



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 21, 2020



The Holy Ministry is filled with people who God called out of his boundless mercy

Nothing else could explain the choices for ministers that God made! He calls such sinful and weak men to fill this office. Only mercy can explain the men he chose in this Sunday's lessons: a despised tax collector, an exiled killer, a persecutor of Christians.

### 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 Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      Hosea 5:15 – 6:6

Like wanton Gomer, Israel had whored herself to false gods. In his mercy, God called to the people, the priests, and the nobility—and their response seemed so good! At first glance, the words that Israel spoke (6:1-3) seem a beautiful model of repentance. But where there is no confession of guilt; no fruits follow; God does not receive it. Merely going through the motions of repentance did not cut it. Merely performing the outward functions of the Law did not suffice. God wanted an admission of guilt, an earnest seeking, but he did not find it. Only the love of God could solve their problem.

#### **Second Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      Romans 4:18-25

How could God choose the ministers he did? How could God choose the people he did? How can God continue to love us after all the times we turn our back on him? Because of an alien righteousness, long promised and now credited to us and to all who believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead.

#### **Gospel of the Day**<sup>1</sup>                      Matthew 9:9-13

The call of Matthew manifests the mercy of God. The Pharisees knew the Scriptures and walked the walk. They left no sacrifice undone. Their outward righteousness and place of respect among the people were the mirror opposite of the man sitting in the tax collector's booth. Despised as a quisling and swindler, the publican's only companions were the other "sinners" who lived beyond the pale of Jewish Law. Yet the call of Christ to faith and apostleship did not come to these outwardly righteous Pharisees, but to the tax collector. So powerful was the call that Matthew left his station and his old life behind and followed. Jesus bypassed the Pharisees because they knew sacrifice but were blind to mercy. When they questioned Christ's acts of mercy, Jesus tells the teachers of Israel to go and learn Scripture, to see the difference between mercy and sacrifice...to see that their claims of righteousness were nothing but more whitewash on tombs. Can they really be healthy when they are blind to mercy for their brothers, blind to the prophets, and blind to the Messiah? Christ wanted different ministers than these. He wanted ministers who knew the mercy of God and would share the mercy of God. So he turned to the sinner, Matthew, and called him from his life of sin to a life of ministry with those merciful words, "Follow me."

#### **Psalm of the Day**                      Psalm 119c

God's law includes both his commands and his gracious promises. Those who rejoice in his salvation find God's Word to be sweet refreshment. It gives life, fellowship, insight, protection, and guidance on our pilgrimage.

## Verse of the Day

2 Corinthians 5:19

“Alleluia. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Alleluia.” Christ’s death paid the price of sinful humanity’s just punishment, and restored us to fellowship with God. The apostles were entrusted with this message that through faith in Christ, God’s gracious gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are yours.

## Prayer of the Day

O God, the strength of all who trust in you, mercifully hear our prayers. Be gracious to us in our weakness and give us strength to keep your commandments in all we say and do; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Hymn of the Day

596 “Let Me Be Yours Forever” (Nikolaus Selnecker, 1532-92)

## Church Year Season <sup>1</sup>

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.

## Minor Festivals

Presentation of the Augsburg Confession (June 25)

The Augsburg Confession was presented to Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire on Saturday, June 25, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany. Here the emperor had convened a "diet," or general assembly, of representatives of church and state to consider the Lutheran movement. In the Bishop's Palace, where Charles V was lodged, the Confession was read in German by Chancellor Dr. Christian Beyer. This fearless Lutheran layman read the Augsburg Confession so distinctly and loudly that also those who were gathered in the spacious courtyard of the palace could understand every word. It was a large and august body which here heard a clear summary of what the Lutherans believed and confessed as the truth of God's Word. There were present all the electors, princes, bishops, representatives of the free cities, and foreign ambassadors connected with the empire. After the reading of the Augsburg Confession, the document was handed to the emperor in both a German and a Latin version.

## 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).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.  
Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”