, | saying,*
“Sing us one of the songs of | Zion!”
4 How shall we sing the | Lord’s song*
in a | foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Je- | rusalem,*
let my right hand for- | get its skill!
6 Let my tongue stick to the roof of my
mouth, if I do not re- | member you,*
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my | highest joy!
7 Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites
the day of Je- | rusalem,*
how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare,
down to its foun- | dations!”
8 O daughter of Babylon,
doomed to | be destroyed,*
blessèd shall he be who repays you with
what you have | done to us!
Blessèd shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock! —Psalm 137

Additional Psalm: Psalm 130

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 25:1–18

Seventy Years of Captivity

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: 3“For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. 4You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, 5saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. 6Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ 7Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands.

Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, 8behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. 10Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste. 13I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. 14For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

The Cup of the Lord’s Wrath

Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.” 17So I took the cup from the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it: 18Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day.
The Time of the Church

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 26:1–19

The Plot to Kill Jesus
1When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, 2“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”
3Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Jesus Anointed at Bethany
6Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. 8And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? 9For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” 10But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. 11For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. 13Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Judas to Betray Jesus
14Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. 16And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples
17Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” 18He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” 19And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

Writing
The prophet also interprets it thus, after his splendid and extensive predictions about this King: He is to rule over all, smashing kings and whatever else is great and resists Him. Lest anyone understand this according to the Jewish delusion that it would happen physically, in the manner of the world, He means to say: “It is certainly true that He is to be great and mighty above all kings on earth. But let me give you the true explanation of how He will deal with this matter and by what manner and form He will achieve such a dominion. He is not going to be a secular lord and king, as I and my descendants in Jerusalem and other kings are. Instead, He will come to earth and share the ordinary life and society of men. He will live His life like an ordinary man, and others will see nothing special or extraordinary about Him.”

In this life, the prophet says, He will “drink from the brook”; that is, He will suffer and die. By “drink” or “cup” Scripture means any sort of torture, misery, and suffering, just as Christ prayed in the garden, where He sweat blood (Luke 22:44) and said (Matt. 26:39): “Dear Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from Me. But if it cannot

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be otherwise but that I drink it, Thy will be done.” You see, that is the kind of drinking of which this verse speaks. The prophets also speak thus and call it “being drunk” when God punishes. Therefore “to fill the cup” or “to make drunk” means to suffer great torture and pain, and “cup” symbolizes that specific portion of suffering which God awards to Him. Jeremiah 25:15, 16, Psalm 75:8, and many other places express it this way.

Therefore Christ had to drink a “cup” on earth and be “drunk”; that is, He suffered torture and pain and perished before all the world. Furthermore, in His own kingdom He was so miserable and poor that He had no place where He could lay His head (Matt. 8:20). No crown, royal adornment, or pomp could be seen about Him—nothing but cross, nails, and blood. There He hung, unable to touch either heaven or earth and unable to stand up on His feet.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

How weak the effort of my heart,
How cold my warmest thought!
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I’ll praise Thee as I ought.

—How Sweet the Name of Jesus

Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A87)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 9–10

13 November

Psalmody

12 What shall I render * to the LORD* for all his bene- fits to me?
13 I will lift up the cup of sal- vation* and call on the name * of the LORD,
14 I will pay my vows * to the LORD* in the presence of all his * people.
15 Precious in the sight * of the LORD* is the death * of his saints.
16 O LORD, I am your * servant;*
    I am your servant,
    the son of your maidservant.
    You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanks- giving* and call on the name * of the LORD.
18 I will pay my vows * to the LORD* in the presence of all his * people,
19 in the courts of the house * of the LORD,* in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise the LORD!

—Psalm 116:12–19

Additional Psalm: Psalm 50:7–15
Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 26:1–19

Jeremiah Threatened with Death

1In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the L ORD: 2“Thus says the L ORD: Stand in the court of the L ORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the L ORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. 3It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds. 4You shall say to them, “Thus says the L ORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, 5and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, 6then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.’ ”

7The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the L ORD. 8And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the L ORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die! 9Why have you prophesied in the name of the L ORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant’?” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the L ORD.

10When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king’s house to the house of the L ORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the L ORD. 11Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

12Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, “The L ORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. 13Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the L ORD your God, and the L ORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. 14But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. 15Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the L ORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

Jeremiah Spared from Death

16Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the L ORD our God.” 17And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, 18“I am of the house of the Exilarchs, and I have spoken in the name of the L ORD: Thus says the L ORD of hosts, “Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.’

19Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the L ORD and entreat the favor of the L ORD, and did not the L ORD relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves.”
New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 26:20–35  
[The Passover with the Disciples]

When it was evening, [Jesus] reclined at table with the twelve. And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Institution of the Lord’s Supper

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

Additional Reading: Revelation 13:1–18

Writing

Our Lord gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this Sacrament, and to show that He does not unwillingly go to the Passion, and to teach us that whatever we may suffer we are to bear it thankfully, thence also suggesting good hopes. For if the type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more will the truth set the world free and He will be delivered up for the benefit of our race. Wherefore, I would add, neither did He appoint the Sacrament before this, but only at the point at which the rites of the Law were to cease. Thus the very chief of the feasts, the Passover, He brings to an end. He removes the feasts to another most awful table, and He says, “Take, eat. This is My body, which is broken for many.”

And how were they not confounded at hearing this? Because He had before told unto them many and great things regarding this. Although they needed no more explanation because they had heard enough about it, but He does speak of the cause of His Passion, namely, the taking away of sins. And He calls it blood of a new testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new law. For this He is also what He did in the old covenant, and this comprises the testament that is the new law. As the old testament had sheep and bulls, so this has the Lord’s blood. Hence He also shows that He is soon to die, for which reason He also made mention of a testament, and reminds them in it of the
former Testament, which was also dedicated with blood. And again He tells the cause of His death, that is, that His blood “is shed for many for the remission of sins”; and He says, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Do you see how He removes and draws them off from Jewish customs? For as you did that, He says, in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of Me. The blood of lambs was shed for the preservation of the firstborn, this is shed for the remission of the sins of the whole world.

—John Chrysostom

Hymnody

Praise the Father, who from heaven
To His own this food has given,
Who, to mend what we have done,
Gave into death His only Son.
—Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior
(LSB 627:4)

Prayer of the Day

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L32)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 11–17

14 November

Emperor Justinian, Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ

Psalmody

1 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*
They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven on the children of man*
to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

3 They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt,* there is none who does good, not even one.

4 Have those who work evil no knowledge,* who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God?

5 There they are, in great terror, where there is no terror!* For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you; you put them to shame, for God has rejected them.

6 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!* When God restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

—Psalm 53

Additional Psalm: Psalm 55:12–19

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 29:1–19

Jeremiah’s Letter to the Exiles

1These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to
the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.  This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem.  The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said:  Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:  Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.  Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.  But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.  For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord.  For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.  For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.  Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.  You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.  I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

15“Because you have said, ‘The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,’ 16thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile: 17”Thus says the Lord of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten.  I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the Lord, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the Lord.’”

New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:36–56

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”  And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.  Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”  And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”  And he came to the disciples and found
them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? 
41Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 42Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” 43And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. 45Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

47While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” 49And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. 50Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. 51And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” 55At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. 56But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Additional Reading: Revelation 14:1–20

Writing

The office of Christ is described most clearly, namely, that He will not bear the sword, that He will not found a new state, but will be a teacher to instruct men concerning a certain unheard but eternal decree of God.

Therefore, even if other kings must also make laws and govern through laws, nevertheless their chief function is not to teach or to pass laws, but to punish evil men with the sword and to defend good men. They are consequently like lictors or hangmen of God. For, as Paul says, “they bear the sword to terrify the wicked and for vengeance” (Rom. 13:4). Their own duty is, therefore, not to teach, because they do not rule over consciences or hearts, but only to restrain the hands . . .

