

Worship Plan - Church Year B

2026-2027





Year B (2026-2027) – Advent

LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS

Note to the worship planner

As you read through this plan, you will note that there are different categories of hymn choices for congregations at different places in their introduction of the *Christian Worship* 2021 (CW21) suite. The **Familiar** category is for congregations that want to maximize use of the rich treasury of hymnody that was already in both *The Lutheran Hymnal* (TLH) and *Christian Worship* 1993 (CW93). The **Introductory** category is for congregations that are newly introducing the CW21 suite. Anything new in CW21 is noted so that it can be practiced ahead of time. It's never good to pick a new hymn and just hope for the best! The **Advanced** category is for congregations who have advanced to the point of making full use of the CW21 suite. Although it will probably take at least a decade to sample all the resources, this category is for congregations that have worked out their system for introducing unfamiliar music. Regardless of category, each hymn is linked to a page with more resources for worship planners. The appointed psalm is also linked to helpful comments for worship planners.

This year's Advent theme, *Lord Jesus, Bring Your Gifts*, turns our attention from the anticipation of giving and receiving gifts ourselves to the Lord Jesus bringing his gifts for us. We already pray daily, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed." During this Advent season, we look at the additional spiritual gifts we receive through the incarnation of our Lord.

Congregations have different customs when it comes to decorating for Christmas. The spectrum runs from the church being fully decorated already early in Advent to not being fully decorated until Christmas Eve. If your congregation is more on the latter end of the spectrum (not decorated until Christmas Eve), this series lends itself to the heightened anticipation of rolling out Christmas decorations gradually throughout Advent. Each Sunday's progressive decorations are a gift! First Sunday: the Advent wreath up, wreaths on the doorways. Second Sunday: more greens/wreaths and ribbons. Third Sunday: trees up and lighted, but no decorations. Fourth Sunday: trees fully decorated. A Hanging of the Greens rite is included for congregations that want more careful attention paid to the decorating at any stage in the process.



LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS

SERIES EXPLANATION

The Lord Jesus arrived with gifts. At Christmas, we remember how he came in the flesh, born of Mary, laid in a manger, true God and true man. He brought us gifts of salvation and fulfillment. His first coming secured our redemption once for all.

The Lord Jesus arrives with gifts every time we gather for worship. Through his Word and sacraments, he is present with his gifts of grace today. In the gospel preached, he speaks forgiveness into our ears. In Baptism, he gives us a new identity, claiming us as his own. In the Lord's Supper, he moves us to repentance and faith, giving his true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

And he will arrive again with gifts. The same Jesus who ascended will return in glory with his eternal gifts for all who believe in him. On that day, faith will become sight, and every promise will be fulfilled. For believers, this is not a day of fear but of joy, for our Savior arrives to take us home.

So we live between his arrivals, remembering his birth, receiving his grace, and waiting with confidence. We pray with joy, "Lord Jesus, bring your gifts!"

Our worship in the season of Advent follows this path.

Lord Jesus, Bring Your Gifts

First Sunday in Advent

Salvation

Second Sunday in Advent

Readiness

Third Sunday in Advent

New Identity

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Fulfillment



First Sunday in Advent

November 29, 2026

LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS
SALVATION

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

In many cultures, it is customary to bring along a gift when you visit. Whether it is flowers or wine or toys for the kids, such presents are welcome. They are highly appreciated when they meet a great need in the household, and poignant when the gift giver sacrifices to make the gift.

Our own households have a great need. We have enemies, failures, and shortcomings. But the Lord Jesus is about to arrive with gifts! He does not come empty-handed. He brings salvation, won by his holy life and innocent sacrificial death, freely given to sinners who could never earn it.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Isaiah 64:1-9 – All of us have become unclean, tainted by sin. We need someone to save us.

1 Corinthians 1:3-9 – Our faithful God promises to enrich us with every spiritual gift.

Mark 11:1-10 – When Jesus rides into Jerusalem, the crowd shouts, “Hosanna!” which means “Save us!”

The alternate readings work equally well with the theme.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the basis for the sermon. The motions of a brush fire and a boiling pot of water are pictures of the hearts of those trembling at the arrival of the powerful Lord. Uncleaness means that we are not worthy to be in the presence of a holy God, and that we are capable of infecting others. But the Lord, our Father, the potter who has us in his skilled hands, has taken care of our guilt and keeps his promises of forgiveness and love.

