



6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 20, 2025

Redeemer Lutheran Church

302 Grove St.

Tillamook, OR 97141

Rev. Kevin W Oster

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Confession and Absolution

853 How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

LSB 853



1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord,
2 But if, for - get - ful, we should find
3 We mar - vel how Your saints be - come
4 In what You give us, Lord, to do,



When once we heed Your call: To live ac - cord - ing
Your yoke is hard to bear; If world - ly pres - sures
In hin - dranc - es more sure; Whose joy - ful vir - tues
To - geth - er or a - lone, In old rou - tines or



to Your Word And dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re - stored,
fray the mind, And love it - self can - not un - wind
put to shame The cas - ual way we wear Your name
ven - tures new, May we not cease to look to You,



That You are Lord of all And will not let us fall.
Its tan - gled skein of care: Our in - ward life re - pair.
And by our faults ob - scure Your pow'r to cleanse and cure.
The cross You hung up - on— All You en - deav - ored done.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Tune: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918

Text: © 1982 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004706

Tune: Public domain

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

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

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

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

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

C **Amen.**

Service of the Word

Introit

Introit

Your word is a lamp | to my feet*

and a light | to my path.

The LORD is my | portion;*

I promise to | keep your words.

I entreat your favor with | all my heart;*

be gracious to me according to your | promise.

When I think | on my ways,*

I turn my feet to your testi- | monies;

I hasten and do | not delay*

to keep your com- | mandments.

The earth, O LORD, is full of your | steadfast love;*

teach me your | statutes!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Your word is a lamp | to my feet*

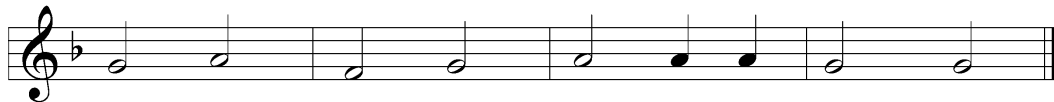
and a light | to my path.

Kyrie

LSB 186



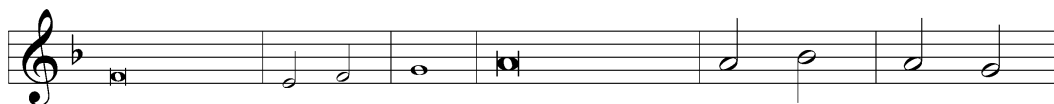
Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 187



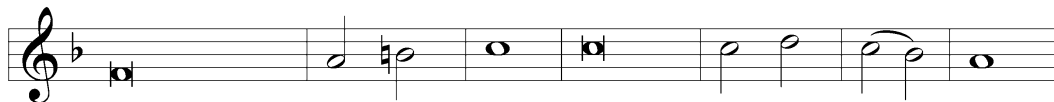
P Glory be to God on high: **C** and on earth peace, good - will toward



men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,



we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.



O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.



O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;



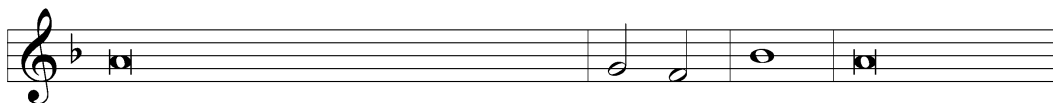
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,



that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up-on us.



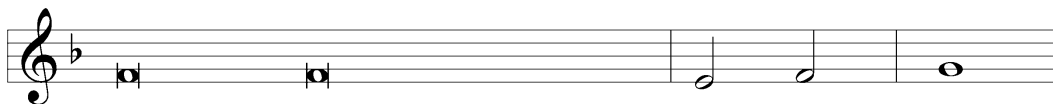
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.



Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up-



on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.



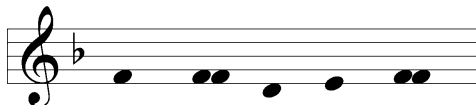
Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,



art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

Proper 11 (Year C)



P The Lord be with you.



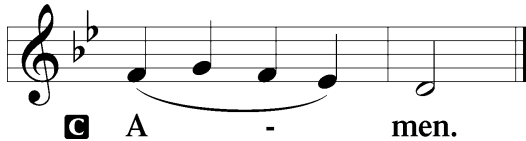
C And with thy spir - it.



P Let us pray.

P O Lord, grant us the Spirit to hear Your Word and know the one thing needful that by Your Word and Spirit we may live according to Your will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our

Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Old Testament Reading

Genesis 18:1-14

The LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 27; antiphon: v. 4

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek." Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in. Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Epistle

Colossians 1:21–29

You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia

LSB 190



☐ Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Luke 10:38-42

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the tenth chapter.



