



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 8

June 28, 2026



Say It Out Loud:
“Love God Above All”

Not all love is good. It is self-destructive to love bad things. However, it is just as harmful to love good things in a bad order. For example, it would seem to be a good thing that a man loves his dog. But if he loves his dog more than he loves his wife, his “love” for both is disordered. That is not in the best interests of the man, his wife, or even his dog. For love to be healthy, it needs to be properly ordered. God has called his people to love those he has placed in their lives. But when those people desire something that God does not desire, Christians love and serve God above all. Properly ordered love leads us to be faithful to God and his Word. We love God above all because he first loved us.

First Lesson ¹

Exodus 32:15-29

Aaron had seen God standing on the sapphire pavement. The seventy elders had partaken of a divine banquet on the mountain (Exodus 24). And only forty days later, they lost it all. Unwilling to face conflict for God, they gave in to the people who wanted to love pleasure, flesh, and idols rather than the God who brought them up out of Egypt. Aaron’s feeble excuses remind us of our own shallow rationalizations for failing to love God above all things. The Levites, however, rallied to Moses’ call and showed that they loved the LORD even more than they loved their brothers. Total commitment to God did not bring peace, but a sword. Yet their devotion was rewarded by God who gave them the high privilege of being his special servants.

Second Reading ³

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Godliness with contentment leads the faithful steward to a life marked by faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Content with our needs, we make faithful use of the Lord’s blessings to carry out his kingdom work. Use of money for God’s loving purposes, avoids the love of money itself. We, then, fight the good fight to break the grasp of mammon and take hold of the eternal life to which we are called.

Gospel ¹

Matthew 10:34-42

Persecution reprioritizes life and sharpens faith. However, the further Christians get from the lions’ roar or the martyr’s stake, the easier it is for us to make our faith in Christ merely moderately important in our lives. Family, friends, work, health—these all vie for our time and attention, and our faith gets pushed further and further down the list. When life is not so bad, who needs the promises of a better life to come? How true Luther’s words of warning: *no persecution is total persecution!* How false our thoughts that faith can be only moderately important! C.S. Lewis said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” In the Gospel, Christ asserts the all-important nature of faith, and the all-consuming nature of discipleship. Jesus calls us to love him above all—more than family or friends, more than personal safety or even life itself. Such total commitment to Christ will not bring peace to your life, but constant conflict with the sinful world around you. Since he did not come to bring peace, but a sword, he points the Christian to rewards in heaven, kept safe by the One who sent him.

Psalms of the Day ⁴

Psalms 27 C

“The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation”

The Church sings Psalm 27 in services that emphasize the victory of the light of the Lord over darkness and unbelief; false gods and false doctrine. The psalmist makes many confident assertions of faith during days of trouble. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 27 is a psalm of thanksgiving, even though you might not see it at first. It is meant to comfort you when you encounter false teachers, which it calls false witnesses, people who blaspheme without being shy about it. For only good and foolish believers would testify about the promises of God with appropriate certainty and freshness, and daily we see that the more good and unlearned the people are, the more beautifully foolish and fresh they are to teach and preach to the entire world.”

Gospel Acclamation Mark 8:34

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Jesus means that we must deny our natural, sinful self – that evil nature within us which is dead in sins, which follows Satan, and which is under the wrath of God. Moreover, a follower of Christ must “take up his cross.” To take up one’s cross means willing to suffer for Christ’s sake as his disciple. This is the way of one who has come to faith in Christ and wishes to be his follower.

Prayer of the Day

God of all power and might, you are the giver of all that is good. Help us love you with all our heart, strengthen us in true faith, provide us with all we need, and keep us safe in your care; 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 702 “Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake” (Johann Scheffler, 1624-1677)

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.

Minor Festivals St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles (June 29)

This is one of the oldest saints’ days. The apostleships of Peter and Paul represent the Church’s complete ministry to both the Jews and the Gentiles. Peter was one of the Twelve, chosen by Jesus to be his disciple early in his ministry. Paul was called to be an apostle by Jesus after he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. The book of Acts pays special attention to the ministries of both apostles (Peter in chapters 1-12; Paul in chapters 13-28).

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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