

# The Ancient Church Epistle and Gospel Lessons For 66 Sundays and Festivals

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## Selected Hymn Verses

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## Purpose of this Work

Our purpose in writing these paragraphs on the Epistle and Gospel lessons of the church year was to provide helps for those who hear them out of context Sunday after Sunday and have trouble with the idiom of the King James version. If the Word is read, it should be heard attentively and understood.

These paragraphs may be used in your church bulletins or else read before a lesson is read. You might even give them to your shut-ins to use in home Bible study or Sunday devotions.

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## First Sunday in Advent

### Romans 13:11-14

Paul tells us that Christians who live in anticipation of Christ's coming should conduct themselves in a manner befitting their high station in life as saints of the Most High God. We are to give a good account of ourselves to the world. Our outward way of life should conform to our inner regenerate being.

### Matthew 21:1-9

Jesus is the King of the world. There is nothing provincial about him. He has no special interests or national favorites. He exercises justice in all of his dealing with mankind. He comes

to call us into a kingdom far above all human limitations. “Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, thy King cometh unto thee.”

### **Second Sunday in Advent**

#### **Romans 15:4-13**

The Bible was written to guide the Church and to strengthen Christians in their faith. Scripture keeps God’s plan of salvation before our eyes. Christ came first to the Jews to fulfill the promise, and then, out of mercy, to the Gentiles, that they also might, sing praises to God for their salvation. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers today have the certain hope of eternal life, and they praise God for it.

#### **Luke 21:25-36**

The approaching Judgment Day will be recognizable both from the signs of nature and from the fear aroused in the hearts of men when the laws of nature are dissolved and turned to chaos. At that time, Christ will return to judge the world and fulfill our hope of eternal life. Since no one knows the day of his coming, we must live Christian lives and listen to the indestructible Word of God, watching and praying that we might be accepted as guiltless through the blood of Christ.

### **Third Sunday in Advent**

#### **I Corinthians 4:1-5**

Paul tells us that the minister of God’s Word is a steward, one who is accountable to his master in connection with a special duty assigned to him. The steward is expected to perform his duty of preaching the Word of God with all faithfulness. We are not to judge the faithfulness of a God-fearing minister. He is a servant of God answerable to God alone. Any other verdict regarding the pastor’s faithfulness is a worthless judgment made by one having no authority to judge.

#### **Matthew 11:2-10**

Many of the disciples of John the Baptist did not recognize Christ as the long-promised Messiah. While in prison shortly before his death, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus that they might receive proof and believe that he was the promised Savior. After speaking with the disciples, Jesus urged them to compare his words and works with those foretold concerning the Messiah. Christ then turned to the people and acknowledged John as the one sent to be his divinely appointed forerunner, the one who was to announce Christ as the Savior of the world.

### **Fourth Sunday in Advent**

#### **Philippians 4:4-7**

No better word can sum up the Advent season than “Rejoice!” Paul tells us that our joy at the Savior’s coming is to be made evident in our lives. Because we know that our salvation is assured through the newborn child, Jesus Christ, we have peace of mind and heart. Let us therefore, with Paul, ever *rejoice!*

#### **John 1:19-28**

John the Baptist is confronted with the question, “Who art thou?” He replies by sounding the all-pervading message of Advent, “Prepare for the coming of the Lord!” As we near the

Christmas festival, the birth of our Lord is foremost in our minds. But we must not, forget why John was crying in the wilderness. He himself tells us in the verse following our lesson: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

### **Christmas Day**

#### **Titus 2:11-14**

By the grace of God, we have salvation through his Son who was born into this world that he might redeem us by his death on the cross. God has made us, who believe in Jesus Christ, different from unbelievers, “a peculiar people,” whose joy is to shun evil and serve God in righteousness.

#### **Isaiah 9:2-7**

A man walking along a dark path at night stumbles in spite of his caution. If someone brings a light, the man responds with joy and gratitude. We were a people walking in the darkness of sin, but Christ came as the light of the world to lead us to God. At Christmas, we celebrate his arrival on earth in flesh like ours to be our brother and Savior. Joyfully we repeat his name and accept the good which Isaiah proclaimed he would do.

#### **Luke 2:1-14**

The mystery of the incarnation, the Savior-God coming into the flesh as a man, was a real event in history. As the epistle spoke the words of prophecy, so now the Gospel relates the joyous portion of salvation history when this occurred. This wonder is not to be hidden, but proclaimed, as in our worship, so also in our preaching and in our lives. We will live for him and share in bringing his peace among men.

### **Sunday after Christmas**

#### **Galatians 4:1-7**

Children all look forward to the time when they will turn 16, 18 or 21, when they will come of age and be free to do what they please. A child needs a parent or guardian to help him with what he cannot understand or do for himself, to take care of him until he's on his own. All men are children before God's law; this law is the guardian that keeps man in line. But man looks to the time when he, too, will come of age, when he is not responsible to the law. That time comes when a man believes that Christ has fulfilled the law and redeemed him. Then God is no longer a stern law-giver. He becomes a loving Father, and we become His true children with an inheritance in heaven.

#### **Luke 2:33-40**

Christ's presentation and circumcision in the temple were the first steps in a whole life of fulfilling the law marked by the shedding of his blood. Two pious saints, Simeon and Anna, rejoice to see the child who, thirty-three years later, will die for their sins. Simeon explains, and Anna tells others, the effect that this eight day old child, the Son of God and the Son of man, will have on all mankind.

### **The Circumcision and the Name of Jesus (New Year's Day)**

#### **Galatians 3:23-29**

Through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, we belong completely to Christ. As Christ's, we are freed from the law and become sons of God. We are classified also as descendants of Abraham who receive the same promise of life and salvation given to Abraham. This promise is ours, as it was his, solely by faith and not by the works of the law.

### **Luke 2:21**

According to Jewish custom, the Christ child received a name on the day of his circumcision. He was called Jesus, as the angel Gabriel had told Joseph and Mary. The name Jesus means Savior. What an appropriate name! Faith in this name makes Jesus our personal Savior.

## **Sunday after New Year**

### **I Peter 4:12-19**

We expect suffering, because through it Jesus' glory becomes our glory. Our suffering glorifies God because the Holy Spirit is in us. But be careful that you suffer for the sake of your Christian faith, not as evildoers who deserve punishment. Through Christ we avoided God's wrath; but what about those who don't put their trust in Him? We can tell them of Jesus, for whose sake we suffer, and commit our lives to God's keeping.

### **Matthew 2:13-23**

When Herod wished to destroy the Christ child, Mary and Joseph fled with Him into Egypt. Joseph trusted in God's protection. He obeyed the angel of the Lord when he told him to go to Egypt, and then, after the death of Herod, to return to Israel. Man's hatred had been fully spent, and it was safe to return. In all that happened, Matthew shows us how the inspired words of the prophets were fulfilled.