☐ Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



 Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

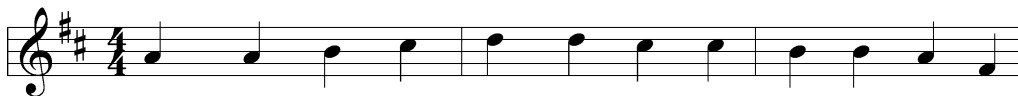
Nicene Creed

Back inside cover of Hymnal

Sit

536 One Thing's Needful

LSB 536



1 One thing's need - ful; Lord, this trea - sure Teach me high - ly
2 How were Mar - y's thoughts de - vot - ed Her e - ter - nal
3 Wis - dom's high - est, no - blest trea - sure, Je - sus, is re -
4 Noth - ing have I, Christ, to of - fer, You a - lone, my
5 There - fore You a - lone, my Sav - ior, Shall be all in



to re - gard. All else, though it first give plea - sure,
joy to find As in - tent each word she not - ed,
vealed in You. Let me find in You my plea - sure,
high - est good. Noth - ing have I, Lord, to prof - fer
all to me; Search my heart and my be - hav - ior,



Is a yoke that press - es hard! Be - neath it the
At her Sav - ior's feet re - clined! How kin - dled her
And my way - ward will sub - due, Hu - mil - i - ty
But Your crim - son - col - ored blood. Your death on the
Root out all hy - poc - ri - sy. Through all my life's



heart is still fret-ting and striv-ing, No true, last-ing hap - pi - ness
heart, how de - vout was its feel-ing, While hear-ing the les - sons that
there and sim - plic - i - ty reign-ing, In paths of true wis - dom my
cross has death whol - ly de - feat - ed And there-by my righ - teous-ness
pil - grim-age, guard and up-hold me, In lov - ing for-give - ness, O



ev - er de - riv - ing. This one thing is need-ful; all oth - ers are
Christ was re - veal-ing! All earth - ly con-cerns she for - got for her
steps ev - er train-ing. If I learn from Je - sus this knowl-edge di -
ful - ly com-plet - ed; Sal - va-tion's white rai-ments I there did ob -
Je - sus, en - fold me. This one thing is need-ful; all oth - ers are



vain— I count all but loss that I Christ may ob - tain!
Lord And found her con - tent - ment in hear - ing His Word.
vine, The bless - ing of heav - en - ly wis - dom is mine.
tain, And in them in glo - ry with You I shall reign.
vain— I count all but loss that I Christ may ob - tain!

Text: Johann Heinrich Schröder, 1667–99; tr. Frances E. Cox, 1812–97, alt. Tune: Adam Krieger, 1634–66
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

Stand

Offertory

LSB 192

C **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not
Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold
me with Thy free spirit. Amen.**

Offering

Stand

Prayer of the Church

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

LSB 194



P The Lord be with you.



G And with thy spir - it.



P Lift up your hearts.



G We lift them up un - to the Lord.



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



C It is meet and right so to do.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

LSB 195



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is He,



bless-ed is He, bless - ed is He that com-eth in the name of the Lord.



Ho-san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san-na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer

LSB 162

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name .**

..

**... For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

The Words of Our Lord

LSB 197

Pax Domini

LSB 197



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



G A - men.

Agnus Dei

LSB 198



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the

world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that
 tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up-on us.
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the
 world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Sit

Distribution

576 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

LSB 576

1 My hope is built on noth-ing less Than
 2 When dark-ness veils His love-ly face, I
 3 His oath, His cov-e-nant and blood Sup-
 4 When He shall come with trum-pet sound, Oh,
 Je-sus' blood and righ-teous-ness; No mer-it of my
 rest on His un-chang-ing grace; In ev-'ry high and
 port me in the rag-ing flood; When ev-'ry earth-ly
 may I then in Him be found, Clothed in His righ-teous-



own I claim But whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
storm - y gale My an - chor holds with - in the veil.
prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
ness a - lone, Re - deemed to stand be - fore His throne!



Refrain

On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; All oth - er ground is



sink - ing sand, All oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

Text: Edward Mote, 1797-1874, alt.
Tune: William B. Bradbury, 1816-68
Text and tune: Public domain

738 Lord of All Hopefulness

LSB 738



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



Whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
Your hands swift to wel - come, Your arms to em - brace:
Whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:



Be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Text: Jan Struther, 1901-53

Tune: Irish

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Tune: Public domain

589 Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens

LSB 589



1 Speak, O Lord, Your ser - vant lis - tens, Let Your Word to
2 Oh, what bless - ing to be near You And to lis - ten
3 Lord, Your words are wa - ters liv - ing When my thirst - ing
4 As I pray, dear Je - sus, hear me; Let Your words in



me come near; New - born life and spir - it give me,
to Your voice; Let me ev - er love and hear You,
spir - it pleads. Lord, Your words are bread life - giv - ing;
me take root. May Your Spir - it e'er be near me



