



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 18, 2021



The ministers of Christ are sent with his authority to forgive sins and give life

In the forefront of those sharing the Savior's Word are those that he has specifically called into the office of the Holy Ministry. These messengers called by Christ need to learn before all others to trust in the Lord, that he will forgive and still be gracious. And so Jesus sends them out with nothing but his promise to rely on. And the results of this ministry are wonderful: through Baptism into Christ, all who believe this Word are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit for life and salvation.

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 ¹

Amos 7:10-15

False or hypocritical prophets always assume that true prophets have the same motive that they do: To earn a living by their work. But the true prophet depends on God to keep his Word, i.e., to send opposition and to send success when and where it pleases him. Notice, however, the love and patience and mercy of God; even when he knows that his Word will be rejected, he sends his beloved messengers to proclaim it. The unbelieving Jeroboam and Amaziah are without excuse. The faithful Amos has this as his reward, that he was faithful to God and his Word, whether they would hear or not; faithfulness is its own reward.

Second Lesson ¹

Ephesians 1:3-14

This begins an eight-week series of readings through Ephesians. What is the impetus and inspiration to do what Jesus sent his disciples to do and what Amos did? The grand impulse is in the gifts of the gospel received by those thus sent. They have been predestined in God's providence. And they will not despair as they share the gospel. For its success does not depend on them; their work is but to announce and proclaim this great grace of God in Christ so that by it those predestined will hear and be gathered into the family of God. Just as our salvation does not depend on us, so the salvation of our hearers does not depend on us either. Those who are predestined have God to praise and thank for it. Those who reject the news we proclaim to all have only themselves to blame for it. We do not try to square that circle; we rejoice in the mystery and are comforted by it both personally and in our labors with the gospel.

Gospel of the Day ¹

Mark 6:7-13

In the forefront of those sharing the Savior by sharing his Word are those that he has specifically called into that office. What should we expect of them? We should expect that they are ready for some to receive and some to reject that word. Notice that he sends them to share only what they have received; he does not give them permission to fudge the message when many or most reject it. For Jesus does not come through false doctrine to create or strengthen faith. It is in faithfulness to the message and reliance on his promise that repentance is worked which both confesses sin and rejoices in absolution. He will keep his promise when and how it pleases him without the "help" of our opinions, our compromises of the truth, our eagerness to be popular and always successful.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 78

This psalm is a summary record of God's gracious and mighty deeds for the rescue of his people, and their often rebellious response to the Word preached to them by his servants the prophets. The psalm calls us to remember: God always keeps his Word, both the words that threaten and the words that promise; he remains faithful, even if all people are found untrue.

Verse of the Day

Deuteronomy 30:14

"The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it." In some of his last recorded words to the Israelites, Moses tells them that God's covenant to his people was not beyond their understanding, believing and accepting. The Holy Spirit had given them the very words of God. Through these same words we too believe in God's covenant to us and are led by him to follow his ways.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your Word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy and to bring forth fruits of faith and hope and love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day

525 "The Son of God, Our Christ" (Edward M. Blumenfeld, b. 1927)

Church Year Season ²

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 B". Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

² Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year A". Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.

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