## **The Epiphany of Our Lord**

### **Isaiah 60:1-6**

The prophet Isaiah looked ahead through seven centuries to the birth of Christ. He saw that Jesus would light the way to salvation for all people, both Jew and Gentile. He told how people would come from long distances to worship the Christ child, even foretelling that some would bring gold and incense to him.

### **Matthew 2:1-12**

Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled when men came from the east to worship the Christ child. These "wise men" were Gentiles who knew the prophecy. They followed the star to worship Christ and bring him gifts. They obeyed God's warning and did not tell King Herod, who wanted to kill the child, where to find him.

## **First Sunday after the Epiphany**

### **Romans 12:1-5**

God gives to us, who are saved alone by faith in Christ's atonement, the talents and power to bring forth fruits of faith. We are not to pride ourselves on the abilities that God gives to us. Nor should we think that good works are not closely connected with living Christian lives. Though we have different gifts, we are all members of the Church, the body of Christ, and are united in Christian fellowship.

**Luke 2:41-52**

The account of Jesus with the doctors and teachers of religion in the temple is all that we know of his life from the time that his parents returned to Nazareth to the time that he was thirty years old. It shows us how even in his youth his Father's business, concern for the souls of men, came first. It shows us, too, that Jesus obeyed his parents, perfectly fulfilling the law of God.

**Second Sunday after the Epiphany****Romans 12:6-16**

As we worship and praise our heavenly Father with all our hearts, we are reminded of the many gifts which our Creator has bestowed upon us. We think particularly of our own personal gift, whether it be the gift of administration, teaching, stirring speech, or whatever. God has blessed us all differently, but He wants us all to use our gifts in a manner that is pleasing to Him. That is how we, as Christians, may live our lives to the praise and glory of God.

**John 2:1-11**

Only four weeks ago we worshipped the Christ child in the manger. Now thirty years have passed in the life of Jesus and he is ready to perform his first miracle, the changing of water into wine. This is a significant event for us, because the Lord, by performing this miracle, indicates that the years of obscurity in Nazareth during which he was subject to his parents have passed, and that the time of joy, the blessed time of the gospel, has come.

**Third Sunday after the Epiphany****Romans 12:16-21**

Paul tells the Romans and us to live peaceably with all men. We are not to be proud or conceited, but honest in all that we do. We are to forgive those who harm us, for by helping our enemy in his need we can overcome evil with good.

**Matthew 8:1-13**

Jesus healed a leper who came to him for help. He also healed the servant of a centurion in Capernaum who believed that Jesus had the power to help him. As those men believed, so also we, who have faith in Christ, believe that he can deliver us from all evil.

**Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany****Romans 13:8-10**

This lesson is a summary of the second half of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We know that as sinful creatures we cannot live this law perfectly, as Jesus did. Let us daily approach the throne of grace, asking for forgiveness and for the strength to love our neighbor, that he may see in our love toward him the power of Christ in us.

**Matthew 8:23-27**

The account of Jesus stilling the tempest with a word shows us the power of the Godhead manifested in His Son. The disciples, who had learned to love Jesus, the man and teacher, were now shown by a wonderful miracle that He was in fact God. This is our God, who has the power to save us from the difficulties of life in this sinful world even as He preserves every member of the true Church unto the eternal calm and peace of heaven.

## **Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

Paul gives us a guide for Christian living. It tells us what a Christian's conduct toward other believers should be. Since we are united in fellowship, we lead a life in conformity with the closeness and holiness of that bond, and express in our lives and in all our actions the love which unites us in Christ.

### **Matthew 13:24-30**

The parable of the tares among the wheat is a picture of the life a Christian lives in the midst of unbelievers. Whatever the tares are in our lives, whether false doctrine or false Christians, we can't avoid them. We must cling to Christ, who will preserve us until the Day of Judgment, when God will separate believers from unbelievers and reward the faithful with eternal life in heaven.

## **Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany—Transfiguration Sunday**

### **II Peter 1:16-21**

When Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured before their eyes, they had another proof that the words of prophecy concerning him were true. The prophets and evangelists were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Because God is the Author of Scripture, we can depend on what it says to us. As a light shining through darkness, it shows us the way to heaven.

### **Matthew 17:1-9**

Jesus' transfiguration was witnessed by the three disciples who were closest to him. It was almost too much for Peter. He wished to prolong the moment of splendor by building small shelters for his Lord and for Moses and Elijah who appeared with Jesus in their glorified bodies. But this transfiguration, together with the voice of the Father assuring them that Christ was His Son, was only to give the disciples a glimpse of heaven and to strengthen their faith. They would not see such glory again until they entered eternal glory.

## **Septuagesima Sunday**

### **I Corinthians 9:24-10:5**

Paul encourages all who have come to faith in Christ not to stand idle, but to lead active Christian lives. We must control our earthly desires so that we do not lose sight of our heavenly goal. Remember how God led Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. The people were led and instructed by Moses, and preserved by the power and presence of Christ, yet they rejected God's blessings and perished.

### **Matthew 20:1-16**

The parable of the workers in the vineyard teaches us that God does not reward us according to how much we may have done in His service, but because He loves us. He asks only that we be faithful, doing all that we can in the time that He has given to us.

## **Sexagesiam Sunday**

### **II Corinthians 11:19-12:9**

In this Epistle, Paul dares the false teachers among the Corinthians to compare themselves with him. He tells of his sufferings, how even God has given him a bothersome

problem, but he never complains. Paul tells of visions he has received, and the joy of talking with God that he has experienced, yet he never boasts. Whether we have troubles or success, let us confess with Paul, “I will not boast about myself, except the things that show how weak I am.” Let us also keep in mind God’s words, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

### **Luke 8:4-15**

The parable of the sower is a warning to Christians that not all who hear the Word and come to faith will be saved. Many fall away. We prayed in the *Collect* that “we may be defended against all adversity.” Let us guard against temptation and hold on to our faith. Carefully tend it as you would tend a garden to make it grow. Don’t let, riches, honor, troubles or persecutions rob you of the most precious treasure available: your salvation in Christ.

## **Quinquagesima Sunday**

### **I Corinthians 13:1-13**

God loved us with a perfect love, and gave His Son into death that we might have everlasting life. As God loved us, so we should be charitable toward others, or all that we have and do is worthless. Charity is undeserved love. Even though we “see through a glass darkly,” and will never have perfect knowledge or love here on earth, Paul wants us to use God’s perfect love as a guide for our love one to another.

### **Luke 18:31-43**

The season of pre-Lent prepares us for the Passion season which unfolds God’s perfect love for sinners. Jesus, too, felt it necessary to prepare his disciples for his crucifixion. He foresaw the loveless treatment that he would receive at the hands of Jew and Gentile in Jerusalem. Then, by healing the soul and body of a helpless blind man, Jesus proved the power of God’s perfect love for sinners which could become fully evident in his death.

