



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 12

July 27, 2025



“Undivided Attention”

On the Privilege and Purpose of Prayer

In a sense, prayer comes naturally to us. We want so we ask. We hurt so we cry out. We are frustrated so we vent. We are blessed so we give thanks. Natural! What does not come naturally, however, is a proper understanding of the privilege of prayer. Prayer is a privilege, based entirely on the unique and unearned relationship we have with God, our Father. And the purpose of prayer is not to tell God what we want, but to claim that which God wants for us. Prayer provides the opportunity to bring our will into conformity with God’s will, not the other way around. This week, we give our undivided attention to what God says about this access we call prayer. Along with Jesus’ disciples we say, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

First Reading³ Genesis 18:20-32

Abraham’s continued pressing of God for concessions would have seemed presumptuous to any earthly master. Yet Abraham was as bold as this when talking to God! On hearing of the Lord’s plans for wicked Sodom, Abraham shamelessly presses the Lord to live up to the meaning of his name. Our confidence is the same as we boldly come before our heavenly Father’s throne seeking his free and faithful grace. We come, then, knowing that our dear Father will answer our prayer in the way that is best for us. Though the Lord did not find even ten righteous ones living in Sodom, Lot and his daughters were ultimately saved.

Second Reading³ 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Focus shifts from payment received to payment made. It is Jesus who used his own blood to buy back and set free all of humankind from the shackles of sin. One might describe this redemptive work as making the best use of available resources! The proclamation of this best business practice is the reason we exist. Therefore we pray for peace in our world. Not for booming economies, this prayer begs that nothing would hinder us from proclaiming the gospel of eternal peace through Jesus.

Gospel³ Luke 11:1-13

The disciples came to Jesus looking for help in learning to pray. Jesus responds coupling the spiritual-gift petitions of the Lord’s Prayer with examples of the boldness with which our Father invites us to ask, seek, and knock. Rooted in the Word, these requests come from hearts of faith that have been taught to seek not only what we need but even what we want. Our confidence is this: we can come again and again before our Father’s throne of grace knowing that every good and perfect gift comes from our dear Father to his dear children.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 138 B “And They Shall Sing”

The Church sings Psalm 138 in services celebrating public confession that God is a gracious Savior. It leads off the final section of psalms written by David. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 138 is a psalm of thanksgiving for all sorts of help in the face of enemies. The psalmist prays for Christ’s kingdom to come, especially that kings would receive his Word and teaching, give thanks for it, and worship him. The psalm closes with a prayer that God would bring his kingdom to fulfillment in eternity.”

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 11:9

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Jesus adds his own explanation of the story and its lesson. “Ask”, “seek”, “knock” are metaphors for prayer. The verbs are in the present tense. They suggest continuing action. Keep on asking, seeking, knocking. Jesus wants us to pray regularly, persistently, faithfully. Jesus adds a promise to each command: “it will be given ... you will find ... the door will be opened.” Every prayer a Christian prays always gets an answer. It isn’t always the answer we are looking for, and it doesn’t always come when we expect it. The answer God gives is always the answer of a wise and loving Father. He gives his answer, not when we see fit, but when he knows best. God’s promise to answer prayer encourages confidence as well as persistence.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord, your ears are always open to the prayers of your humble servants who come to you in Jesus’ name. Teach us always to ask according to your will that we may never fail to obtain the blessings you have promised; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

725 “Hear Us, Father, When We Pray” (Chad L. Bird, 1970)

Church Year Season¹

Season 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 cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Colors & Symbolism

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

Superfronatal: 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.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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