



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

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



## Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

October 18, 2020



### Our God Patiently Seeks Fruit

The Lord came to his city and his temple to teach his people, but the leaders of Israel rose up against him. When they questioned his authority, Jesus responded with three parables meant to drive the leaders to self-evaluation and self-condemnation. The parable of the two sons, tenants in the vineyard and the wedding banquet were addressed to these men who had been given the trust of spiritual leadership in Israel, but had failed. The stories speak of family ties, contractual obligation, and the favor of a royal invitation. Each should have led to a proper response, yet each parable showed that Israel's leaders were refusing to give God the fruits of faith he patiently sought. As a result, the kingdom of God was ripped away and given to others – those who produce fruits of repentance. By his work and through the gift of faith, believers have received Christ's righteousness in their hearts and been moved to repent and bear fruits of faith. <sup>1</sup>

### 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>

Isaiah 5:1-7

The Lord had given his people every advantage to produce fruits of faith. To his great disappointment, he found only the rotten fruit of injustice and unrighteousness. In his righteous anger, he turned his vineyard into a wasteland again. We are well warned. Where the gospel is despised, the cries of human injustice can be heard. The judgment of God is never far behind.

#### **Second Lesson** <sup>1</sup>

Philippians 3:12-21

The inspired apostle puts to rest two notions that war against the gospel of our salvation. Some assert that we can achieve holiness already in this life. This arrogance excludes grace. Although we strain toward heavenly perfection, we know that our holiness in this life comes from the Savior alone. Others make a mockery of Jesus' forgiveness by using it as a license to sin. They are earthly minded. But our citizenship is in heaven, where our omnipotent Lord Jesus will transform our bodies for the ultimate perfection and freedom!

#### **Gospel of the Day** <sup>1</sup>

Matthew 21:33-43

In the parable of the tenants the Lord shows incredible patience with those who abuse their responsibility to care for the Lord's Church. God rightfully insists on fruits. But each of his messengers met with harsh rejection until, finally, the Son is murdered. Those who have rejected their Savior, Jesus Christ, will be destroyed, and God will give the kingdom to others who will produce fruit.

#### **Psalm of the Day**

Psalm 118

The Lord has given us a day of rejoicing. His chief glory is that he has raised that which was contemptible to glory and great honor. This applies to us because it first applied to the chief cornerstone, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Verse of the Day

Hebrews 2:12

“I will proclaim your name to my people; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in your bountiful goodness keep us safe from every evil of body and soul. Make us ready, with cheerful hearts, to do whatever pleases you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Hymn of the Day

203 “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word” (Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

## 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.

## 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.  
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