## **Ash Wednesday, The First Day of Lent**

### **Joel 2:12-19**

God is concerned that His people repent whenever they stray from His precepts. God often accomplishes this only by shaking His people into self-examination and repentance. Prior to our readings, Joel shows how God would call all of Israel to repentance through a ravaging locust swarm which he compares to God’s judgment. God is interested only in true repentance—a repentance that rends the heart and not merely the outer garment. God forgives all who truly repent.

### **Matthew 6:16-21**

If your interest in religion goes no further than the social aspects involved, then you are no better than the Pharisees, who used repentance merely as a vehicle through which, by outward appearances, they attracted worldly sympathy for their self-glorification. True repentance gives no outward indication, so that all glory may be to God. Accordingly, the Gospel lesson advises that we not bank on the self-glorification of earthly treasure, which is but for a moment when compared to the eternity of heaven or hell, but rather invest wisely, seeking the treasures laid up for us in heaven. You must decide on one or the other, for your heart is going to be with the treasure that you choose—either the temporal or the eternal.

## **Invocavit, The First Sunday in Lent**

### **II Corinthians 6:1-10**

Paul's ministry was blameless. It was blameless because Paul relied upon Christ completely in all that he did. Paul's faith in Christ gave him strength to prove his worth as a true servant of Christ despite the many hardships of life and the assaults of the devil. Through Christ's victory over Satan, all Christians have received the power to renounce the devil in every action and to prove themselves the servants of God.

### **Matthew 4:1-11**

Christ, through his temptations, shows us how we should defend ourselves against the attacks of our enemies. Christ used the Word of God in its truth and purity to repel Satan's onslaught. He trusted in God and used His Word to rebuff the attacks of the devil. So too, we should make use of the Word of God to defend against the workings of the devil, and not try to use our own intellect.

## **Reminiscere, The Second Sunday in Lent**

### **I Thessalonians 4:1-7**

On this "Reminiscere" Sunday we ask our Lord to "remember" and preserve us. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to keep their bodies, which he refers to as vessels, or outer shells, as consecrated temples of the Holy Ghost. If we remember that the Spirit dwells in us, we will be strengthened against lust, fornication and slander. We will live with the thought in mind that all we do should be done to the glory of God.

### **Matthew 15:21-28**

The woman of Canaan was a Gentile, a person outside of the chosen family of Israel. Yet her persistent but humble faith in her Savior brought about an answer to her prayer. Oh that our inner fire of faith may burn as brightly as this woman's! We have the guarantee that it will, for the Lord *remembers* us with His Word, the richest fuel of all for our fire of faith

## **Oculi, The Third Sunday in Lent**

### **Ephesians 5:1-9**

Be imitators of God! This opening thought of our reading confronts us with the great responsibility of imitating the same love Christ showed for us. It directs us to avoid the many present-day sins which can only lead to damnation. Do not be deceived by those who babble empty words; but walk as children of light in the Lord, for through Him alone we produce goodness, righteousness, and truth.

### **Luke 11:14-28**

Christ performed a miracle in making a man speak who formerly was dumb. Some of the bystanders claimed that Jesus did it through the power of Satan. The all-knowing Christ spoke to them of divisions within a country and continued by saying, "A family divided against itself falls apart." So how could Christ be God and yet of Satan? Jesus then told of a man who was converted, but, when tempted again by Satan and his helpers, ended up in a condition worse than before. When a woman from the crowd called out a blessing upon the mother of Jesus, his response was, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it."

## **Laetare, The Fourth Sunday in Lent**

### **Galatians 4:21-31**

The son of Abraham and Sarah was Isaac. He was the son of the promise, the covenant of grace that God made with Abraham. The son of Abraham by Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah, was Ishmael. Paul tells us that Hagar represents the covenant of the law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. If we try to be saved by keeping the law, we will be cast out. But if we trust in the grace of God, we are the children of the promise. Our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake.

### **John 6:1-15**

Jesus was always concerned that his people think first of their soul's salvation. The feeding of the five thousand was a great miracle. The people who had seen Jesus heal the sick and had now been fed were ready to make him their king. But Jesus did not come to be a bread king, and so he went away alone.

## **Judica, The Fifth Sunday in Lent (Passion Sunday)**

### **Hebrews 9:11-15**

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of Christ's single perfect sacrifice for our sins. This sacrifice did not have to be made day after day, like the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Jesus' blood was sufficient for the sins of the world, to justify all men before God. We are convinced of this, and look forward to the eternal inheritance which Christ won for us.

### **John 8:46-59**

The Jews rejected Jesus and denied his divinity. They called him a Samaritan possessed with a devil, by whose power he performed miracles and made outrageous claims. But Christ rebuked them for their ignorance. He proclaimed his divine office as the eternal Son of God who came into the world as true man to save men from everlasting death.

## **Palmarum, The Sixth Sunday in Lent**

### **Philippians 2:5-11**

Though Jesus is God, he took on our flesh and served the Father, doing His will, even dying on the cross for us. Because he did this, God exalted him so that all creation must recognize him as Lord. We, too, should have a will like his, not expecting others to honor and serve us. Instead, we should serve others, knowing that through Jesus' merit God our Father will honor us with everlasting life. This lesson shows both the humility and majesty of our Lord, as he does his lowly, yet kingly ride into Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 21:1-9**

Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem is a study in contrasts. Jesus, the Son of man, knew everything that the future had in store for him. He, the almighty Son of God, rode victoriously into Jerusalem—to die! By coming in this manner, the King of kings fulfilled one more prophecy pointing to the Savior from sin. He is a humble king, easily approached by every sinner. He invites us beggars to come to him and receive the forgiveness and life he freely gives.

## **Maundy Thursday**

### **I Corinthians 11:23-32**

Paul emphasizes the purpose and importance of the Lord's Supper. He points out how necessary it is for all of us to examine ourselves before partaking of the sacrament so that we may be sure that we are truly repentant of our sins. If we are not, the Lord will know, and we will commune not for salvation, but for damnation.

### **John 13:1-15**

By washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus teaches them two important lessons. First he points out that to spend eternity with Christ in heaven we must believe that he has washed away all our sins. Then, by his example of true humility and love, he shows us how we are to love all mankind and give them the saving message of the gospel.

## **Good Friday**

### **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah described the passion of Jesus, the Suffering Servant of the Lord. He spoke of the exalted freedom that, all who were enslaved by sin would have when Jehovah's Servant would die to release them from that bondage. Isaiah foretold the violence, the cruelties that He would endure. His prophecies would be fulfilled by Christ, the God-Man, the Lord's Servant. And what would be the result? Christ would be exalted, and all who believed in him would be healed from the disease of sin and all its consequences.