Let each prom-ise still my fear. Death's dread pow'r, its in-ward
Let Your Word be now my choice! Man - y hard-ened sin-ners,
On Your words my spir - it feeds. Lord, Your words will be my
That I bear a - bun - dant fruit. May I dai - ly sing Your



strife, Wars a - gainst Your Word of life; Fill me, Lord, with
Lord, Flee in ter - ror at Your Word; But to all who
light Through death's cold and drea - ry night; Yes, they are my
praise, From my heart glad an - thems raise, Till my high - est



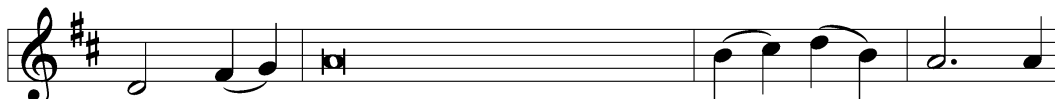
love's strong fer - vor That I cling to You for - ev - er!
feel sin's bur - den You give words of peace and par - don.
sword pre - vail - ing And my cup of joy un - fail - ing!
praise is giv - en In the end - less joy of heav - en.

Text: Anna Sophia von Hessen-Darmstadt, 1638–83; (sts. 1–3): tr. George A. T. Rygh, 1860–1942, alt.; (st. 4): tr. Christian Worship, 1993
Tune: Johann Schop, c. 1590–1667
Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199



C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac-



cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,



which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,



a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy



peo - ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and



to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,



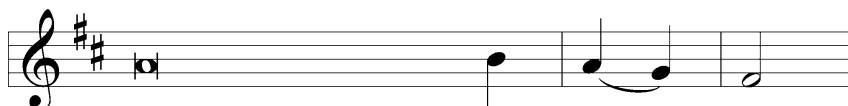
is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

Thanksgiving

LSB 200



A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,



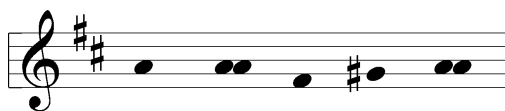
C and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

A Let us pray.

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.



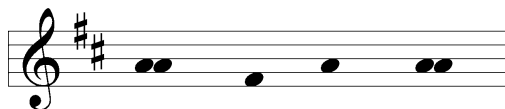
P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.

Benedicamus

LSB 202



A Bless we the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 202

- P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and T give you peace.
- C **Amen, amen, amen.**

Our Communion Practice

First Corinthians chapter 11 (28-29) states, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." Therefore, we encourage you to examine yourself before taking the Lord's Supper using the following questions:

Do I realize that I am a sinner?

Do I believe that Jesus is my Savior, that I have been baptized into His death?

Do I believe that I will receive both bread and wine and Christ's body and blood?

Do I intend from this time forward to amend my sinful life?

Our reverence for and our understanding of this Sacrament compels us to ask that anyone who has not communed with us before please speak to the Pastor **prior** to approaching the rail. **Children who have not been instructed and guests who wish to receive a blessing are welcome at the rail, please indicate this by folding your hands and placing them on the rail.**

728 How Firm a Foundation

LSB 728



- 1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,
- 2 "Fear not! I am with you, O be not dis - mayed,
- 3 "The soul that on Je - sus has leaned for re - pose
- 4 "When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way will lie,
- 5 "Through - out all their life - time My peo - ple will prove



Is laid for your faith in His ex - cel - lent Word!
 For I am your God and will still give you aid;
 I will not, I will not, de - sert to his foes;
 My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, will be your sup - ply.
 My sov - 'reign, e - ter - nal, un - change - a - ble love;

What more can He say than to you He has said
 I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
 That soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,
 The flames will not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign
 And then, when gray hairs will their tem - ples a - dorn,

Who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
 Up - held by My righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 I'll nev - er, no nev - er, no nev - er, for - sake!
 Your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine.
 Like lambs they will still in My bos - om be borne."

Text: A Selection of Hymns, 1787, London, alt. Tune: Genuine Church Music, 1832, Winchester Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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July 20 – 1 Kings 19:18 – “Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” Elijah was so sure that he was right — that he was the only one left who had not gone after Baal. But he was too pessimistic; his faith in God was off-center. We can’t go by our own wisdom. We must trust the Lord and what He has revealed to us in His Word. Think about how this applies to our support of God’s work in the

church with our offering. Take a look in Luther's Small Catechism's Table of Duties to see what the Bible has to say about our giving.