Christ left these things to the kings of the world; to His own people He says: “It shall not be so among you” (Matt. 20:26). For His kingdom stands in the Word, and His office is to teach. He left the care of swine to the kings of the world, for they have been provided with a staff with which they can drive cattle. But His office is . . . to preach, to tell of God’s decree. This definition of the kingdom of Christ is clear enough and the proper distinction. But few truly comprehend it. That harmful mixture of both kingdoms continually clings to people’s hearts to such an extent that it is difficult even for spiritual-
minded men to distinguish this kingdom properly from the kingdom of the world. Nevertheless those who believe in another life after this life see that the services of kings and governors are necessary for them in this life, but that they need Christ the King for another and eternal life.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody
Rise, my soul, to watch and pray;
From your sleep awaken!
Be not by the evil day
Unawares o’ertaken;
For the foe,
Well we know,
Is a harvest reaping
While the saints are sleeping.

—Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray (LSB 663:1)

Prayer of the Day
Lord God, heavenly Father, through the governance of Christian leaders such as Emperor Justinian, Your name is freely confessed in our nation and throughout the world. Grant that we may continue to choose trustworthy leaders who serve You faithfully in our generation and make wise decisions that contribute to the general welfare of Your people; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1108)

Emperor Justinian, Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ
Justinian was emperor of the East from AD 527 to 565, when the Roman Empire was in decline. With his beautiful and capable wife, Theodora, he restored splendor and majesty to the Byzantine court. During his reign, the empire experienced a renaissance, due in large part to his ambition, intelligence, and strong religious convictions. Justinian also attempted to bring unity to a divided Church. He was a champion of orthodox Christianity and sought agreement among the parties in the Christological controversies of the day as the groups disputed the relation between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. The Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in AD 533 was held during his reign and addressed this dispute. Justinian died in his eighties without having accomplished his desire to forge an empire that was firmly Christian and orthodox.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 18–23

15 November
Psalmody
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,*
and renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from your presence,*
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,*
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,*
and sinners will return to you.
14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,*
O God of my salvation,*
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
15 O Lord, open my lips,*
and my mouth will declare your praise.
16 For you will not delight in sacrifice,  
or I would | give it;*  
you will not be pleased  
with a burnt | offering.
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken | spirit;*  
a broken and contrite heart, O God,  
you will | not despise.
18 Do good to Zion in your good | pleasure;*  
build up the walls of Je- | rusalem;
19 then will you delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole  
burnt | offerings;*  
then bulls will be offered on your | altar.
 —Psalm 51:10–19

Additional Psalm: Psalm 51

Old Testament Reading:  
Jeremiah 30:1–24

Restoration for Israel and Judah  
1The word that came to Jeremiah from  
the LORD:  
2“Thus says the LORD, the God  
of Israel: Write in a book all the words that  
I have spoken to you.  
3For behold, days are  
coming, declares the LORD, when I will  
restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and  
Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them  
back to the land that I gave to their fathers,  
and they shall take possession of it.”
  
4These are the words that the LORD spoke  
concerning Israel and Judah:
  
5“Thus says the LORD:  
We have heard a cry of panic,  
of terror, and no peace.
6Ask now, and see,  
can a man bear a child?  
Why then do I see every man  
with his hands on his stomach like a  
woman in labor?  
Why has every face turned pale?
7Alas! That day is so great
I have done these things to you.  
Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured,  
and all your foes, every one of them, shall go into captivity;  
those who plunder you shall be plundered, and all who prey on you I will make a prey.  
For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the Lord, because they have called you an outcast: ‘It is Zion, for whom no one cares!’

“Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob  
and have compassion on his dwellings;  
the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be.  
Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate.  
I will multiply them, and they shall not be few;  
I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.  
Their children shall be as they were of old,  
and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them.  
Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst;  
I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me? declares the Lord.  
And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

Behold the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked.  
The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his mind.  
In the latter days you will understand this.

New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:57–75

Jesus Before Caiaphas and the Council  
Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What
further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” 67Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, 68saying, “Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

Peter Denies Jesus
69Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” 70But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” 71And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” 72And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” 73After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” 74Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. 75And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Additional Reading: Revelation 15:1–8

Writing
We have attributed these two parts to repentance: contrition and faith. . . . We say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin and grieves that it has sinned. This contrition takes place when sins are condemned by God’s Word. . . .

As the second part of repentance we add faith in Christ. The Gospel, in which the forgiveness of sins is freely promised concerning Christ, should be presented to consciences in these terrors. They should believe that, for Christ’s sake, their sins are freely forgiven. This faith cheers, sustains, and enlivens the contrite, according to Romans 5:1, “Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.” This faith obtains the forgiveness of sins. It justifies before God, as the same passage testifies, “since we have been justified by faith.” This faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and Peter, of Saul and David. The contrition of Judas or Saul (Matthew 27:3–5; 1 Samuel 31:4–6) is useless because faith is not added. Faith grasps the forgiveness of sins, given as a gift for Christ’s sake. So the contrition of David or Peter (2 Samuel 12:13; Matthew 26:75) helps because faith, which takes hold of the forgiveness of sins granted for Christ’s sake, is added to it. . . . This faith grows gradually and throughout the entire life, struggles with sin, in order to overcome sin and death. Love follows faith, as we have said above. So childlike fear can be clearly defined as anxiety that has been connected with faith, that is, where faith comforts and sustains the anxious heart.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIIA (V) 28–29, 35–38
Hymnody
Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,
That from pain I might be free;
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:
Thence I gain security;
Comfortless Thy soul did languish
Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.
—Christ, the Life of All the Living
(LSB 420:5)

Prayer of the Day
Lord Jesus Christ, the temple of Your body was destroyed on the cross and three days later raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father. Visit us now with this same body, that we may not deny that we know You but in faith hear in our ears Your life-giving voice and receive on our lips Your very body and blood to strengthen us in times of temptation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1109)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 24–27

16 November

Psalmody
1 O God, save me, | by your name,*
   and vindicate me | by your might.
2 O God, | hear my prayer;*
   give ear to the words | of my mouth.
3 For strangers have risen against me;
ruthless men | seek my life;*
   they do not set God be- | fore themselves.
4 Behold, God is my | helper;*
   the Lord is the upholder | of my life.
5 He will return the evil to my | enemies;*
   in your faithfulness put an | end to them.
6 With a freewill offering I will sacri- | fice to you;*
   I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for | it is good.
7 For he has delivered me from every | trouble,*
   and my eye has looked in triumph on my | enemies.
—Psalm 54

Additional Psalm: Psalm 139:7–18

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 31:1–17, 23–34
The Lord Will Turn Mourning to Joy
1 “At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”

2 Thus says the LORD:
“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,
3 the LORD appeared to him from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
   O virgin Israel!
Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines
   and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.
5 Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria; 
the planters shall plant 
and shall enjoy the fruit.
6 For there shall be a day when watchmen will call 
in the hill country of Ephraim: 
‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, 
to the LORD our God.’ ”
7 For thus says the LORD: 
“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, 
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; 
proclaim, give praise, and say, 
‘O Lord, save your people, 
the remnant of Israel.’
8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country 
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, 
among them the blind and the lame, 
the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; 
a great company, they shall return here.
9 With weeping they shall come, 
and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, 
I will make them walk by brooks of water, 
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, 
for I am a father to Israel, 
and Ephraim is my firstborn.
10 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, 
and declare it in the coastlands far away; 
say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, 
and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’
11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob 
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
12 They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, 
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, 
over the grain, the wine, and the oil, 
and over the young of the flock and the herd; 
their life shall be like a watered garden, 
and they shall languish no more.
13 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, 
and the young men and the old shall be merry. 
I will turn their mourning into joy; 
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
14 I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, 
and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, 
declares the LORD.”
15 Thus says the LORD: 
“A voice is heard in Ramah, 
lamentation and bitter weeping. 
Rachel is weeping for her children; 
she refuses to be comforted for her children, 
because they are no more.”
16 Thus says the LORD: 
“Keep your voice from weeping, 
and your eyes from tears, 
for there is a reward for your work, 
declares the LORD, 
and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
17 There is hope for your future, 
declares the LORD, 
and your children shall come back to their own country. . . .
23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Once more they shall use these words in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I restore their fortunes:
“The Lord bless you, O habitation of righteousness,
O holy hill!”