### **John 18:1-19:42**

Once again we behold the Lamb of God in his last hours. God's Son died to win us eternal life. Once more we review this greatest of all sorrows, the death of God's sinless Son for man's sin. Christ, the unblemished Lamb, is sacrificed on the altar of the cross. Witness the depths of his woe. He was betrayed, arrested, denied, spit upon, mocked, beaten, crowned, unjustly tried, condemned and crucified. He died and was buried. What a price for sinning! What love that he who never sinned became the Lamb slaughtered for our redemption. This makes this Friday Good!

## **Easter Day, The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord**

### **I Corinthians 5:6-8**

Paul reminds us that our sins, no matter how few or numerous they may be, are responsible for the condemnation of our whole being in the presence of God. Therefore we must look to Christ, the true Passover Lamb, for forgiveness and a new life.

### **Mark 16:1-8**

The angel proclaims the resurrection to the women at the tomb and to us today. Since Christ has risen, we are to know that our souls are no longer to be fearful, that death cannot prevent our resurrection, and that *we* are summoned to spread this joyous news.

## **Quasimodogeniti, The First Sunday after Easter**

### **I John 5:4-10**

On this Quasimodogeniti Sunday we may review the benefits of Holy Baptism. The Epistle lesson tells us that those who are born of God overcome the world. Through baptism we are reborn from spiritual death to spiritual life. Thus God gives us the power to overcome the world. We triumph because Christ conquered death in his resurrection as we heard last Sunday.

Through faith we accept the victory that he won, as John writes, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

### **John 20:19-31**

The Gospel lesson tells us clearly, in the words of Thomas, that Jesus is God. Many people, even so-called Christians, do not accept this fact. They teach that he only existed as a man, scholar perhaps, a magician or a great moralist, but not God. Passages such as this, however, tell us without doubt that Jesus was and is God. This is important, for now we know how his resurrection was possible. Now we know that his sacrifice was sufficient to pay for our sins. Now we know that through our baptism we receive this payment. Now we know—we’re saved.

## **Misericordias Domini, The Second Sunday after Easter**

### **I Peter 2:21-25**

By his patient suffering, Jesus set us an example of how we should endure whatever is inflicted on us by the enemies of God. We were once sheep going astray, but our Good Shepherd rescued us and made us his own. Should we not, then, be willing to suffer for our faith even as Jesus suffered for us?

### **John 10:11-16**

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He gave his life for us, his sheep, and he has formed an intimate acquaintance with us. Jesus knows and takes care of our needs. We know and appreciate his love. We are thankful that he has brought us into his fold even though we were not part of his original flock, the descendants of Abraham.

## **Jubilate, The Third Sunday after Easter**

### **I Peter 2:11-20**

At Easter time we arose with Christ into a new life. This new life looks forward to our home in heaven, though now we are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Even though we live in the world, we are not part of it. Therefore Peter encourages us to respect all men and, at the same time, to use the freedom which Christ won for us. Even while submitting to the laws of men, a Christian will be faithful to God.

### **John 16:16-23**

Today is Jubilate Sunday—a day to rejoice. Jesus speaks of the “little while” that he will yet be with his disciples. After that time, Jesus will be seen by them no more in this life. At first the disciples think of that day with sorrow. But Jesus assures them that they will find great joy in his ascension to his Father. So we also with joy anticipate meeting our ascended Lord in heaven.

## **Cantate, The Fourth Sunday after Easter**

### **James 1:16-21**

God is the Author of every good and perfect gift. His goodness does not change. God’s greatest blessing to us was that He brought us to faith and gave us first place among His creatures. We who are God’s children are to hear His word, weigh our own words well before speaking, be patient, and avoid evil. Only when we accept God’s Word are we saved.

**John 16:5-15**

The disciples should have been happy that Jesus would ascend to heaven, for he promised to send them the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit would deepen their Christian understanding and would show the world that it is wrong not to believe, that righteousness comes only through the ascended Savior, and that the devil is condemned. The instructions of the Holy Spirit are the will of Jesus because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one.

**Rogate, The Fifth Sunday after Easter****James 1:22-27**

For many people who call themselves Christian, hearing God's Word has become a dead custom, a break in the weekly routine. James compares such a person to someone who glances in a mirror to see if his face is clean, but cannot remember every detail from that brief look. The Word is not something to be treated lightly. It is the power of God which tells us how Christ won heaven for us. A real Christian carries this Word in his heart every day of his life. By his outward actions, he proves himself a real Christian who not only hears the Word, but also lives according to it.

**John 16:23-30**

Because Christ blotted out all of our sins before God with his death on the cross, we can pray to God as our Father in heaven. We have direct, person-to-person access to God. Jesus promises his disciples that the Father will hear and answer all who pray in his name. Although he is now with the Father in heaven, Christ still sends us the Holy Spirit to help us understand God's will and to work confidence in our hearts to pray to the Father. Since God has promised that He will hear us, why should we hesitate to ask for help in Jesus' name?

**The Ascension of our Lord****Acts 1:1-11**

Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus gave his disciples the great commission to be his witnesses. He promised them that they would receive power and strength for their work by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost is still at work today as the agent and executive of God on earth, directing and giving success to the work of all who bear the name of Christ and watch for his return in glory.

**Mark 16:14-20**

The great commission to go into the world and preach the gospel simply means to bring the good news of salvation to those who repent and believe, and the warning of damnation for those who do not believe. This is the Office of the Keys, the power which Jesus gave to his disciples and to the Church today. This lesson speaks also of some of the extraordinary powers given to the missionaries of the Church while it was still in its infancy.

**Exaudi, The Sunday after the Ascension****I Peter 4:7-11**

Since Judgment Day is drawing ever closer, we as Christians should watch and be ready for it, praying constantly. He should also love one another, leaving selfishness behind, and showing Christian hospitality where there is a need for it. Finally, we should use our God-given talents as best we can, doing all to the glory of God.

**John 15:26-16:4**

Christ promises to send the Holy Spirit, Who comes from the Father and the Son, to work faith in the hearts of men. At the same time, however, Christ also warns his followers, who hold fast to his teachings, to expect much affliction and tribulation from the ungodly. After Christ's ascension, the hatred of his enemies for him would be directed against his disciples.

**Whitsunday, The Feast of Pentecost****Acts 2:1-13**

Christ promised his disciples that after he ascended into heaven he would send the Comforter who would fill them with power and confidence to proclaim the Word. Ten days after Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit, with a sound like that of a strong wind, entered a home in which the disciples had gathered. By entering into their hearts and giving them the ability to speak in numerous languages, the Holy Ghost revealed again to the disciples that it was God's will that the Gospel should be preached to all men. Those who hear this preaching either believe it, or else mock and reject it.

