



# ABOUT THE PROPERs

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 20, 2021



The Word of Christ Bears Abundant Fruit after Its Own Kind

The parables of our Lord convey the mysteries of the kingdom of God to those who are taught to fear, love and trust in him by faith. The seed scattered on the ground seems insignificant. And yet, hidden within the seed is life. It sprouts and grows. It even becomes a planting of the Lord. The work of the gospel is invisible, but real. It is hidden, but with results that can be seen – even if the power behind those visible results remains a mystery. That is true of the kingdom of God, the church. It is no less true of the kingdom of God hidden within the individual member of the church. Has faith made a difference in life, or is it something apart? Faith that is the result of the living seed of the Word is alive and gives evidence of its life.

### The Propers

*The Proper*s 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 <sup>1</sup>

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Do you think it an impossible thing that God could make much of what appears to be nothing? He set the paradigm in his own Son. There is that baby in Bethlehem. There is that dying criminal on the cross. Nothing in the eyes of the world and less than nothing, he reigns from the tree. Yet all who have real life and life eternal find their refuge, their nourishment, their beauty, their life, their all, in none other.

Second Lesson <sup>1</sup>

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

How splendid, how beautiful the outward and the visible dwelling place that God has given us for a moment, before it decays and crumbles into dust. If the visible seems to us so precious, how precious must be that which for the present is still invisible to which we are heirs. If then we exert ourselves so to preserve and care for the tent, how much more concerned ought we to be that we reach the blessed permanent abode towards which we journey, a home already built and preserved for us by Christ and assured to us by his Spirit in the means of grace. Nothing of the visible tent is sure or durable; only the invisible abides forever.

Gospel of the Day <sup>1</sup>

Mark 4:26-34

The field of the city, the small acre of the individual soul, both are brown and dead until the seed is scattered on it. What a waste of time it seems to be! And yet, hidden within the seed is life. It sprouts. It grows. It even becomes a planting of the Lord that is a haven for those who do not have the seed, at least not yet. So again the question begs to be asked: Where are you in this barren field, and where are you as a parched acre on that field? Has the seed taken root? Has it triumphed over obstacles and sprouted? Is it still very young and tender? Is it finally useful in service? Every time you see a plant growing, be reminded of questions like these.

## Psalm of the Day

## Psalm 92

We are the plantings of the Lord in his household, the Church. Since that is altogether his doing and not the result of our merit or decision, we give him thanks, worship and adore him for his grace.

## Verse of the Day

## Psalm 132:9

“May your priests be clothed with righteousness; may your saints sing for joy.” David’s prayer was that the LORD would clothe his priests with his righteousness, his blamelessness and holiness, through faith. As the priests reflected the LORD’s righteousness through their ministry, God’s people, the saints, would rejoice in his salvation.

## Prayer of the Day

O God, protector of all the faithful, you alone make strong; you alone make holy. Show us your mercy and forgive our sins day by day. Guide us through our earthly lives that we do not lose the things you have prepared for us in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Hymn of the Day

188 “Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid” (attr. Rhabanus Maurus, 776-856)

## Church Year Season <sup>2</sup>

## 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).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.

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