ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 27

November 8, 2026



The Beginning of the End

It's Time to … Watch for the Final Events

As we wait for Jesus Christ to come back on the Last Day, it can be easy for us to get distracted, lose vigilance, and become spiritually drowsy. It's the beginning of the end. God doesn't want to find us asleep when Jesus returns so we miss out on the marriage feast in heaven. So he reminds us that the time between Christ's first and second coming is a time for us to remain spiritually alert. Today we are encouraged to watch for the final events during these end times, so we are prepared to meet our bridegroom when he returns!

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God and Savior, you have set the final day and hour when we shall be delivered from this world of sin and death. Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven; 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 — Isaiah 52:1-6

Isaiah prophesies to captive Israel who is sleepwalking through life because they are lost in the stupor of grief over their afflictions. "Awake!" the prophet cries, and hear God's promise of coming triumph that will give you strength to face your present problems. God would reveal his glory by redeeming his people and leading them safely home. Captive Israel here is a picture of the waiting Church, and one day God will fulfill this promise also in us. The Church of the End Times labors in a world held captive by sin, and is tempted to sleepwalk through these last days. So the prophet cries to us, "Awake!" for the day of triumph is coming when God will lay bare his arm and redeem us from sin, death, and the devil forever. He will lead us to the New Jerusalem where we will sit enthroned at the marriage feast of the Lamb. The day is coming—watch for it!

Second Reading — 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Being mindful of the judgment means living according to God's Word, not according to what the world says. The world tells itself again and again not to worry about God and his judgment. Peace and safety are its watchwords. Regardless of what the world says, the judgment is most certainly coming. When it comes on the world, it will be like a woman in labor—sudden, unstoppable, irreversible. Paul reminds us to be mindful of the coming judgment by living alert and self-controlled lives. We are believers and are as different from unbelievers as sheep are from goats, as day is from night. So let's live like it! We have been appointed to receive salvation, so let's live as sons of the light and sons of the day. Leave the deeds of darkness for this dark world whose cries of "Peace!" and "Safety!" will not stop the judgment from overtaking them.

Gospel — Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus pictures the time before his return as virgins waiting for a bridegroom and the start of a wedding feast. The parable divides all people (*ten* virgins) into two groups: foolish and wise. They weren't described that way because of what they did in the parable, but their actions showed what they were. The foolish virgins acted utterly foolish, bearing empty lamps. The other virgins' actions showed that they indeed were wise. The wise went into the joys of wedding banquet, but the foolish lost both invitation and even recognition. Jesus' central instruction in this parable calls for the waiting Church to be the watchful Church. Keep watch for you do not know the day or the hour!

Psalm of the Day [4] Psalm 90 D "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

The Church sings Psalm 90 in services where we recognize the perspective that comes after the passage of time, especially when joy comes after relief from affliction. The only psalm written by Moses, it leads off Books IV and V of the Psalter. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 90 is a teaching psalm. Moses teaches that death comes as a result of sin, which is innate from Adam to all of us, even though it is known only by God and is hidden from the world. The psalm asserts that life here is both short and miserable, and could well be called daily death. But that is surprisingly good, because we are driven to God's gracious help for deliverance. The psalm ends with the prayer that God would show us this deliverance by sending Christ. It is a short, fine, rich, and full little prayer."

Gospel Acclamation Matthew 24:42

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

Hymn of the Day 486 "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" (Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608)

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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