CW21's *Altar Book* contains an Advent season Prayer of the Church. It is spoken by the pastor, not responsively. *Service Builder* contains two responsive prayers for the Advent season.

[Psalm 24](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 24 in services anticipating the arrival of Christ the Lord.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	309	548	487
HOD	301	301	301
Third/Distr	305/306	314	326
Closing	319	524	524

[301](#) (Savior of the Nations, Come) is the featured hymn for Advent this year in the NPH *Hymns for Life* series used in many of our Lutheran elementary schools.

[305](#) (Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates) is CW93 Hymn 3. It's in a lower key in CW21 to make it easier to sing.

[306](#) (Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates) is a shortened version of hymn 305. The tune is familiar from CW93 Hymn 84.

[309](#) (The Advent of our King) has been familiar to WELS worshipers since 1941.

[314](#) (O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide) is familiar as CW93 Hymn 22.

[319](#) (Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring) is well-known to WELS worshipers.

[326](#) (O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort) is new to us and is worth the effort it takes to play and sing it. It may be familiar to some from a version sung by the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus.

[487](#) (Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending) calls for strong singing and accompanying. It is the tune from *CW: Supplement*, not the tune from CW93.

[524](#) (Rejoice, the Lord Is King) is a very familiar tune from CW93 (used for three hymns in that book) and has an ideal text for the themes of the service.

[548](#) (The King of Glory Comes) is familiar from CW93 Hymn 363. The same tune is used for the refrain of the Psalm 24 setting in the pew edition.



Second Sunday in Advent

December 6, 2026

LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS
READINESS

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Some people know how to get ready for a visitor. They tidy the house, prepare a meal, and make thoughtful plans so their guest feels welcome. There is anticipation, even joy, in the preparation. Other people wait until the last minute and then are filled with dread at what it will take to welcome a guest. Perhaps they won't even be ready!

Scripture invites us to think this way when we anticipate Christmas. The Lord Jesus is about to arrive! But to spare us anxiety, he brings along a gift for us, the gift of readiness. In a world of uncertainty and distraction, Jesus prepares our hearts to repent, to stand watchful and confident, knowing that our future rests secure in him. We are not left scrambling or afraid. We are made ready by his law and gospel.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Isaiah 40:1-11 – Isaiah prophesies about one who would come to get people ready to meet their Lord.

2 Peter 3:8-14 – Peter reminds us that daily repentance is the only proper way to get ready for judgment day, which will come unexpectedly.

*Mark 1:1-8 – God raised up John the Baptist to preach a message of repentance and forgiveness, readying people to meet their Lord.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel is chosen as the sermon text. Mark demonstrates that the work of John the Baptist gets us ready for the good news of Jesus. John's baptism of repentance was for those confessing their sins. The key catechetical truth to teach is that repentance is a gift from God, rather than a self-generated work. God grants a contrite heart.

[Psalm 85](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 85 in services where we encounter the holiness of God, leading us to repentance and peace through faith in Jesus our holy Savior.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	312	302	311
HOD	316	316	316
Third/Distr	317	308	651
Closing	318	942	318

[302](#) (Prepare the Royal Highway) is set to the tune of a Swedish folk song, so the melody is easy to pick up.

[308](#) (There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying) is harder than it looks. Even though it was in CW93, it should probably still be introduced by a choir or cantor.

[311](#) (Dawning Light of Our Salvation) was originally written for guitar accompaniment but is suitable to be accompanied by piano or organ.

[312](#) (Comfort, Comfort All My People) is a familiar and musically comforting tune and text.

[316](#) (On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry) has been sung in WELS churches every Advent since 1941.

[317](#) (When All the World Was Cursed) was put into a lower key in CW93 to make it easier to sing and play.

[318](#) (Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding) has a familiar text from TLH, but a new tune was introduced in CW93 to make it easier to sing.

[651](#) (In Hopelessness and Near Despair) is set to a different tune than the one that appeared in *Christian Worship: Supplement*.

[942](#) (Create in Me a Clean Heart) is familiar from the TLH liturgy and warmly welcomed.



