ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 24

October 18, 2026



The Beginning of the End

It's Time to … Give to God What Is God's

In the 250th anniversary year of the signing of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of America, Americans are realizing that our freedoms are not guaranteed forever. What can we do with the limited time we have left to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments without governmental interference? We can do exactly what Jesus advised, giving to God what is God's. We can thank Jesus for fulfilling all righteousness in our place by honoring him and serving others. God does not need our good works, but our neighbors do! The Word of the Lord guides us as we live out our callings as children of God. Among other things, it informs how we use our money, how we interact with those in our community, and how we live as both Christian citizens in the world and citizens of God's heavenly kingdom.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord our God, so govern the nations on earth and direct the affairs of this world that your church may worship you in peace and joy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson — Daniel 1:3-21

Daniel and his friends faithfully served the government that God had placed over them—even though this was the government that had conquered their city and carried them off into exile.

Second Reading — Romans 13:1-7

St. Paul leaves no loopholes. Everyone is to submit to the governing authorities precisely because they have been established by God.

Gospel — Matthew 22:15-21

In an attempt to trap Jesus, the Pharisees asked whether it was right to pay taxes to a pagan government. Our Lord demonstrated that there was no conflict between our debt to the government and our debt to God. Jesus teaches we are to give the government what belongs to the government. But we are not to give to the government what belongs only to God. In fact, we owe God much more than taxes. We owe him thankful and believing hearts, which accept Jesus as the Messiah who paid our debt of sin. The Pharisees were unwilling to grant this to God.

Psalm of the Day [4] — Psalm 96 A — "Let the Heavens Rejoice"

The Church sings Psalm 96 in services that celebrate Jesus entering the world with his righteousness for the sake of people from every nation. It parallels the psalm used to mark the entrance of the glory of the LORD in the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:23-33), leading the Christian Church to use Psalm 96 on Christmas Eve. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 96 is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ in all the world. The text clearly calls on all nations, lands, peoples, and even forests, oceans, and trees to worship in joy and praise. They are to thank the Lord for judging and ruling with righteousness and truth, delivering us from sin, death, hell, and the power of the devil. This is the new song of the new kingdom sung by new creatures, people who are born not of the law or works, but born of God and the Spirit, through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Gospel Acclamation Colossians 2:10

"In Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority."

Hymn of the Day 619 "Praise the Almighty; My Soul, Adore Him" (Johann D. Herrnschmidt, 1675-1723)

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. Luke, Evangelist (October 18) … St. James of Jerusalem (October 23)

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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