24 And Judah and all its cities shall dwell there together, and the farmers and those who wander with their flocks. 25 For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.”

26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

27 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the Lord. 29 In those days they shall no longer say:

“‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

30 But everyone shall die for his own sin. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

The New Covenant

31 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 27:1–10

Jesus Delivered to Pilate

1 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. 2 And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

Judas Hangs Himself

3 Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, 4 saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” 5 And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. 6 But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” 7 So they took counsel and bought with them the potter’s field as a burial place for strangers. 8 Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, 10 and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.”
Additional Reading: Revelation 16:1–21

Writing

It would, however, be wholly improper to speak of despair (desperatio) on the part of Christ. Despair is iniquity and would conflict with the sinlessness of Christ, which is attested by Scripture. Besides, Scripture expressly bears witness that Christ, while forsaken of God, continued to trust in God (Ps. 22:1, 19ff.; Luke 23:46). While He was forsaken of God, He still cried to God as His God, saying, “My God, my God!” Gerhard writes of this: “Other men cannot, without sinning, feel the wrath of God deserved by their sins, because of the utter corruption of their nature; for secretly in their hearts they become impatient, and at times they also murmur against God in words, as the examples of Job and Jeremiah testify. But Christ bears these tortures without any sin, persists in holy obedience to God, and retains filial trust in His heart. For these are by no means the words of one despairing when He exclaims: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ But they are the words of one giving notice that He is enduring extreme agony of the soul and pains which are truly of hell. And so Christ, by wrestling with the power of the devil, with the horror of death, and with the agonies of the damned, brought back from them a glorious triumph for our salvation.” . . . Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that while Christ was forsaken of God, the Father’s declaration still was true: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). By the very fact that Christ took upon Himself, in the place of sinful mankind, this extreme punishment of being forsaken of God and so fulfilled His Father’s will, He remained the object of God’s supreme love, even while He was under His wrath, just as He says: “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” (John 10:17).

—Francis Pieper

Hymnody

I caused Your grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Your soul is cumbered,
Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.
—Upon the Cross Extended
(LSB 453:4)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty, everlasting God, through Your only Son, our blessed Lord, You commanded us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who persecute us. Therefore, we earnestly implore You that by Your gracious working our enemies may be led to true repentance, may have the same love toward us as we have toward them, and may be of one accord and of one mind and heart with us and with Your whole Church; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (110)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 28–33
17 November

Psalmody

1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens;* praise him in the heights!
2 Praise him, all his angels;* praise him, all his hosts!
3 Praise him, sun and moon,* praise him, all you shining stars!
4 Praise him, you highest heavens,* and you waters above the heavens!
5 Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created.
6 And he established them forever and ever;* he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

—Psalm 148:1–6

Additional Psalm: Psalm 148

Old Testament Reading:
Jeremiah 33:1–22

The Lord Promises Peace

1 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: 2“Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it—the Lord is his name: 3Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. 4For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: 5They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil. 6Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. 7I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. 8I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. 9And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

10“Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord:

11‘Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!’

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord.

12“Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks.

13In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah,
The Time of the Church

flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the Lord.

The Lord's Eternal Covenant with David

14“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’

17“For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, 18and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.”

19The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 20“Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, 21then also my covenant with David my servant shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. 22As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

Additional Reading:
Jeremiah 34:1–36:32; 45:1–51:64

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 27:11–32

Jesus Before Pilate

11Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” 12But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. 13Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” 14But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

The Crowd Chooses Barabbas

15Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. 16And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” 18For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. 19Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” 20Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” 22Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” 23And he said, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

24So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning,
he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” 25 And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

**Jesus Is Mocked**

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. 28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

**The Crucifixion**

32 As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

**Writing**

The crucifixion, which ended with the triumphant cry, “It is finished” (John 19:30), was the offering of the all-sufficient sacrifice for the atonement of all sinners. The Man on the cross was the Lamb of God, who bears the sins of the world to carry them away from the face of God. The salvation of the whole world once hung by those three nails of the cross on Golgotha. As the fruit from the wood of the forbidden tree from which the first man once ate brought sin, death, and damnation upon the entire human race, so the fruits of the wood of the cross restored righteousness, life, and blessedness to all people.

On account of this, the cross is both holy and blessed! Once nothing but a dry piece of wood, it was changed, like Aaron’s staff, into a green branch full of heavenly blossoms and fruit. Once an instrument of torment for the punishment of sinners, it now shines in heavenly splendor for all sinners as a sign of grace. Once the wood of the curse, it has now become, after the Promised Blessing for all people offered Himself up on it, a tree of blessing, an altar of sacrifice for the atonement, and a sweet-smelling aroma to God. Today, the cross is still a terror—but only to hell. It shines upon its ruins as a sign of the victory over sin, death, and Satan. With a crushed head, the serpent of temptation lies at the foot of the cross. It is a picture of eternal comfort upon which the dimming eye of the dying longingly looks, the last anchor of his hope and the only light that shines in the darkness of death.

—C. F. W. Walther

**Hymnody**

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
’Tis the Christ, by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, ’tis He, ’tis He!
’Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David’s Son, yet David’s Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
’Tis the true and faithful Word.

—Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

*(LSB 451:1)*

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus Christ, as the healer of nations, You released many from their
bondage to sin, death, and the devil, but when it came time to release You, the crowd chose a murderer instead. Through our co-crucifixion with You in the waters of our Baptism, may we continually be released from our sins as we confess You to be our everlasting King; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1110)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 34–39

18 November

Psalmody
1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*
   Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,*
   and by night, but I find no rest.
3 Yet you are holy,* enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In you our fathers trusted;*
   they trusted, and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried and were rescued;*
   in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
—Psalm 22:1–5

Additional Psalm: Psalm 22:12–26

Old Testament
Reading: Jeremiah 37:1–21

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah
1Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim. 2But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the Lord that he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.
3King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the Lord our God.” 4Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. 5The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.
6Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet:
7“Thus says the Lord, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, ‘Behold, Pharaoh’s army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. 8And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire. 9Thus says the Lord, Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely go away from us,” for they will not go away. 10For even if you should defeat the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.’”

Jeremiah Imprisoned
11Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh’s army, 12Jeremiah set out from

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Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion there among the people. 

When he was at the Benjamin Gate, a sentry there named Irijah the son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are deserting to the Chaldeans.” And Jeremiah said, “It is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.” But Irijah would not listen to him, and seized Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for it had been made a prison.

When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells and remained there many days, King Zedekiah sent for him and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house and said, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Jeremiah said, “There is.” Then he said, “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.” Jeremiah also said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison?

Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land’? Now hear, please, O my lord the king: let my humble plea come before you and do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, lest I die there.” So King Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard. And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers’ street, until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.


[The Crucifixion]

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see
whether Elijah will come to save him.” 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

55 There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Additional Reading: Revelation 17:1–18

Writing

[Here is the] pure and true doctrine of our churches concerning [predestination and the eternal providence of God]:

I. Christ has died for all people and, as the Lamb of God, has borne the sins of the whole world.

II. God created no one for condemnation, but wants all people to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore He commands all to hear His Son Christ in the Gospel. By the Gospel He promises the power and working of the Holy Spirit for conversion and salvation.

III. Many people are condemned by their own guilt who are either unwilling to hear the Gospel of Christ or later fall from grace. This happens either by error against the foundation of grace or by sins against conscience.