Third Sunday in Advent

December 13, 2026

LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS
NEW IDENTITY

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

You may feel that you are failing at doing all the things expected of you to prepare for Christmas. The pressure to make everything perfect and special is overwhelming! If you are honest, you can never live up to the sentimental memories of years past.

Don't worry. The Lord Jesus is about to arrive! He brings along a precious gift for you, a new identity. No longer defined by sin or failure, you are called a child of God, clothed in Christ's righteousness. This is who you are now, redeemed, restored, and dearly loved. You are capable of preparing for Christmas.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Isaiah 61:1-3,10,11 – The good news of Jesus' arrival is that he makes us new people.

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 – The Lord keeps us blameless by faithful repetition of his gospel promises.

John 1:6-8,19-28 – John the Baptist was only a witness to the light. Jesus is the light through whom we see ourselves in a new way.

Preacher Notes

The Second Reading is chosen as the sermon text. It is a snapshot of specific and practical examples of how Christians live with their new identities as people of joy and people of truth. The gospel message that declares us blameless through the work of Jesus leads us to prayer and thanksgiving. The Gospel reading gives opportunity to talk about the role of baptism in Christian identity.

[Psalm 71](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 71 in services that mention the saving work of the Lord in all the stages of life, from infancy to old age.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	315	315	322
HOD	324	324	324
Third/Distr	358	310	307
Closing	313	519	519

[307](#) (When the King Shall Come Again) is a new text sung to the tune of “Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain.”

[310](#) (Arise, O Christian People) has been around for a while, both text and tune, but it still takes some effort to sing.

[313](#) (Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes) is upbeat and familiar.

[315](#) (Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord) is well-known to Lutherans around the world.

[322](#) (Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus) is a familiar text set to an unfamiliar Southern folk tune.

[324](#) (O Lord, How Shall I Meet You) is sung to its original melody, which was CW93 Hymn 18, and the second tune in TLH Hymn 58.

[358](#) (Of the Father’s Love Begotten) is quite familiar even though it is a little difficult to sing.

[519](#) (There Is a Redeemer) looks difficult but is usually learned very quickly, partly because of the simple refrain.



Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 20, 2026

LORD JESUS, BRING YOUR GIFTS
FULFILLMENT

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Much of the excitement leading up to Christmas is the anticipation of presents. Promises are made, or at least implied. Needs and wants are identified, and people plan to visit. What could be more exciting?

The Lord Jesus is about to arrive! Does he have any presents for you? He brings fulfillment. All God's promises and prophecies find their "Yes" in Jesus. The long wait is over. The hope of the nations has come. In him, your deepest needs are met, and your eternal future is certain.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*2 Samuel 7:8-16 – The Lord promised King David that one of his descendants would establish an everlasting kingdom.

Romans 16:25-27 – The prophetic writings about Jesus prove that God fulfills his promises.

Luke 1:26-38 – God fulfilled his promise to send a Savior who would establish an everlasting kingdom.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. The theme of the week is God fulfilling his promises, so it is worth the time to go through the details of the promise and the fulfillment especially as outlined in the Gospel reading. God makes many promises and fulfills them all. The repetition of promises fulfilled strengthens our faith. As a result our lives have meaning, which is one definition of the human feeling of fulfillment.

[Psalm 139](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 139 in services that observe the plans God has for his children even before they are born.

Hymns

The Fourth Sunday in Advent is an ideal time to use The Great O Antiphons of Advent as part of the service. In place of the sermon or the Prayer of the Church, the idea is to have a brief meditation before the congregation sings each stanza of CW 327, "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel," the Advent hymn based on the twelfth-century antiphons. If your service time allows it, seven stanzas based on the original seven antiphons are available at the link for Hymn 327.

The *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* in *Service Builder* is especially suited as an order of service for Christmas Eve but could also be used on the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent.

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	360	320	325
HOD	327	327	327
Third/Distr	321	330	924
Closing	333	333	333

[320](#) (As Angels Joyed with One Accord) really emphasizes the various ways that Christ arrives.

[321](#) (God's Own Son Most Holy) has an old German sound.

[325](#) (My Soul in Stillness Waits) is a modern alternate presentation of the O Antiphons. It is regularly introduced with a choir or a cantor and accompanied by piano.

[327](#) (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel) can be used in many ways in the service.

[330](#) (Peace Came to Earth) should be practiced ahead of time, since it is harder than it looks.

