



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 19

September 14, 2025



“Wounds That Heal”

The Found Are Left; The Lost Are Found

“He’s lost.” We use that term not only to refer to someone who is bewildered about where they are but also to refer to someone who is in a helpless, hopeless state. Mankind’s natural state is one of complete spiritual helplessness, a profound lostness. It manifests itself in countless ways. The one who simply wants God to leave him alone: lost. The one who feels she can handle life on her own: lost. The one who thinks he has the right to repent of his sins on his own timetable and terms: lost. The one who thinks God owes her in some way: lost. Wandering around physically lost can lead to winding up in bad places. Jesus’ wounding words this week teach that wandering around spiritually lost puts you in the worst place of all. Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us in our lost state. He relentlessly seeks us. He involves God’s people in seeking the lost and rejoicing over the found.

First Reading³

Hosea 3:1-5

To illustrate the Lord’s grace to idolatrous Israel, Hosea is instructed to marry and love an adulterous woman. The action of showing love to one considered so undeserving spoke a volume of God’s grace to sinners. When a sinner comes seeking to find the goodness of God, he finds the joyful and welcoming arms of our faithful God.

Second Reading³

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Satan’s schemes can twist even the act of repentance into an opportunity to plunge a soul into the depths of despair. Will the repentant man return with heart in hand only to have that heart trampled by self-righteous hypocrites who feel they are owed their due? No, the congregation is to show Christ’s love for the lost. Forgiveness and comfort are to be given to the penitent heart rather than heaping guilt over the sinner’s head and robbing the contrite heart of the joy of salvation.

Gospel³

Luke 15:1-10

The difference between the truly righteous and the merely self-righteous can be seen in the attitude displayed by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. The Savior of nations spent even his meal times with those clamoring to know his forgiveness, while his detractors condemned him for associating himself with such worthlessness. The temptation is to place the lost and straying on the irrecoverable list without making the effort to “seek and save.” The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin describe not only the heavenly joy at a sinner’s repentance, but the priority placed on such a recovery mission. Jesus calls us to love the lost both because of their place in the flock and because of their intrinsic worth in the eyes of God.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 51 A

“Be Merciful, O Lord”

The Church sings Psalm 51 in services that emphasize repentance, both contrition and faith. It is classified as the middle of the seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143) and is the first of the biographical psalms of David (51-60). Martin Luther said, “Psalm 51 is one of the most prominent teaching psalms. David teaches us correctly what sin is, where it comes from, what damage it does, and how a person becomes free from it. In this psalm, like nowhere else, sin is clearly shown to be an inheritance, born in us. No works can remove it; only God’s grace and forgiveness can do that.”

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 15:10

“There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Prayer of the Day

Lord, we pray that your mercy and grace may always go before and follow after us that, loving you with undivided hearts, we may be ready for every good and useful work; 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

654 “Jesus Sinners Does Receive” (Erdmann Neumeister, 1671-1756)

Church Year Season ¹

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

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.

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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