**John 14:23-31**

Scripture pictures the unbeliever as one who has gone astray and is without Christ. Jesus promises us in this lesson that he will manifest himself in his believers and never forsake them. He also promises to send the Holy Ghost, through whom believers receive true and lasting peace with God. This knowledge was to comfort Jesus' disciples during his approaching suffering and death, and is also a comfort to us during our life.

**The Feast of the Holy Trinity****Romans 11:33-36**

The festival of the Holy Trinity fixes our attention on the divine mystery of our Triune God. Paul tells us that God's wisdom, knowledge, judgments and ways are beyond our comprehension. We cannot understand them. Yet as true believers, we are to praise our divine Creator, who has shown unbounded mercy and grace toward us.

**John 3:1-15**

The mystery of forgiveness and regeneration is prominent in this lesson. How can sinful man, represented here by Nicodemus, understand that salvation comes through Christ alone without, any merit on his part? How can he understand the working of the Holy Spirit? Jesus explains to Nicodemus the mystery what surrounds the kingdom of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, be born again by the washing of Holy Baptism, and eternal life in the kingdom of heaven is yours!"

**First Sunday after Trinity****I John 4:16-21**

In the older enumeration of the last half of the church year, the Sundays were counted after Pentecost rather than after Trinity. Combining the two, we could say that at Pentecost we celebrate the Holy Spirit who gives us life in Christ, and in the weeks after Trinity we rejoice in our new life in the God we honored on Trinity Sunday. The lesson reminds us of the high calling which we are privileged to share in Him. God has loved us, and now we can love Him and grow

together in Christian love. This love gives us courage before God and concern for our fellow man.

### **Luke 16:19-31**

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a story designed to make us uncomfortable. In it Christ would teach us not to put him off. As the Epistle teaches Christians about living love, so the Gospel teaches us to be concerned for others and for God's Word—not tomorrow, but today. God has given us His witnesses; let's hear them today.

## **Second Sunday after Trinity**

### **I John 3:13-18**

It is only natural that the world hates the Christian, for he is different. A definite sign of our salvation and a clear indication of our hope of eternal life is that we no longer hate, but love our brothers. Hate is the same as murder, and murderers don't have eternal life. If you don't love, you remain in the power of death. We know what real love is by what Christ did for us, laying down his life. We should follow his example of love for others. Love isn't something you can keep to yourself or even limit to words. Love is a matter of actual deeds and practice.

### **Luke 14:16-24**

God's love does not hide itself. He has prepared an eternal banquet for us in heaven as a sign of His love. He extends the invitation to all, rich, middle class and poor. But some men get bogged down in the things of this life. They don't see that God invites them to the one thing that matters. The excuses they offer are no good. There's no reason to turn down the love and good will of the Lord.

## **Third Sunday after Trinity**

### **I Peter 5:6-11**

As Christians, we are confronted with temptation as long as we live in the world. We must always be on guard against the devil who seeks to undermine our faith. Although by ourselves we stand helpless in the face of ever present temptation, God affords us strength and assures us of ultimate victory in every crisis.

### **Luke 15:1-10**

The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin show that the kingdom of God throbs with love for sinners. As members of this kingdom, we are obligated to display this same love toward lost and wandering sinners. We must spare no effort, waste no time, and show no prejudice in seeking the lost. The love of God joyfully embraces every sinner who returns.

## **Fourth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Romans 8:18-23**

In spite of this world's suffering, the result of man's rebellion against God, we can be certain of the glory that shall be ours. Just as all of God's creation waits for the glory of God's sons, so also believers, the saints of God, live in expectation of their release from earthly suffering. Our expectation is made doubly sure because of our communion with God as children of God.

**Luke 6:36-42**

Jesus shows us that our own sinful nature must be taken care of before we can concern ourselves with the sins of others. Only when we have seen our own nature condemned by God's Law and by faith have embraced the Savior's freely offered forgiveness, can we show our neighbor his sin. We will also show him what great things God has done in him through the healing and redemptive power of the Gospel. Then we will truly "pluck the mote" from our neighbor's eye.

**Fifth Sunday after Trinity****I Peter 3:8-15**

The apostle outlines some principles for us to follow in leading a Christian life. A Christian loves his fellow man, is forgiving, guards his speech, and shuns evil even though he may be scorned for it by unbelievers. We must be so sure of our faith that when people question us we will be able to direct them to forgiveness in Christ.

**Luke 5:1-11**

A life lived for Jesus is full of blessing. As the people were blessed by hearing his words, and as the disciples caught many fish by following his direction, so we experience God's saving and preserving power in our lives. Let us ever follow and obey Christ, as did the men whom he called to be his disciples.

**Sixth Sunday after Trinity****Romans 6:3-11**

Paul tells us in Romans 6 that with deliverance from sin we are given a life in righteousness. Through baptism we receive forgiveness of sins. Our sinful natures were crucified and buried with Christ when he died. As he conquered sin and death, so we have died to sin—spiritual death has no more power over us. But since Christ rose from the dead we are alive in him. We, who were formerly the slaves of sin, now live unto God, serving Him with all our hearts

**Matthew 5:20-26**

Have you ever called anyone a fool? Have you ever been angry with someone without a reason? Then you are in danger of hell fire. It is absolutely necessary that we, whose sins have been forgiven through the blood of Jesus, forgive all who sin against us. Only then can we pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

**Seventh Sunday after Trinity****Romans 6:19-23**

In this lesson, Paul tells us that we are all servants. We were formerly servants of sin, producing only vice and wickedness. But now we are servants of God, living good and honorable lives, because we have been freed from sin by Jesus Christ. We no longer serve sin—its only payment is eternal death. Instead, we serve our God, Who freely gives us the gift of eternal life in heaven.

**Mark 8:1-9**

The Gospel lesson gives us a wonderful example of the great power of our Lord Jesus. He made enough food from seven loaves of bread and a few small fish to feed 4,000 people, with seven baskets of food left over. By this miracle, Jesus demonstrated the power that was his as the Son of God, the Savior, through whom we have eternal life.

**Eighth Sunday after Trinity****Romans 8:12-17**

Paul tells the Romans and us not to live for the pleasures of the world, for if we do we will be condemned. We should live for God, Who has made us His children. The Spirit of God lives in us. As children of God, we can pray to Him in all confidence, trusting also that He will preserve us until we enter the glory of heaven.

**Matthew 7:15-23**

Christ tells us that we can determine whether a man is a false or a true prophet by judging the fruits of his work. We should beware of false teachers because they can lead us to everlasting damnation. At the end of time, all who have turned from God will hear Him say, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

**Ninth Sunday after Trinity****I Corinthians 10:6-13**

The children of Israel who left Egypt fell into many temptations during their journey to Canaan and were destroyed. Paul warns us not to be careless in our attitude toward the temptations of the world. We dare not let down our guard even for a moment and consent to a sin, thinking that we are strong in the faith and cannot be hurt. Though we can and often do fall into sin, God preserves us in the faith. With every temptation He provides a way to escape, that we may bear it.