[333](#) (O Little Town of Bethlehem) acknowledges that we have almost arrived at Christmas.

[360](#) (Behold, a Branch Is Growing) can be heard in popular Christmastime music.

[924](#) (Abide, O Dearest Jesus) is appropriate anytime we remember God with us.



THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

The Hanging of the Greens is a Western Christian ceremony for the adornment of churches with Advent and Christmas decorations. This is typically done at the start of the Advent season or whenever a congregation decorates the chancel for Christmas. The rite involves the placement of evergreen vegetation and other decorations in the church. Bible passages help explain the significance of the Advent wreath, Chrismons on the tree, and any other special decorations. Christmas trees are occasionally erected during the hanging of the greens, although a great deal of preparation is necessary to make it work.

The idea of the ritual is to have certain things brought forward from the back of the nave in procession during the stanzas of the opening hymn. Individuals or families can bring the items forward. Any of the following rubrics, as locally appropriate, can be printed in the service folder between each hymn stanza.

The processional cross leads us into worship as the long-awaited King of kings draws near with his gifts.

The candles follow the cross of Christ to symbolize the Light that only Jesus can gift to the world.

The altar book is brought into the church to remind us that we begin a new Church Year of worship.

The altar flowers follow these symbols to represent the joy of God's people as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ.

The evergreen wreaths are placed throughout the chancel to remind us of eternal life through faith in Jesus.

Next the Christmas tree is decorated. Evergreens symbolize the assurance of eternal life. The white Chrismons are symbols of the Christian faith.

The Christmas banner reminds us of the Savior who arrives with his gifts.

The flame is brought forward to light the first candle on the Advent wreath.



Year B (Dec 2026, Jan 2027) – Christmas

OUR BROTHER IS BORN

SERIES EXPLANATION

When a new child is born into a family, excitement fills the home. Parents smile, siblings gather around the crib, and everyone wants to see the little one. There is joy in welcoming someone who belongs to the family. A newborn changes everything. The house feels fuller, and the future seems brighter because a new life has entered the family circle.

That excitement points to a far greater joy at Christmas. The child born in Bethlehem is not only the son of Mary and Joseph. He is our brother. By taking on human flesh, Jesus Christ entered our human family. He became one of us so that we might become children of God.

The wonder is even greater because this family is not limited to one house or nation. It includes believers from every land, language, and generation. Through faith, all Christians are brothers and sisters, and Jesus stands among us as our elder brother, holy and loving. He came to rescue his family from sin and death. His birth means that the doors of heaven's family are opened to us. So Christmas joy is not only about a baby born long ago. It is the celebration that our brother has arrived, and in him the whole family of believers rejoices together.

In the season of Christmas, our worship follows this pattern.

Our Brother Is Born

Christmas Eve

He Is Born for Us

Christmas Day

He Is God's Son

First Sunday after Christmas

He Goes to the Temple for Us

Second Sunday after Christmas

He Is Obedient for Us



OUR BROTHER IS BORN
HE IS BORN FOR US

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

When a baby is born, everyone knows what to do. Family members feed the child, carry the child, protect the child, and meet every need. A newborn depends completely on others for care. That is part of the wonder of life.

When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, it seemed the same. Mary wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger. Yet this child had come for the opposite purpose. He was born to care for us. He came to carry our sins, protect us from evil, and provide eternal life. The tiny infant in the manger is both our brother and our Savior, arriving to rescue the world. He is born for us.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Isaiah 7:10-14 – The Lord promises to send a Savior, born of a virgin.

*Titus 3:4-7 – St. Paul tells us that Jesus appeared to save us.

Luke 2:1-20 – The account of our Savior’s birth.

Preacher Notes

The Second Reading is chosen as the sermon text. In order to be an heir, you have to be a member of the family. In order to appreciate your inheritance, you have to be aware of your need. You also need someone in the family who has an inheritance to give. Generally, an inheritance comes after someone dies. Baptism is the way that the Christian inheritance is passed.

[Psalm 96](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 96 in services that celebrate Jesus entering the world with his righteousness for the sake of people from every nation.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	335	336	338
HOD	329	329	329
Third/Distr	346	333	339
Closing	337	337	340/341

[329](#) (All My Heart Again Rejoices) was usually sung on Christmas Eve because the English translation in TLH had “this night” in the title.

