



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 2020



The Christian lives as wheat among weeds

The Christian lives as wheat among weeds as he waits for the harvest. In the Prayer of the Day we ask for the spirit to live like wheat—to think and to do what is right—even while we live in this sinful world. Living with an eye on the coming harvest gives us encouragement, comfort, and hope.¹

The Propers

The Propers are those portions of the service that change (or, are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.

First Lesson¹

Joel 3:12-16

The book of Joel foretells the coming of the Day of the Lord. Here in chapter 3, Joel pictures the judgment of the nations as a day of harvest. The day is coming when the sickle will swing and the harvest will begin. Can you imagine the terror that will strike the unbelieving heart when the sun is darkened and the moon and stars fail to shine? Can you imagine the fear when he hears the roaring and thundering of the LORD? Yes, we live as wheat among weeds, but the harvest is coming. When it does, there will be no need for God’s people to fear. He is their refuge and stronghold.

Second Lesson¹

Romans 8:26,27

This is the eighth in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. Prayer is a gift from God for all believers who are living as wheat among weeds. Surrounded by wickedness, the power and comfort of prayer is a great privilege indeed. Yet it’s a privilege that we so often leave unused or underutilized. Thank God for the gift of the Spirit! The One who called, enlightened, and sanctified us is still at work to overcome our weaknesses. When we don’t know what to pray for, we can know that the Spirit is praying for us.

Gospel of the Day¹

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

God intended to have a weed-free field of wheat. From the beginning, however, the enemy thwarted his intentions with temptation and sin. How many Christians have seen the evil all around them and pondered the servants’ question, “Didn’t you sow good seed?” How many churchmen have tried to separate the wheat and weeds in the kingdom with rules or monasteries, with inquisitions or Pharisaical laws? Anyone who tries only succeeds in ruining wheat along with the weeds. They uproot the faith of the weak who fall into sin; they trample the faith of the strong by feeding their pride. The Lord most certainly has a plan to separate the wheat and weeds—just not yet. He has servants standing by to do the work—they’re just not us. Instead, God urges his people to live with their eye on the coming harvest. God does not want us to try and separate wheat from weeds before then. Christ tells us to live as wheat among the weeds of this world and wait expectantly for the harvest when the angels will sort it all out: weeds to fire, and wheat to shine as the righteous sons of God in the kingdom of their Father.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 18

The Lord is worthy of our trust. He has delivered his people from the hands of their enemies.

Verse of the Day

Isaiah 55:11b

“My Word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” God is present and active in his living, eternal Word. He will use it to accomplish his will, including his desire to bring the elect to saving faith. There is great comfort in knowing that while we possess God’s powerful message as his heralds, he is always using the Word to achieve his divine purposes.

Prayer of the Day

Grant us, Lord, the spirit to think and do what is right that we, who cannot do anything that is good without you, may by your help be enabled to 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.

Hymn of the Day541 “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” (*Geistliche Psalmen*, 1611; Nikolaus Selnecker, 1532-92)**Church Year Season**¹

Sundays after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons teach us the characteristics of the Holy Ministry, the Christian, the Church, our God, and the Christian life.

Colors & Symbolism

Sundays after Pentecost: Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

Nain Paraments

Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.
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