**Luke 16:1-9**

The parable of the unjust steward tells us about a man who had been careless with his employer's money and was called to account. Having lost the money and the respect of his master, the steward didn't try to make excuses. He exhibited keen skill and sensibility by lowering the debts owed to his employer, thus winning the admiration of his master for his shrewdness. How much better would it not, have been if he had used his hidden talents in all his previous dealings! We as Christians are stewards; God is our master. Let us use our various talents, not just for ourselves, but to help others and to advance the kingdom of God.

**Tenth Sunday after Trinity****I Corinthians 12:1-11**

Paul speaks of spiritual gifts. They are all from God. A man can't even believe by himself; the Holy Ghost must work faith in his heart. There are different gifts, services and activities, but they are all worked by God. Every Christian possesses some gift of grace to be used for the spiritual profit of the congregation of believers.

**Luke 19:41-48**

Less than a week before his crucifixion, Jesus wept over Jerusalem because his people refused to accept him as their Savior from sin. Jesus cast out of the temple those who sold animals to be sacrificed. He was concerned that people who came to worship should not be disturbed. While teaching in the temple, Jesus encouraged men to look to him for their salvation. He did not want them to think that they could escape punishment by offering sacrifices without repentance.

### **Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**

#### **I Corinthians 15:1-10**

The Corinthians received from Paul the gospel message of Jesus' death and resurrection. The resurrection proved that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted by God. Paul lists many people who saw the resurrected Lord. At the bottom of the list he put his own name. He knew what God's grace could do; it changed him from a persecutor of Christians to the greatest preacher of all time. Yet he remained humble, knowing that he had done nothing. God had done it all.

#### **Luke 18:9-14**

Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the publican to certain self-righteous people who did not know the meaning of humility. They were like the Pharisee who stood where everyone could see him and hear him thank God that he was "so good." Jesus contrasted such false righteousness with the true humility of the publican. This man accepted God's promise of forgiveness for every person who repents of his sin and asks for mercy.

### **Twelfth Sunday after Trinity**

#### **II Corinthians 3:4-11**

The law given on Mt. Sinai was the Lord's command, perfect and complete. But we can't do what the law demands, and are condemned by it. Our gracious Father sent His Son to fulfill the law for us. Only faith in Christ makes us righteous before God. Though the law was glorious, the glory of the life-giving gospel is immeasurably greater.

#### **Mark 7:31-37**

Jesus healed a dead man who could not speak clearly. The man did nothing, even as we did nothing when the gospel first made us hearers and messengers of the Word. Jesus did not want this miracle made public. If the man knew only that he had been healed, how could he tell people that Jesus had come into the world not just to work miracles, but to save the souls of men?

### **Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity**

#### **Galatians 3:15-22**

Paul describes the essential natures and purposes of God's covenant and law. The covenant, an agreement between God and His people by which they were saved, was made 430 years before the law. The covenant points to Christ both in the old and New Testaments, and saves men by faith in God's promises. The law was not meant to be a means of salvation, but was given to show men that they are sinners and have to turn to the gracious promise of God for salvation. Because no one can be saved by trying to keep the law, Christians should not place themselves under useless religious ordinances in hopes of pleasing God and earning salvation.

**Luke 10:23-37**

Jesus did not give us the parable of the good Samaritan as an example for us to follow to gain salvation, but as a lesson in love. Love is the highest of all Christian virtues. Out of it flow works of the gospel, as opposed to works of the law which are based on fear. Workers of the law, the priest and the Levite, did not help or save the man who was attacked. Although works do not save us, they do show who is a true Christian at heart, and they often lead unbelievers to look for that something that makes Christians different from other people. In this way our good works may save others as the good Samaritan saved the man who was attacked by robbers.

**Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity****Galatians 5:16-24**

The Bible clearly teaches that every converted Christian receives the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in his life. Today's lesson encourages us to walk in the Spirit. Our sinful flesh rebels against the presence and power of this holy guest. The flesh wants us to sin. The Spirit, however, wants us to do works of righteousness in love for Christ, who saved us and sent the Holy Spirit to us.

**Luke 17:11-19**

Among the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in today's Epistle is the gift of faith. The Gospel lesson is the story of the healing of the ten lepers. Nine of the lepers were concerned only with bodily restoration to health. Only one leper recognized that his restored flesh was still sinful, and that he needed spiritual restoration. This one man turned to Christ in faith. His faith made him truly "whole."

**Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity****Galatians 5:25-6:10**

You can fool some people some of the time, but don't deceive yourself. You'll never be able to fool God, for God is not mocked. Find out where you stand by taking a spiritual appraisal of your life. If you truly live in the spirit you will find yourself walking in the spirit. This means that your life will be marked by fruits of faith, such as avoiding self-glory or envy, and showing charity to your spiritually fallen brother. If you constantly talk your life one way and just as consistently live it the other, you're only fooling yourself. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Let us not sin and reap sin's harvest, but let us show the fruits of our faith by taking every opportunity to do good to all, especially to fellow believers.

**Matthew 6:24-34**

It is well known that if you try to please everyone you end up pleasing no one. Yet in religion, people think that they can serve God and every desire of the flesh at the same time. What holds true in everyday life is true here. "No man can serve two masters." The Gospel is a lesson in priorities: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Since nature gives evidence that God takes care of His lowliest creatures, we are confident that He will take care of us who are the apple of His eye. So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough problems without having to borrow from the future.

**Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity****Ephesians 3:13-21**

Paul thanks God for showing His great mercy and grace unto the Gentiles. He prays that their souls and minds may grasp the truths of the gospel to the fullest, asking God to perform this act in them through the working of the Holy Ghost.

### **Luke 7:11-17**

Christ helped many people during his earthly ministry. The widow of Nain was one recipient of his mercy. Christ saw the plight of this woman, had compassion on her, and restored her only son to life. This was certainly a most gracious act of God. We, too, are recipients of His mercy. It may not be as evident as in this passage, but God's mercy and grace are with us every day.

## **Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Ephesians 4:1-6**

We have been called into the vocation, or work, of the Lord. Our response to the saving gospel should be marked by an all-out zeal to spread the good news of Christ to all men. It cannot be proclaimed efficiently if the members of the body, the Church of Christ, are constantly at variance. Paul reminds us that through the unity of a common faith in Christ all our differences are removed, whether they be races color or language. United we can proclaim the love of God to the world.