IV. All sinners who repent are received into grace, and no one is excluded, even though his sins were as scarlet. For God’s mercy is much greater than the sins of all the world, and God has compassion on all His works.

— Christian Visitation Articles 1592, Article IV

Hymnody

O wondrous love, whose depth no heart hath sounded,
That brought Thee here, by foes and thieves surrounded!
All worldly pleasures, heedless, I was trying While Thou wert dying.

— O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken (LSB 439:7)

Prayer of the Day

O God, creator of heaven and earth, grant that as the crucified body of Your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the third day, and rise with Him to newness of life, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L34)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 40–46
19 November

Elizabeth of Hungary

Psalmody

1 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble!* 
   May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!
2 May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion!
3 May he remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices!
4 May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your plans!
5 May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners!* 
   May the LORD fulfill all your petitions!
6 Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand.
7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,* but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
8 They collapse and fall,* but we rise and stand upright.
9 O LORD, I save the king!* May he answer us when we call. —Psalm 20

Additional Psalm: Psalm 18:25–34

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 38:1–28

Jeremiah Cast into the Cistern

1 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, 2“Thus says the LORD: He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live. He shall have his life as a prize of war, and live.” 3 Thus says the LORD: This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be taken.” 4 Then the officials said to the king, “Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.” 5 King Zedekiah said, “Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.” 6 So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king’s son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

Jeremiah Rescued from the Cistern

7 When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch who was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate— 8 Ebed-melech went from the king’s house and said to the king, “My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern, and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.” 9 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the
Ethiopian, “Take thirty men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.” 11So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe in the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. 12Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes.” Jeremiah did so. 13Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah Again

14King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance of the temple of the Lord. The king said to Jeremiah, “I will ask you a question; hide nothing from me.” 15Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.” 16Then King Zedekiah swore secretly to Jeremiah, “As the Lord lives, who made our souls, I will not put you to death or deliver you into the hand of these men who seek your life.”

17Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.” 19King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans, lest I be handed over to them and they deal cruelly with me.” 20Jeremiah said, “You shall not be given to them. Obey now the voice of the Lord in what I say to you, and it shall be well with you, and your life shall be spared. 21But if you refuse to surrender, this is the vision which the Lord has shown to me: 22Behold, all the women left in the house of the king of Judah were being led out to the officials of the king of Babylon and were saying,

“‘Your trusted friends have deceived you and prevailed against you; now that your feet are sunk in the mud, they turn away from you.’

23All your wives and your sons shall be led out to the Chaldeans, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand, but shall be seized by the king of Babylon, and this city shall be burned with fire.”

24Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die. 25If the officials hear that I have spoken with you and come to you and say to you, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; hide nothing from us and we will not put you to death,’ 26then you shall say to them, ‘I made a humble plea to the king that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.’ ” 27Then all the officials came to Jeremiah and asked him, and he answered them as the king had instructed him. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been overheard. 28And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

Additional Reading: Jeremiah 39:1–44:30
New Testament Reading:
Matthew 27:57–66

Jesus Is Buried

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. 60 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

62 The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ 63 Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” 64 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” 65 So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Writing

This is . . . an outstanding praise of hospitality, in order that we may be sure that God Himself is in our home, is being fed at our house, is lying down and resting as often as some pious brother in exile because of the Gospel comes to us and is received hospitably by us. This is called brotherly love or Christian charity; it is greater than that general kindness which is extended even to strangers and enemies when they are in need of our aid. . . . For the accounts of the friendships of the Gentiles, like those of Theseus and Hercules, of Pylades and Orestes, are nothing in comparison with the brotherhood in the church; its bond is an association with God so close that the Son of God says that whatever is done to the least of His is done to Himself. Therefore their hearts go out without hypocrisy to the needs of their neighbor, and nothing is either so costly or so difficult that a Christian does not undertake it for the sake of the brethren. . . . But if anyone earnestly believed that he is receiving the Lord Himself when he receives a poor brother, there would be no need for such anxious, zealous, and solicitous exhortations to do works of love. Our coffers, storeroom, and compassion would be open at once for the benefit of the brethren. There would be no ill will, and together with godly Abraham we would run to meet the wretched people, invite them into our homes, and seize upon this honor and distinction ahead of others and say: “O Lord Jesus, come to me; enjoy my bread, wine, silver, and gold. How well it has been invested by me when I invest it in You!”

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

O darkest woe!
Ye tears, forth flow!
Has earth so sad a wonder?
God the Father’s only Son
Now is buried yonder.

—O Darkest Woe (LSB 448:1)
Prayer of the Day

Mighty King, whose inheritance is not of this world, inspire in us the humility and benevolent charity of Elizabeth of Hungary. She scorned her bejeweled crown with thoughts of the thorned one her Savior donned for her sake and ours, that we, too, might live a life of sacrifice, pleasing in Your sight and worthy of the name of Your Son, Christ Jesus, who with the Holy Spirit reigns with You forever in the everlasting kingdom. (1111)

Elizabeth of Hungary

Born in Pressburg, Hungary, in 1207, Elizabeth was the daughter of King Andrew II and his wife, Gertrude. Given as a bride in an arranged political marriage, Elizabeth became the wife of Louis of Thuringia in Germany at age fourteen. She had a spirit of Christian generosity and charity, and the home she established for her husband and three children in the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach was known for its hospitality and family love. Elizabeth often supervised the care of the sick and needy and at one time even gave up her bed to a leper. Widowed at the age of twenty, she made provisions for her children and entered into an austere life as a nun in the Order of Saint Francis. Her self-denial led to failing health and an early death in 1231 at age twenty-four. Remembered for her self-sacrificing ways, Elizabeth is commemorated through the many hospitals named for her around the world.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 47–56

20 November

Psalmody

19 Open to me the gates of | righteousness,*
that I may enter through them
and give thanks | to the LORD.

20 This is the gate | of the LORD;*
the righteous shall enter | through it.

21 I thank you that you have | answered me*
and have become my sal- | vation.

22 The stone that the builders re- | jected*
has become the | cornerstone.

23 This is the LORD’s | doing;*
it is marvelous | in our eyes.

24 This is the day that the | LORD has made;*
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.

25 Save us, we pray, | O LORD!* O LORD, we pray, give | us success!

26 Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the LORD!* We bless you from the house | of the LORD.

27 The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine up- | on us.* Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the | altar!

28 You are my God, and I will give | thanks to you;*
you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.

29 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good;*
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!

—Psalm 118:19–29

Additional Psalm: Psalm 118:1–2, 15–24

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 1:1–21

Daniel Taken to Babylon

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and
besieged it. 2And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. 3Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king’s palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. 6Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 7And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Daniel’s Faithfulness

But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. 9And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, 10and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.” 11Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12“Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king’s food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” 14So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. 15At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king’s food. 16So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. 17As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. 20And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. 21And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

New Testament Reading:
Matthew 28:1–20

The Resurrection

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone
and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

The Report of the Guard

11 While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers 13 and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14 And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

The Great Commission

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Writing

“Jesus approached them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.’” This authority was given to one who had just been crucified, buried in a tomb, laid dead and afterwards had arisen. Authority was given to him in both heaven and earth so that he who once reigned in heaven might also reign on earth through the faith of his believers.

“ ‘Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’” First they teach all nations; then they baptize those they have taught with water, for the body is not able to receive the sacrament of baptism before the soul has received the truth of the faith. They were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit so that the three who are one in divinity might also be one in giving themselves. The name of the Trinity is the name of the one God.

