



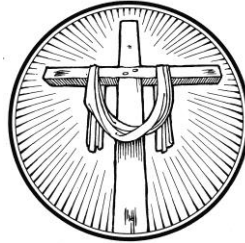
ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

November 8, 2020



Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we partake of his wedding feast

All three readings serve to remind us that our heavenly King has gone to great lengths to bring lasting joy and happiness into our lives. Our gracious God spared no expense in preparing the feast of our salvation, not even the life of his one and only Son.

God wants all to enjoy this heavenly feast. Thus, his servants are sent into the world with the Gospel to invite and gather as many as they find, “both good and bad,” to fill the wedding hall of heaven with guests (Matthew 22:8–10). In Holy Baptism, Christ clothes us in the “wedding clothes” of his own perfect righteousness, so we are acceptable in God’s sight (Matthew 22:11). Therefore, “let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9).

The Propers

The Propers are those portions of the service that change (or, are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.

First Lesson

Isaiah 25:6-9

“All peoples” are invited to the eternal feast of the Lord Almighty. Only the best is served, and the participants are in high spirits. Death, tears, and persecution are things of the past. The guests praise their divine host: “We trusted in [the Lord] and he saved us Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”

Second Lesson

Philippians 4:4-13

From prison Paul invites Christians to rejoice with him! Why? “The Lord is near.” Anxiety is put to rest by confident petitions to the Omnipotent and thankful recognition of divine blessings received. Peace between God and man guards our hearts, fills our minds with everything “excellent and praiseworthy,” and supplies the secret of being content in every situation.

Gospel of the Day

Matthew 22:1-14

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a wedding banquet that is spread and announced by the lavish grace of God. It is free to all, and all are eventually invited. If God invited so many, why do so few actually attend? Leave it to depraved human nature to drag its feet, to make excuses, or to seek admission while dressed in its own rebellion! “Many are invited, but few are chosen:”

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 23

Kings were often spoken of as shepherds, but the Shepherd-King of Israel is a monarch unlike any other. The Lord is our shepherd who provides for all of our needs in life and death.

Verse of the Day

Isaiah 25:9b

“Alleluia. ‘This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.’ Alleluia.”

Prayer of the Day

Grant, O merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

376 “Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness” (Nicolaus L. von Zinzendorf, 1700-60)

Church Year Season ¹

Sundays 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 teach us the characteristics of the Holy Ministry, the Christian, the Church, our God, and the Christian life.

Colors & Symbolism

Sundays after Pentecost: 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 and Editor.
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