### **Luke 14:1-11**

Jesus was invited to a meal in the house of a Pharisee on the Sabbath day. A sick man was present. Jesus, who knew that the Old Testament law permitted works of love on the Sabbath, healed the man. By this action, he showed that love is far more important than the arrogant pride of the Pharisees. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees with a parable recalling the seating order used at a wedding table. He who elevates himself will be humbled. But he who humbles himself in Christian humility before God and his neighbor will be exalted and finally come to honor in God's kingdom.

## **Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity**

### **I Corinthians 1:4-9**

The Apostle Paul thanks God for providing the Corinthians with the true gospel. He is grateful that God has confirmed them in the mysteries of Christ, now and until the Day of Judgment. God's faithfulness in calling them to the fellowship of Christ is a gift of grace.

### **Matthew 22:34-46**

When a lawyer tests Christ with what he thinks is an unanswerable question, Jesus gives him the two great commands of Scripture. The first is "Obey the Lord your God with your whole being." The second is "Love your neighbor as yourself." These two are the basis for all of God's commands. Jesus then asks the Pharisees about himself, saying, "If David calls me, the Christ, Lord, how then can I be his son?" They are silent, not willing to confess Jesus as the Messiah.

## **Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Ephesians 4:22-28.**

A redeemed sinner will always show the change that has come over him in his daily life. A new man will replace the old. Deceit, anger and theft are three of the characteristics of the old

man that must go if a sinner loves the Lord who redeemed him. In their place will arise truth, forgiveness, and honest labor.

### **Matthew 9:1-8**

It is extremely difficult for mere men to separate the saving change which happens in the soul from the outward effect that such a change has on the body. The Jews were offended when Jesus healed the palsied man by using the words, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Jesus, who alone looks into the heart, reminded them that forgiveness of sins comes first, and after that will follow the joys of outward change and healing for the body.

### **Twentieth Sunday after Trinity**

#### **Ephesians 5:15-21**

The Apostle Paul lists many of the duties that God requires of believers who are conscious of His will. We will not waste our time on things that do not benefit our spiritual conditions nor will we abuse mind and body with drunkenness. We will praise God and thank Him for all His undeserved blessings.

#### **Matthew 22:1-14**

The parable of the marriage of the king’s son is an illustration of the kingdom of God. We who accept the gospel promise of forgiveness of sins and put on the garment of righteousness in Christ will be received at the heavenly feast prepared for us. But unbelievers, who are too busy with earthly things and don’t care to obey God’s summons to repentance and life, will be cast out into everlasting punishment.

### **Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity**

#### **Ephesians 6:10-17**

Paul compares the Christian with a knight of old going out to do battle. His fight is against the forces of Satan. He needs special armor to stay alive and win the battle. Strength to fight cannot be his own; it must come directly from God. A Christian must put on God’s defense, God’s armor. Then he will be able to defend himself from Satan’s attacks by holding on to God’s truth; by trusting God to declare him righteous through Jesus’ merit alone; by being busy spreading the gospel; by believing God’s Word completely regarding his hope of life; by making salvation his main hope and joy; and finally, by wielding God’s Word against any evil thought or person. This will save him.

#### **John 4:46-54**

A nobleman once traveled some distance to ask Jesus to come and heal his son—only to hear Jesus tell him that he wouldn’t believe in him unless he saw him perform signs or miracles. When the man kept asking for help, Jesus strengthened his faith by not going at all. He simply used his word to heal the boy. When the nobleman returned home to find his son well, he and his servants believed in Jesus. No matter how weak it may seem to be, God’s Word saves us who believe.

### **Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity**

#### **Philippians 1:3-11**

Paul was a living example of Christian love. He longed to be with his friends in Philippi and remembered them in all his prayers. He didn't pray for an increase in their earthly blessings, but that they might continue in their faith in Christ Jesus, and that the fruits of their faith and love might always increase.

### **Matthew 18:23-35**

The parable of the unmerciful servant reminds us of the fifth petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Since Christ has forgiven our sins, a debt that none can ever repay, he expects us to forgive all who sin against us. If we don't, how can we expect God to forgive us?

## **Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity**

### **Philippians 3:17-21**

Paul writes concerning our heavenly citizenship. We are God's citizens because we were chosen by Him to live under Him and serve Him. There are enemies of this kingdom who give evidence of the tremendous power of sin. Paul presents facts which demonstrate this power. He pleads that we strive to remain faithful citizens of the cross, for God's power is greater. It overcomes the enemies of His kingdom. Following Him makes the difference between eternal separation from Him or eternal citizenship with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

### **Matthew 22:15-22**

Jesus tells the Herodians and us today that our citizenship is in heaven. While we are here on earth, however, we have a duty toward God and man, to Christ and to Caesar. God's command to love Him and our neighbor is no contradiction. God places our superiors over us and sanctions their commands. Christian citizenship shows loyalty to God and to the "Caesars" He places over us for our good.

## **Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Colossians 1:9-14**

The apostle writes concerning faith and life. He prays that the Colossians may ever thank God for salvation through the blood of Christ and for God's guidance in their daily lives. Service to the Lord and giving testimony are marks by which faith becomes evident in our lives.

### **Matthew 9:18-26**

Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead and healed a woman who suffered from a slow hemorrhage. Jesus rewarded the faith of these people with life and health. We believe that Jesus, who had such power here on earth, will raise our bodies from death to life in heaven.

## **Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

### **I Thessalonians 4:13-18**

As we enter the last days of another church year, our thoughts turn again to the last days on this earth. The Epistle lesson gives us a clear description of Christ's second coming. Paul tells us that when Jesus returns these will be shouts of joy and trumpets blasting. We need not worry about our death because we know that the dead will be raised as Christ once rose from the grave. Living and dead will be reunited with Christ and taken to heaven to live with him forever. This is our comfort, especially when death stares us in the face.

### **Matthew 24:15-28**

The Gospel lesson is a warning for us to be prepared for Judgment Day. That day is truly a threat for the unprepared, but it is a promise for the Christian. For the unbeliever, the day is much like execution day; he can only look forward to it with fear. But for Christians, Judgment Day is like a prisoner's release day. We look forward to it with joy, for it will bring our release from the "prison" of this world.

## **Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Trinity**

### **II Peter 3:3-14**

In the days before Judgment Day, many people will deny what the Bible says about the end of the world. They will not believe that God created the earth, or that He sent the flood to destroy everything on it. Because God's time has not yet come, they will foolishly say that it never will come. We, who believe God's promises, know better. We await the destruction of all creation by fire and the beginning of a new life with God in heaven.

### **II Thessalonians 1:3-10**

The suffering which Christians endure now is nothing compared to the punishment which the wicked will receive after Judgment Day. They will suffer because they do not believe or obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We, who believe the testimony of Scripture, look forward to the end of our suffering, when Jesus will return in glory.