July 20 "Sometimes the answer to a problem is as simple as asking for help. Let's not hesitate to bring all our questions, troubles, and needs to the Lord. Thank Him for the people He provides for our help. Pray that He will give you the opportunity today to be His help to others." *Daily Devotion, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Michigan – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

YOU CAN TEACH LAYPEOPLE THEOLOGY... Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in Collinsville, IL and hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken. You can listen to recent in-depth interviews about: A Lutheran View of Natural Law, The Problem of Male Friendship, Christian Endurance, Did Martin Luther Remove Books from the Bible? and more. You can listen at your convenience at issuesetc.org, Amazon Alexa, Google Home, Apple HomePod, TuneIn, the LPR mobile app and a podcast provider.

6/29 Attendance 43 General Fund Offering: \$2485.00

Weekly Schedule for July 06-July 13, 2025

20 Today	Sunday School	9:30 a.m.	Fellowship Hall
	Bible Class	9:30 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Divine Service	10:30 a.m.	Sanctuary
21 Monday	Quilters	9:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall
	Coffee	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall
	Men's Book Club.	6:30 p.m.	Pelican Brewing Co.

22 Tuesday

23 Wednesday	Men's breakfast Compline	8:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m.	Denny's Sanctuary
24 Thursday	Midweek Studies 5 Rivers Study	1:00 p.m. 1:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall 5 Rivers

25 Friday

26 Saturday

27 Next Sunday	Sunday School Adult Bible Class Divine Service	9.30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Fellowship Hall Sanctuary Sanctuary
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Week Beginning Sunday, July 20, 2025 Trinity 5

Catechism: The Office of the Keys—What is the Office of the Keys? Where is this written? What do you believe according to these words?

Verse of the week: 2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Psalm of the week: Psalm 84

Hymn of the week: 682 "God of the Prophets, Bless the Prophets' Sons"

Bible Stories for the Week:

Bible Narrative

Second Reading

Sunday	"I Will Make You Fishers of Men"—Luke 5:1-11	Lamentations 3:19-33
Monday	A Man Is Healed on the Sabbath—Luke 14:1-14	Proverbs 31:10-31
Tuesday	St Mary Magdalene —John 20:1-2, 10-18	Lamentations 3:55-66
Wednesday	The Parable of the Great Supper—Luke 14:15-35	Lam. 5:1-9, 15-22
Thursday	The Parables of Lost Sheep and Coin—Luke 15:1-10	Mark 10:35-45
Friday	St James the Elder —Acts 11:27-12:5	Romans 6:1-11
Saturday	Sunday's OT and Epistle—Exodus 20:1-17	

Faithfulness: The Stewardship Standard

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

What is the standard to which a steward is held? Ask the average person, and they might talk about percentages, tithes, and commitments. Too often, the default mode of measuring stewards is by how much and how frequently they give. This is not helpful. Measuring activity without any connection to baptismal identity is a recipe for disaster. It can either breed a sense of superiority and self-righteousness or create a culture of scarcity and despair. Neither outcome is godly or helpful.

This is not to say that stewardship should be regarded as "no big deal." St. Paul, within his discussion of the ministry to which he has been called, sets the standard of accountability for the steward: faithfulness. This removes any sense of superiority or self-righteousness and dispels

scarcity and despair. When a steward manages what the Lord has entrusted to them — resources and all aspects of life — for God's purposes, the focus is not on how much or how frequently they give. This standard reflects the stewardship portrayed in the Gospels where Jesus entrusts varying amounts, each according to ability. The commended stewards were recognized for their faithfulness in their vocation, not the amounts they managed. Conversely, the condemned stewards were not castigated for their lack of performance but for their lack of faithfulness.

What does this mean for the steward in the pew? The Lord has entrusted you with various things. Luther captures them in his explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. The familiar couplets of food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals and all possessions are the Lord's, and He has entrusted them to you for His purpose. This trust brings an active realization of thanksgiving.

This active thanksgiving is our stewardship. It can be distilled into two questions that the steward regularly needs to answer:

1. How has God blessed me?
2. How is He calling me to respond?

The first question is quite simple to answer: if the Lord has entrusted something to you, it is a blessing. This blessing is for God's glory and the benefit of your neighbor. The second question is more challenging to measure; it is not about percentages and charts. Instead, it is about a life of thanksgiving that flows from the mercies of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This thanksgiving starts at and flows from the cross and the empty tomb. Our stewardship of the Gospel drives our stewardship of everything else.

The standard, then, is faithfulness. Faithfulness flows from eyes focused on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. It does not come from our efforts but through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through Word and Sacrament. It begins at the altar in the Divine Service but extends into the world — from hearth and home to workplace and classroom, from commerce to leisure. The mercy of God, freely given in Jesus, leads us to demonstrate a faithfulness that reveals to others the same mercy we have received in Jesus.

This faithfulness cannot be measured empirically. It is simply allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us for the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor. Weekly. Daily. Faithfully.