[333](#) (O Little Town of Bethlehem) is familiar and beloved.

[335](#) (To Shepherds as They Watched by Night) is a Martin Luther text to a very familiar tune.

[336](#) (While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night) is a TLH text (not in CW93) set to a familiar tune easier to play and sing than the TLH tune.

[337](#) (Silent Night) is traditional and beloved.

[338](#) (On Christmas Night All Christians Sing) has notes to indicate when to sing in unison and in harmony.

[339](#) (Infant Holy, Infant Lowly) seems fresh and familiar at the same time.

[340](#) (Away in a Manger) starts on the high note.

[341](#) (Away in a Manger) starts on the low note.

[346](#) (Angels We Have Heard on High) is quite well known.



OUR BROTHER IS BORN
HE IS GOD'S SON

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

From eternity, Jesus has been God, holy and majestic. When we look tenderly at the holy infant, we are looking at the same God who once told the prophet Moses, “No one may see me and live.” Yet, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds all saw their holy God and survived. How? God became human, hiding his glory within flesh, so that he could come to us without instilling fear or dread. In fact, he came to be our brother.

A famous theologian once said, “We are to think of the Lord’s birth, where the Word became flesh, not as a past event which we recall, but as a present reality on which we gaze.” It’s not that Christ the Savior *was* born. It’s that Christ the Savior *is* born.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Micah 5:2-5a – Bethlehem was the birthplace of the God-man who became our brother.

Galatians 4:4-7 – The Son of God was born of a woman to redeem us and make us heirs of our heavenly Father.

John 1:1-18 – The mystery of the incarnation: God became man, the Word became flesh.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. Normally a preacher might concentrate on the fulfillment of the Bethlehem prophecy. But there is also the prophecy of brothers returning to join the Israelites in verse 3. Many Lutheran commentators see that as a reference to the New Testament Church (cf. 2:12; 4:6,7,10; 5:7,8). One of the works of the Son of God is to bring together Jews and Gentiles.

While Christmas Eve has become our culture’s chief celebration of Christmas, the Church’s primary celebration of Jesus’ birth remains on Christmas Day. A setting of The Service with the celebration of Holy Communion is appropriate. *Service Builder* offers several responsive dialogues in the menu options for Additional Rites. These dialogues replace the Confession and the “Kyrie.” Two dialogues are provided for Christmas. *Service Builder* also offers Proclamation of the Birth of Christ under Additional Rites. The Proclamation may be read by the presiding minister or another speaker before the first hymn. The regular canticles of The Service may be replaced by Christmas hymns with similar themes. For example, “Angels We Have Heard on High” (346, st. 1,3) may replace the “Gloria”; “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” (363, st. 1,4) may replace the “Sanctus”; and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (333, st. 3,4) may replace the “Agnus Dei.” In addition, the Christological section of the Athanasian Creed (sentences 27-38,40) would make a fitting confession of faith.

[Psalm 98](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 98 in services that praise God for bringing righteousness and salvation to people across the world.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	354	345	345
HOD	358	358	358
Third/Distr	331	366	331
Closing	349	361	348

[331](#) (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come) is a Lutheran classic.

[345](#) (Where Shepherds Lately Knelt) became popular when it was introduced in the 1993 hymnal.

[348](#) (A Child Is Born in Bethlehem) is from the 1400s and preserves that classic sound.

[349](#) (A Great and Mighty Wonder) has the same tune as Hymn 360 but simplified rhythm.

[354](#) (O Come, All Ye Faithful) is quite well known.

[358](#) (Of the Father's Love Begotten) is a little harder to sing than one might expect.

[361](#) (Go, Tell It on the Mountain) is familiar, so people don't realize how hard it is to sing.

[366](#) (O Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly) is written to be sung in parts (as it was in TLH).



First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2026

OUR BROTHER IS BORN

HE GOES TO THE TEMPLE FOR US

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

At the dedication of Solomon's temple, the Lord revealed his glory in a breathtaking way. When Solomon finished the prayer of dedication, the cloud of the Lord's presence filled the house so fully that the priests could not stand to minister. The blazing glory of God showed that he had chosen that place for his name to dwell among his people. The temple stood as a visible reminder that the holy God desired to live with sinners through his promises of mercy.