“ ‘Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.’” What a marvelous sequence this is. He commanded the apostles first to teach all nations and then to baptize them in the sacrament of faith and then, after faith and baptism, to teach them to observe all that he had commanded. Lest we think these commandments of little consequence or few in number, he added, “all that I have commanded you,” so that those who were to
believe and be baptized in the Trinity would observe everything they had been taught.
—Jerome

Hymnody
On Galilee’s high mountain
Christ gave the great command
In words of strength and promise
Which all can understand:
“All pow’r to Me is given
To do what I shall choose;
Therefore I send My children,
Their witness I will use.”
—On Galilee’s High Mountain
(LSB 835:1)

Prayer of the Day
O God, for our redemption You gave
Your only-begotten Son to the death of
the cross and by His glorious resurrection
delivered us from the power of the enemy.
Grant that all our sin may be drowned
through daily repentance and that day
by day we may arise to live before You in
righteousness and purity forever; through
Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now
and forever. (L37)

Suggested Reading from
the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg
Confession XXVII (XIII) 57–63

21 November

Psalmody

1 When Israel went out from | Egypt,*
the house of Jacob from a people of
strange | language,
2 Judah became his sanctu- | ary,*
Israel his do- | minion.
3 The sea | looked and fled;*
Jordan | turned back.
4 The mountains | skipped like rams,*
the | hills like lambs.
5 What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?*
O Jordan, that you | turn back?
6 O mountains, that you | skip like rams?*
O | hills, like lambs?
7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of
the Lord,*
at the presence of the God of | Jacob,
8 who turns the rock into a pool of | water,*
the flint into a spring of | water.
—Psalm 114

Additional Psalm: Psalm 16

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 2:1–23

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

1In the second year of the reign of
Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had
dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep
left him. 2Then the king commanded that the
magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and
the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king
his dreams. So they came in and stood before
the king. 3And the king said to them, “I had a
dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the
dream.” 4Then the Chaldeans said to the king
in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your
servants the dream, and we will show the
interpretation.” 5The king answered and said
to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. 6But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.” 7They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.” 8The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.” 9The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. 10The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

11Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. 12So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. 13Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. 14He declared to Arioch, the king’s captain, “Why is the decree of the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. 15And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

**God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream**

17Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20Daniel answered and said:

> “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king’s matter.”

**New Testament Reading:**

**Revelation 18:1–24**

**The Fall of Babylon**

1After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. 2And he called out with a mighty voice,
Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,

Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;

for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.

As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'

For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.

And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!

The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!

For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,
And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!
For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets,
for God has given judgment for you against her!”

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

“So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;
and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more,
and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more,
and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more,
and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more,
and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more,
for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”

Writing
God’s Eternal Foreknowledge and Election

1. To begin with, the distinction between God’s foreknowledge and His eternal predestination ought to be kept accurately.

2. God’s foreknowledge is nothing else than this: God knows all things before they happen, as it is written in Daniel 2:28, “But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.”

3. This foreknowledge extends over the godly and the wicked alike. But it is not the cause of evil or of sin. In other words, it is not what causes people to do wrong (which originally arises from the devil and mankind’s wicked, perverse will). Nor does it cause their ruin, for which they themselves are responsible. But foreknowledge only regulates this and fixes a limit on their ruin, how far it should progress and how long it should last. All this happens to serve His elect for their salvation, even though such ruin is evil in itself.

4. Predestination, or God’s eternal election, covers only the godly, beloved children of God. It is a cause of their salvation, which He also provides. . . .

5. It is not to be investigated in God’s secret counsel. It is to be sought in God’s Word, where it is revealed.

6. God’s Word leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected who are to be saved in eternity. For it is written in Ephesians 1:4, “Even as He chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.”

7. Christ calls all sinners to Himself and promises them rest. He is eager seriously wills that all people should come to Him
and allow themselves to be helped. He offers them Himself in His Word and wants them to hear it and not to plug their ears or neglect and despise the Word. Furthermore, He promises the power and working of the Holy Spirit and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation so that we may remain steadfast in the faith and gain eternal salvation.

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord XI 2–8

Hymnody

Ev’ry eye shall now behold Him
Robed in glorious majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall their true Messiah see.
—Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending (LSB 336:2)

Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You call heaven and all the saints and apostles and prophets to rejoice when those who pretend to be the true Church are brought to judgment. Help us to discern between what is true and what is false, always knowing that Your kingdom comes through humility and suffering and that the truth of the Gospel is found in You alone; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1112)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 64–69

22 November

Psalmody

1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,*
in the company of the upright,
in the congregation.
2 Great are the works of the LORD,*
studied by all who delight in them.
3 Full of splendor and majesty is his work,*
and his righteousness endures forever.
4 He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.
5 He provides food for those who fear him;*
he remembers his covenant forever.
6 He has shown his people the power of his works,*
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.
7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;*
all his precepts are trustworthy;
8 they are established forever and ever,*
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.*
Holy and awesome is his name!
10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.*
His praise endures forever!
—Psalm 111

Additional Psalm: Psalm 92:1–8

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 2:24–49

[God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream]

24 Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy
the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.”

Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.” The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”

Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

**Daniel Interprets the Dream**

You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. As you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a
stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

**Daniel Is Promoted**

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. 47The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” 48Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king’s court.

**New Testament Reading:**

**Revelation 19:1–21**

**Rejoicing in Heaven**

1After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

3Once more they cried out,

“Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

4And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” 5And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

**The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

6Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

7Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

9And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

10Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.
The Rider on a White Horse

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Writing

The glory of the last day is here anticipated. As the people of a nation go forth with shouts of victory to meet the returning conquerors, so the multitudes of the perfected saints break forth in hymns of triumph at the return of the victorious Lord of hosts. The salvation of the saints was in His hands, and He wrought it by the mighty manifestation of His grace. And so all glory and power belong to our Lord alone throughout all eternity. His judgments, His sentences, are true; they have been rendered in accordance with His promises; and they are just, for the rulers of the kingdom of Antichrist had every opportunity to see the errors of their way and to return to the truth, but they deliberately refused and thus invited the wrath of the Lord. For the countless souls which the [Antichrist’s] harlot corrupted with her idolatry, and for the lives of other thousands whose blood she shed, she will have to answer with a sharp reckoning on the last day.

The song of triumph is echoed by the singers and the elders: And for the second time they said, Hallelujah! And her smoke ascends forever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down, and they worshiped God that is seated upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah! The great harlot is cast into the abyss of fire and brimstone, to be burned with fire throughout eternity. . . . And this fact causes both the elders representing the Church of God and the four cherubs that acted as His servants and messengers to fall down before the throne of God in the act of worshipful adoration, and to repeat, in endless refrain, their hymn of praise, Amen, Hallelujah; to
God alone all praise and glory, through all eternity!
—Paul E. Kretzmann

Hymnody
Zion hears the watchmen singing,
And all her heart with joy is springing;
She wakes, she rises from her gloom.
For her Lord comes down all-glorious,
The strong in grace, in truth victorious;
Her star is ris’n, her light is come.
Now come, Thou Blessèd One,
Lord Jesus, God’s own Son,
Hail! Hosanna!
We enter all
The wedding hall
To eat the Supper at Thy call.
—Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying
(LSB 516:2)

Prayer of the Day
Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth
Your Son, we pray, to lead home His bride,
the Church, that with all the company of
the redeemed we may finally enter into His
eternal wedding feast; through Jesus Christ,
our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
(H87)

Suggested Reading from
the Book of Concord
Apology of the Augsburg
Confession XXVIII (XIV) 1–5

23 November
Clement of Rome, Pastor

Psalmody
4 “O LORD, make me know my end
and what is the measure of my days;*
let me know how fleeting I am!
5 Behold, you have made my days
a few handbreadths,*
and my lifetime is as nothing
before you.
Surely all mankind stands
as a mere breath!*
6 Surely a man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;*
man heaps up wealth and does not
know who will gather!
7 “And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?*
My hope is in you.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions.*
Do not make me the scorn of the fool!
9 I am mute; I do not open my mouth,*
for it is you who have done it.
10 Remove your stroke from me;*
I am spent by the hostility of your hand.
11 When you discipline a man with rebukes
for sin, you consume like a moth what
is dear to him;*
surely all mankind is a mere breath!
12 “Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not your peace at my tears!* For I am a sojourner with you, a guest, like all my fathers.
—Psalm 39:4–12

Additional Psalm: Psalm 38:12–22

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 3:1–30
Nebuchadnezzar’s Golden Image
1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and
The Time of the Church

its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 5And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

The Fiery Furnace

6Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. 7They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! 8You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 9And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.” 10Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

11Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. 12Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 13Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?”

14Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 15If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 16But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

17Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. 18And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning

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fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. 22 Because the king’s order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” 25 He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. 27 And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. 28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

New Testament Reading: Revelation 20:1–15

The Thousand Years
1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

The Defeat of Satan
7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that
are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**Judgment Before the Great White Throne**

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Writing**

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors and, when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and [coming] to the extreme limit of the west, he suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience. . . .

It is right and holy, therefore, men and brethren, to obey God rather than to follow those who, through pride and sedition, have become the leaders of a detestable emulation. For we shall incur no slight injury, but rather great danger, if we rashly yield ourselves to the inclinations of men who aim at exciting strife and tumults, so as to draw us away from what is good. Let us be kind one to another after the pattern of the tender mercy and kindness of our Creator. For it is written, “The kind-hearted shall inhabit the land, and the guiltless shall be left upon it, but transgressors shall be destroyed from off the face of it.”

—Clement of Rome

**Hymnody**

The ancient dragon is their foe;
His envy and his wrath they know.
It always is his aim and pride
Thy Christian people to divide.

—Lord God, to Thee We Give All Praise (LSB 522:4)
Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your servant Clement of Rome called the Church in Corinth to repentance and faith to unite them in Christian love. Grant that Your Church may be anchored in Your truth by the presence of the Holy Spirit and kept blameless in Your service until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1113)

Clement of Rome, Pastor

Clement (ca. AD 35–100) is remembered for having established the pattern of apostolic authority that governed the Christian Church during the first and second centuries. He also insisted on keeping Christ at the center of the Church’s worship and outreach. In a letter to the Christians at Corinth, he emphasized the centrality of Jesus’ death and resurrection: “Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, realizing how precious it is to His Father, since it was poured out for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to the whole world” (1 Clement 6:31). Prior to suffering a martyr’s death by drowning, Clement displayed a steadfast, Christlike love for God’s redeemed people, serving as an inspiration to future generations to continue to build the Church on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, with Christ as the one and only cornerstone.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVIII (XIV) 6–10

24 November

Psalmsy

7 All who hate me whisper together about me;* they imagine the worst for me.
8 They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him;*
   he will not rise again from where he lies.”
9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted,* who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
10 But you, O Lord, be gracious to me, raise me up, that I may repay them!
11 By this I know that you delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
12 But you have upheld me because of my integrity,* and set me in your presence forever.

—Psalm 41:7–12

Additional Psalm: Psalm 41

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 4:1–37

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

1 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.
Nebuchadnezzar’s Second Dream

4I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. 5I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. 6So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. 8At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, 9“We have heard that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. 10The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

13“I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 14Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

15He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 16But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 17Let his mind be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. 18The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ 19This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel Interprets the Second Dream

19Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! 20The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, 21whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived—22it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. 23And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its
roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ 24this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, 25that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. 26And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. 27Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

**Nebuchadnezzar’s Humiliation**

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 30and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” 31While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, 32and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.” 33Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.

**Nebuchadnezzar Restored**

34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
35all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”
36At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. 37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.
New Testament Reading:
Revelation 21:1–8

The New Heaven and the New Earth

1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

2And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

5And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Writing

How, then, can water cleanse and renew our souls? Simple everyday water certainly cannot do this. But God has established a merciful institution: that when a sinner is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so God Himself desires to be present there and through this, with His Word connected with the water, to wash the baptized’s soul of all his impurities, make him into a temple of the Holy Spirit, and call him His child and raise him up to be an heir of eternal life. A great and inexpressible wonder happens in Holy Baptism—that man born in sin is reborn to be a child of heaven. Baptismal water is, therefore, a saving, gracious, heavenly, divine water, full of the wonder of divine grace and compassion. St. Paul called it a washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit and said elsewhere: “As many of you as are baptized, you have put on Christ.” Yes, and St. Peter said: “Baptismal water saves us.” . . .

Oh, so do not let your Baptism be taken away! It is your greatest treasure! It is a ship that shall never be wrecked, which leads you into a heavenly harbor. It is quite true that the rebirth that happens at Baptism cannot be truly perceived with the senses. But what did Christ say? “Do not wonder at what I have said ‘You must be born anew.’ The wind blows . . .” That is, you see the water well, you hear its sound and you hear the Word that is spoken over the baptized one, but the inner working of grace, going in his soul on account of it, you cannot see.

—C. F. W. Walther

Hymnody

Christ has wiped away their tears forever; They have that for which we still endeavor. By them are chanted Songs that ne’er to mortal ears were granted.

—Oh, How Blest Are They (LSB 679:4)
Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Alpha and Omega, in Your suffering and death You were making all things new, and from that tree You brought Your work of redemption to an end by declaring, “It is finished.” Be our beginning and our end, that our weeping now at Your table here below may prepare us to feast at Your heavenly banquet, where You will wipe every tear from our eyes and death will be no more; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1114)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVIII (XIV) 11–14

25 November

Psalmody

9 We have thought on your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple.
10 As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is filled with righteousness.
11 Let Mount Zion be glad! Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!
12 Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers, consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels, that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever.*

—Psalm 48:9–14

Additional Psalm: Psalm 48

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 5:1–30

The Handwriting on the Wall

1 King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand.
2 Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. 4 They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

5 Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. 6 Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. 7 The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” 8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the
writing or make known to the king the interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.

10 Then the queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet hall, and the queen declared, “O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. 11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”

Daniel Interprets the Handwriting

13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. 14 I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15 Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. 16 But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. 19 And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.

20 But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. 21 He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. 22 And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, 23 but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

24 Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed:

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Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. 26 This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; 27 Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; 28 Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.

Additional Reading: Daniel 7:1–8:27


The New Jerusalem

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement. 18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Writing

The following issue also belongs to the further explanation and saving use of the teaching about God’s foreknowledge to salvation: Only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life [Revelation 21:27],
are saved. Therefore, how can we know, or why and how can we perceive who the elect are and who can and should receive this teaching for comfort?

In this matter we should not judge according to our reason, or according to the Law or from any outward appearance. Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed depth of divine predestination. Instead, we should listen to God’s revealed will. For He has made “known to us the mystery of His will” (Ephesians 1:9) and made it clear through Christ so that it might be preached (2 Timothy 1:9).

This is revealed to us in the way Paul says “those whom He predestined [elected and foreordained] He also called” (Romans 8:30). God does not call without means, but through the Word. For He has commanded “that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name” [Luke 24:47]. St. Paul also testifies in a similar way when he writes, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The King calls the guests that He wants to have at His Son’s wedding through the ministers He sends out (Matthew 22:2–14). . . .