### **Matthew 25:31-46**

On Judgment day there will be only two groups of people: believers and unbelievers. To us they will all look alike, as do the sheep and goats of Palestine. But God will separate one from another as easily as a shepherd divides the goats from his sheep. The criterion for God's separation will be faith in His Son, for no act of kindness pleases God unless it is done as a result of faith.

## **Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Trinity**

### **I Thessalonians 5:1-11**

The last Sunday of the church year is a day of warning; the end of the world is coming. The time is a secret. We can expect the end at any time, and should be prepared for it. But believers need not give up hope. God does not intend for them to perish in the Judgment, but will take them to Himself in heaven.

### **Matthew 25:1-13**

The parable of the ten virgins is a warning about the last day, the end of the world. This story contrasts wakefulness with sleep, readiness with being unprepared, and wisdom with foolishness. The final note of warning is that there is one last opportunity for everyone. The bridegroom's door opens only once.

## **The Festival of Harvest**

### **Deuteronomy 26:1-11**

Moses told the children of Israel to show proper appreciation for God's blessings. The first fruits of their harvest in the Promised Land were to be brought to the altar of the Lord.

While making the offering, the people were to recall the mercy of God toward them, that He had delivered them from bondage and had given them a fruitful land.

### **Luke 12:13-21**

The parable of the rich fool warns us that the value of a man before God is not determined by his material wealth. God judges according to the richness of Christian faith which accepts full and free salvation. Beware of greed; it destroys faith. May the Word of God sown in our hearts make us rich—rich toward God!

## **The Festival of the Reformation**

### **Revelation 14:6,7**

Men are born and pass away, kingdoms rise and fall, but God and His Word do not change. God has preserved His Word throughout history. In Luther's time, the church was in danger of losing the pure gospel through the destructive influence of the Pope. God used His servant, Martin Luther, to undertake the reformation of His Church. We think of Luther when we read of the "angel having the everlasting gospel to preach." Luther brought the light of the gospel into the dark kingdom of the Pope. We pray that God would protect us from all who would cause us to stumble and lose the pure Word of God.

### **Matthew 11:12-15**

The last words of the Old Testament speak of "Elijah the prophet," who will come before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," Malachi 4:5. John the Baptist was the fulfillment of that prophecy, the "Elias" who prepared the world for the coming of Christ. John ushered in the New Testament era. He preached the gospel with great force, and many people eagerly snatched it up for themselves because it was such wonderful news. By God's grace, we still have the pure gospel preached in the Reformation, and it hasn't lost any of the force that it had in John's day. People of all nations are hearing the good news and accepting it with great joy.

## **Selected Hymn Verses**

The verses listed below can stand by themselves as poetry, or have been chosen because they express thoughts not necessarily related to the headings of the hymn book under which they are printed. If you can't find what you want under the hymnal headings, you can use this list to:

1. select verses for printing in the bulletin, either for a devotion, or to express the general thought of a sermon, or just to fill a blank space,
2. choose hymns for the service itself. For instance, if you want a doxology to use in place of 52 or 644 at the end of the service, alternates are listed.

### **Meditation Before Service**

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1:2            | 138:1     |
| 3:1            | 225:1,3   |
| 5:1            | 243:1     |
| 8:2—Easter     | 278:1     |
| 10:1,3         | 279:1     |
| 12:3—Pentecost |           |
| 19:1           | 341:1,4   |
| 21:1           | 360:1,6,7 |

26:1 387:1  
39:1,4 390:1-3  
122:1 547

**Meditation After Service**

2:7 77:15  
23:4 123:8  
26:6 127:4  
34:1 257:2  
39:5 264:5  
46:1,3 265:5  
47:2,3 294:4  
53 371:7  
73:4,5 412

**Beginning of Service (1-6)**

138

**End of Service (45-54)**

283

**Evening (551-565)**

553:1-2

**Praise and Thanks**

36:1 248:4,5  
50:2 360:1,5,7  
132:1,5 378:1,5  
191:6 401  
237:1 544:1

**Prayer (454-459)**

454:8

**A Table Prayer**

659

**The Lord's Prayer**

455 556:6  
458  
Introduction: "Our Father"  
528:2,7  
First Petition  
Second Petition  
494:2,4 501:7  
Third Petition

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| 416:1                           | 532:1-2 |
| 418                             | 540:5   |
| 517:1,4                         | 544:5   |
| 529:1-5                         | 547:3   |
| Fourth Petition                 |         |
| 434                             | 544:4   |
| 542:4                           |         |
| Fifth Petition                  |         |
| 24:1-3                          |         |
| Sixth Petition                  |         |
| 555:5                           |         |
| Seventh Petition                |         |
| 517:3                           | 547:2   |
| 520:5                           | 548:3   |
| 524:3-5                         | 554:5   |
| Conclusion: "Thine...the glory" |         |
| 248                             |         |
| Amen                            |         |
| 211:7                           | 548:6   |

**The Lord's Supper (304-316)**

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 149 | 545 |
|-----|-----|

Maundy Thursday (163-164)

**The Holy Trinity (237-253)**

8

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 38    | 375:5 |
| 335:4 | 643   |

**The Redeemer (339-368)**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 352:1 |       |
| 411:5 | 413:5 |

**The Word (282-297)**

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 285:1-6 |         |
| 290:4   | 296:3,4 |
| 291:4,5 | 544:3   |

**The Ten Commandments**

287

**Christian Education (627-631)**

629:1,4,5

**Missions (494-512)**

507:6

Epiphany (126-134)

**Christian Warfare** (444-453)

449:1,4

477:4 528

**Death and Burial** (585-602)

453

**Judgment** (604-612)

67 186:2,3

134:4 604:4

143:15 611:7

**Christian Faith** (General)

77:3

93:4 321:4

111:5 328:4

120:5 334:1

121:4,6 338:1,2

140:5 342:1,4,5

167:7 353:2

173:1 356:5,7

194:4 379:4

210:5 392:1

220:1 416

234:3,6 422:4

237:3 428:1,6

258:1 442:5

270:5 515:1-6

292:9 549:5

298:4 625:2,4,5

301:1 655

**Doxologies** (see page 838)

3:4

5:3

12:5 438:5

14:5 466:4

26:6 471:6

36:3 493:4

37:3 500:3

63:5

65:6—missions

95:7

106:7 508:4

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 117:5   | 524:7   |
| 133:5,7 | 525:4   |
| 199:4   | 536:6   |
| 212:7   | 541:1-5 |
| 218:6   | 550:9   |
| 233:7   | 558:6   |
| 244:1   | 559:7   |
| 245:6   | 564:1-3 |
| 250:4   | 570:8   |
| 257:3   | 571:5   |
| 273:4   | 605:5   |
| 274:6   | 622:4b  |
| 320:7   | 640:1,4 |
| 331:8   | 641:6   |
| 332:5,6 | 642:4   |
| 417:7   | 654:8   |