If we want to think about our eternal election to salvation helpfully, we must in every way hold strongly and firmly to this truth: just as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, that is, it belongs to all people. For this reason Christ has given these commands:

Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations. (Luke 24:47)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. (John 3:16)

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 25–28

Hymnody

Within those walls of Zion
Sounds forth the joyful song,
As saints join with the angels
And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever with them;
The daylight is serene;
The city of the blessed
Shines bright with glorious sheen.
—Jerusalem the Golden (LSB 672:2)

Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, You have promised to those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life that they will dwell in the New Jerusalem, where the temple is the Lamb whose lamp lights the world. Prepare us to enter this heavenly city at the Supper You prepared for us here of the very body and blood of the Lamb, even as we participate now in the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1115)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVIII (XIV) 15–19
Psalmody

1 We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near.*
   We recount your wondrous deeds.
2 “At the set time that I appoint*
   I will judge with equity.
3 When the earth totters,
   and all its inhabitants,*
   it is I who keep steady its pillars.
4 I say to the boastful, ‘Do not boast;’*
   and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your horn;
5 do not lift up your horn on high,*
   or speak with a haughty neck.”
6 For not from the east or from the west*
   and not from the wilderness comes lifting up,
7 but it is God who executes judgment,*
   putting down one and lifting up another.
8 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed,
   and he pours it out from it,*
   and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.
9 But I will declare it forever;
   I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
10 All the horns of the wicked I will cut off,*
   but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.
—Psalm 75

Additional Psalm: Psalm 108

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 6:1–28

Daniel and the Lions’ Den

1It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; 2and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. 3Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.
4Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. 5Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”
6Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! 7All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” 9Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.
10When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. 11Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. 12Then they came near and said before the king, concerning
The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Additional Reading: Daniel 9:1–27
New Testament Reading:
Revelation 22:1–21

The River of Life

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Jesus Is Coming

6 And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” 7 “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” 8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, 9 but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” 10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.” 12 “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Writing

This article, “I believe in the holy Christian Church,” is as much an article of
faith as the rest. This is why natural reason cannot recognize it, even if it puts on all its glasses. The devil can cover it over with offenses and divisions, so that you have to take offense at it. God too can conceal it behind faults and shortcomings of all kinds, so that you necessarily become a fool and pass false judgment on it. Christendom will not be known by sight, but by faith. And faith has to do with things not seen, Hebrews 11:1. Christendom joins with her Lord in the song, “Blessed is he who takes no offense at me” [Matt. 11:6]. A Christian is even hidden from himself; he does not see his holiness and virtue, but sees in himself nothing but unholiness and vice. And you, stupid know-it-all, would behold Christendom with your blind reason and unclean eyes!

In a word, our holiness is in heaven, where Christ is; and not in the world, before men’s eyes, like goods in the market place. Therefore let there be offenses, divisions, heresies, and faults; let them do what they can! If only the word of the gospel remains pure among us, and we love and cherish it, we shall not doubt that Christ is with us, even when things are at their worst. As we see here in this book, that through and beyond all plagues, beasts, and evil angels Christ is nonetheless with his saints, and wins the final victory.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Now from that tree of Jesus’ shame
Flows life eternal in His name;
For all who trust and will believe,
Salvation’s living fruit receive.
And of this fruit so pure and sweet
The Lord invites the world to eat,
To find within this cross of wood
The tree of life with ev’ry good.

—The Tree of Life (LSB 561:4)

Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, Alpha and Omega,
bright Morning Star, You are the tree of life standing on each side of the river of the water of life, bringing healing to the nations. Prepare us for Your coming through the healing medicine of Your Word and Sacraments, putting to flight the diseases of our souls, that with willing hearts we may ever love and serve You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1116)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVIII (XIV) 20–27
The Time of Christmas

Advent Season

Propers for the Advent Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page O–62.

27 November

Psalmody

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God,* and I will tell what he has done | for my soul.
17 I cried to him | with my mouth,* and high praise was | on my tongue.
18 If I had cherished iniquity | in my heart,* the Lord would not have | listened.
19 But truly God has | listened,* he has attended to the voice | of my prayer.
—Psalm 66:16–19

Additional Psalm: Psalm 66

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 1:1–28

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken:
  “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.
3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”
4 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly!
   They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.
5 Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel?
   The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.
7 Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.
8 And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.

9 If the Lord of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the Lord,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

11 What to me is the multitude of your
sacrifices?
says the Lord;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of
rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.

12 When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you
this trampling of my courts?

13 Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of
convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn
assembly.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from
before my eyes;

cease to do evil,
17 learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow’s cause.

18 Come now, let us reason together, says
the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
20 but if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be eaten by the sword;
for the mouth of the Lord has
spoken.”

The Unfaithful City

21 How the faithful city
has become a whore,
she who was full of justice!
Righteousness lodged in her,
but now murderers.

22 Your silver has become dross,
your best wine mixed with water.

23 Your princes are rebels
and companions of thieves.
Everyone loves a bribe
and runs after gifts.
They do not bring justice to the fatherless,
and the widow’s cause does not come
to them.

24 Therefore the Lord declares,
the Lord of hosts,
the Mighty One of Israel:
“Ah, I will get relief from my enemies
and avenge myself on my foes.
25I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.
26And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”
27Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.
28But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 1:1–12

Greeting

1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Born Again to a Living Hope

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Writing

[It finally came in time] to the most perfect promise of all, that of the new testament, in which, with plain words, life and salvation are freely promised, and actually granted to those who believe the promise. And he distinguishes this testament from the old one by a particular mark when he calls it the “new testament” [Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25]. For the old testament given through Moses was not a promise of forgiveness of sins or of eternal things, but of temporal things, namely, of the land of Canaan, by which no man was renewed in spirit to lay hold on the heavenly inheritance. Wherefore also it was
necessary that, as a figure of Christ, a dumb beast should be slain, in whose blood the same testament might be confirmed, as the blood corresponded to the testament and the sacrifice corresponded to the promise. But here Christ says “the new testament in my blood” [Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25], not somebody else’s, but his own, by which grace is promised through the Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, that we may obtain the inheritance.

According to its substance, therefore, the mass is nothing but the aforesaid words of Christ: “Take and eat, etc.” [Matt. 26:26], as if he were saying: “Behold, O sinful and condemned man, out of the pure and unmerited love with which I love you, and by the will of the Father of mercies [II Cor. 1:3], apart from any merit or desire of yours, I promise you in these words the forgiveness of all your sins and life everlasting. And that you may be absolutely certain of this irrevocable promise of mine, I shall give my body and pour out my blood, confirming this promise by my very death, and leaving you my body and blood as a sign and memorial of this same promise. As often as you partake of them, remember me, proclaim and praise my love and bounty toward you, and give thanks.”

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Since He is ours,
We fear no powers,
Not of earth nor sin nor death.
He sees and blesses
In worst distresses;
He can change them with a breath.
Wherefore the story
Tell of His glory

With hearts and voices;
All heav’n rejoices
In Him forever: Alleluia!
We shout for gladness,
Triumph o’er sadness,
Love Him and praise Him
And still shall raise Him
Glad hymns forever: Alleluia!
—In Thee Is Gladness (LSB 818:2)

Prayer of the Day

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L01)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Large Catechism Longer Preface 1–6

28 November

Psalmody

13 You will arise and have pity on Zion;*
it is the time to favor her;
the appointed time has come.
14 For your servants hold her stones dear*
and have pity on her dust.
15 Nations will fear the name of the Lord,*
and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.
16 For the Lord builds up Zion;*
he appears in his glory;
17 he regards the prayer of the destitute*
and does not despise their prayer.
—Psalm 102:13–17

Additional Psalm: Psalm 85
The Mountain of the Lord

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord

For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.

Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots.

Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.

So man is humbled, and each one is brought low—do not forgive them!

Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty.

The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;

against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up;

and against all the oaks of Bashan;

against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills;

against every high tower, and against every fortified wall;

against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft.

And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled,
and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low,
and the \textit{LORD} alone will be exalted in that day.

\begin{scriptsize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[18] And the idols shall utterly pass away.
\item[19] And people shall enter the caves of the rocks
\hspace{1em} and the holes of the ground,
\hspace{1em} from before the terror of the \textit{LORD},
\hspace{1em} and from the splendor of his majesty,
\hspace{1em} when he rises to terrify the earth.
\item[20] In that day mankind will cast away
\hspace{1em} their idols of silver and their idols of gold,
\hspace{1em} which they made for themselves to worship,
\hspace{1em} to the moles and to the bats,
\hspace{1em} to enter the caverns of the rocks
\hspace{1em} and the clefts of the cliffs,
\hspace{1em} from before the terror of the \textit{LORD},
\hspace{1em} and from the splendor of his majesty,
\hspace{1em} when he rises to terrify the earth.
\item[21] Stop regarding man
\hspace{1em} in whose nostrils is breath,
\hspace{1em} for of what account is he?
\end{enumerate}
\end{scriptsize}

\textit{Additional Reading: Isaiah 3:1–4:6}

\textbf{New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 1:13–25}

\textbf{Called to Be Holy}

\begin{scriptsize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. \hspace{1em}
\item[14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, \hspace{1em}
\item[15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, \hspace{1em}
\item[16] since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” \hspace{1em}
\item[17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, \hspace{1em}
\item[19] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, \hspace{1em}
\item[20] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. \hspace{1em}
\item[21] He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you
\hspace{1em} who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
\item[22] Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, \hspace{1em}
\item[23] since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; \hspace{1em}
\item[24] “All flesh is like grass
\hspace{1em} and all its glory like the flower of grass.
\hspace{1em} The grass withers,
\hspace{1em} and the flower falls,
\hspace{1em} but the word of the Lord remains forever.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{scriptsize}

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

\textbf{Writing}

Dr. Luther writes in the Preface to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans:

\begin{scriptsize}
\begin{quote}
Faith, however, is a divine work in us that changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1:[12–13].
\hspace{1em}
It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is
\end{quote}
\end{scriptsize}
a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them. Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever. He gropes and looks around for faith and good works, but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. Yet he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God’s grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all creatures. And this is the work that the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace. Thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire. [LW 35:370–71]

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IV 10–12

Yea, hea’v’n itself were void and bare
If Thou, Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break,
My trust in Thee can nothing shake.
Thou art the portion I have sought;
Thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.
—Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart (LSB 708:1)

Prayer of the Day
Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L02)

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord
Large Catechism Longer Preface 7–13

29 November
Noah

Psalody
19 Open to me the gates of | righteousness,*
that I may enter through them and give thanks | to the LORD.
20 This is the gate | of the LORD;*
the righteous shall enter | through it.
21 I thank you that you have | answered me*
and have become my sal- | vation.
22 The stone that the builders re- | jected*
has become the | cornerstone.

Hymnody
Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;
I pray Thee, ne’er from me depart,
With tender mercy cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share.
The Time of Christmas

23 This is the LORD’s doing;* it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 This is the day that the LORD has made;* let us rejoice and be glad in it.
—Psalm 118:19–24

Additional Psalm: Psalm 118

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 5:1–25

The Vineyard of the LORD Destroyed

1 Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.
3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up;
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah

are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

Woe to the Wicked

8 Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field,
until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.
9 The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing: “Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.”

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink,
who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them!
12 They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts,
but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands.
13 Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge;
their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.
14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure, and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude will go down, her revelers and he who exults in her.
15 Man is humbled, and each one is brought low,
and the eyes of the haughty are brought low.

16 But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice,
and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.

17 Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture,
and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich.

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood,
who draw sin as with cart ropes,
who say: “Let him be quick,
let him speed his work
that we may see it;
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near,
and let it come, that we may know it!”

19 Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter!

20 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!

21 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right!

22 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,
so their root will be as rottenness,
and their blossom go up like dust;
for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts,
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

23 Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people,
and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them,
and the mountains quaked;
and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets.
For all this his anger has not turned away,
and his hand is stretched out still.

Additional Reading: Amos 1:1–9:15

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:1–12

A Living Stone and a Holy People

1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

8 and

“A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.
9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Writing

Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise (Leviticus 3; 7:11–18; Psalm 56:12). These are the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the troubles of saints, yes, all good works of saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those making them, nor can they be applied to others to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation by the outward act (ex opere operato). They are made by those who have been reconciled. These are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches, “a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices” (1 Peter 2:5). Spiritual sacrifices, however, are contrasted not only with those of cattle, but even with human works offered by the outward act, because spiritual refers to the movements of the Holy Spirit in us. Paul teaches the same thing, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). “Spiritual worship” means, however, a service in which God is known and is grasped by the mind. This happens in the movements of fear and trust toward God. Therefore, it contrasts not only with the Levitical service, in which cattle are slain, but also with a service in which a work is imagined to be offered by the outward act.

The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches the same thing, “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” (13:15). He adds the interpretation, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. He asks us to offer praises, that is, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and the like. These benefit not by the outward act, but because of faith. This is taught by the clause “Through Him then let us continually offer,” that is, by faith in Christ.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 25–26

Hymnody

Christ is our cornerstone,
On Him alone we build;
With His true saints alone
The courts of heav’n are filled.

On His great love
Our hopes we place
Of present grace
And joys above.

—Christ Is Our Cornerstone
(LSB 912:1)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in
Grant that we may be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, so that with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1117)

Noah

Noah, the son of Lamech (Genesis 5:30), was instructed by God to build an ark in which his family would find security from the destructive waters of a devastating flood that God warned would come. Noah built the ark, and the rains descended. The entire earth was flooded, destroying “every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals” (Genesis 7:23). After the flood waters subsided, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. When Noah determined it was safe and God confirmed it, Noah, his family, and all the animals disembarked. Then Noah built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for having saved his family from destruction. A rainbow in the sky was declared by God to be a sign of His promise that never again would a similar flood destroy the entire earth (Genesis 8:20–22; 9:8–17). Noah is remembered and honored for his obedience, believing that God would do what He said He would.

Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Longer Preface 14–20

30 November

St. Andrew, Apostle

Psalmody

1 To you I lift up my eyes,*
   O you who are enthroned
   in the heavens!

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress,*
   so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
   till he has mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD,
   have mercy upon us,*
   for we have had more than enough
   of contempt.

4 Our soul has had more than enough
   of the scorn of those who are at ease,*
   of the contempt of the proud.
   —Psalm 123

Additional Psalm: Psalm 7

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 6:1–7:9

Isaiah’s Vision of the LORD

1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said:

   “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean
lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

6Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Isaiah’s Commission from the LORD

8And I heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” 9And he said, “Go, and say to this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

10Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

11Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said:

“Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

12And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.”

The holy seed is its stump.

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz

7:1In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. 2When the house of David was told, “Syria is in league with Ephraim,” the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

3And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field. 4And say to him, ‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. 5Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, 6“Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,”” thus says the Lord God:

“It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass.

8For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.

9And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.’”

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New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:13–25

Submission to Authority

13Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. 18Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Writing

Reverent hearts, we hold the feast of the apostle Andrew in Christendom as the first in the [Church] Year not only because it falls near the season of Advent but also because Andrew was called first, before the other apostles, by the Lord Jesus. Even Durandus, the bishop of Mende, says, “The saints are to be honored by imitation, not adored, as if to honor them as gods. They are to be honored with love, not adored with servitude.”

Now history tells us how St. Andrew together with his fellows conducted their new office. Right away they left their nets and followed the Lord Jesus. And again, right away they left the ship and their father and followed Him. To them, Jesus is now the most precious one on earth—according to His mind they learn, according to His words they teach, according to His will they live, according to His decree they suffer and die. When St. Andrew was threatened with the cross, he said joyfully, “If I feared the punishment of the cross, I would never have preached the mystery of the cross.” Then when he saw the cross, he spoke, “Hail, precious cross, you who were dedicated by the body of Christ; may He receive me through you, who redeemed me through you.” And when he was living after three days on the cross, his hearers wanted to take him down by force, but he said, “Ah, let God take care of it! Do not make the peace of the Gospel suspect by your unnecessary revolt against the government.” That was apostolic constancy and long-suffering! This is what it means to “leave everything and follow Christ,” all the way to the last catch of fish! —Valerius Herberger

Hymnody

When we seek relief
From a long-felt grief,
When temptations come alluring,
Make us patient and enduring.

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