Centuries later, that same glory returned to the temple, but in a hidden form. When Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple, no cloud rolled in and no fire descended. Yet the greater glory was there. The eternal Son of God came carried in his mother's arms. Faith could recognize what eyes could not see: the Lord had come again to his temple. The glory once blazing above the ark now rested in the child who came to redeem the world, our brother, Jesus.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*1 Kings 8:6-13 – The temple in Jerusalem was where the glory of the Lord would be revealed.

Colossians 3:12-17 – Our eyes have seen the glory of the Lord, and our lives will show it.

Luke 2:22-40 – God allows elderly Simeon and Anna to see the veiled glory of the Lord at the temple with their own eyes.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. The preacher has an opportunity to review the history of the glory of the Lord in the Old Testament, especially its arrival at the dedication of the temple for the sake of God's people. Then the context will be established for Jesus, the glory of the Lord veiled in flesh for our benefit, going to the temple on our behalf.

If you celebrate the Lord's Supper on this Sunday, it might be appropriate to add the "Nunc Dimittis" (Hymn 951) to its former place in the liturgy.

[Psalm 111](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation. If both Psalm settings seem too difficult, it might be appropriate to sing one of the settings of the "Nunc Dimittis" (Hymns 949-951, 968-970).

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 111 in services where Christians marvel at God's gracious salvation.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	332	332	355
HOD	355	355	950
Third/Distr	342	968	969
Closing	951	497	949/970

[332](#) (Let Us All with Gladsome Voice) is easy to play and to sing (even in parts).

[342](#) (O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is) is familiar as the closing hymn of every MLC Christmas concert.

[355](#) (Let All Together Praise Our God) is a familiar tune used twice in both TLH and CW93.

[497](#) (O Light of Gentile Nations) is the only hymn designated for use at the Presentation.

[949](#) (In Peace and Joy I Now Depart) is a new tune for a familiar text.

[950](#) (Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace) is short and sweet.

[951](#) (Lord, Now You Let Your Servant) is the familiar TLH setting.

[968](#) (In Peace, Lord, You Let Your Servant) is familiar from CW93. Only in *Service Builder* (SB).

[969](#) (Now, Lord, You Let Your Servant) is beautiful and little harder than it looks. Only in SB.

[970](#) (In Peace and Joy I Now Depart) is classic, modal, and difficult for Americans. Only in SB.



Second Sunday after Christmas

January 3, 2027

OUR BROTHER IS BORN

HE IS OBEDIENT FOR US

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

We appreciate it when someone steps in and does something we should have done ourselves. A friend covers a responsibility we forgot. A coworker finishes a task we left unfinished. A family member handles a burden we could not carry. Their help brings relief, and their kindness is not easily forgotten.

That gratitude points to something far greater in what Jesus of Nazareth has done for us. God's law required perfect obedience, but we have failed in thought, word, and deed. We were supposed to love God above all things and love our neighbors as ourselves, yet sin touches every part of life. Jesus came as our substitute. He kept every command perfectly in our place, living the life of obedience we owed. Then he went further. He accepted the punishment our sins deserved, suffering and dying on the cross. His righteousness becomes ours by faith. His sacrifice removes our guilt. What no one else could do, our brother Jesus did completely.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Exodus 20:8-12 – The Third and Fourth Commandments

Hebrews 2:10-18 – Jesus fulfilled all righteousness in our place.

*Luke 2:41-52 – Jesus demonstrates perfect obedience.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel is chosen as the sermon text. The faithful family fulfilled their religious requirements. But Mary and Joseph's obedience was short of perfect, since they did not see Jesus' purpose clearly. Jesus' obedience was perfect, both to his earthly parents and to his heavenly Father. He keeps the law in our place.

[Psalm 84](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 84 in services that emphasize the joy of gathering in Christian congregations around the gospel in Word and sacrament.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	362	343	334
HOD	383	383	383
Third/Distr	919	364	363
Closing	359	761	979

[334](#) (I Stand Beside Your Manger Here) is a famous Lutheran text newly translated and set to a very familiar tune.

[343](#) (Once in Royal David's City) can be sung anytime in Advent or during the Twelve Days of Christmas.

[359](#) (We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth) has a great Lutheran heritage but is more difficult to sing than it first appears.

[362](#) (Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising) is sung by Lutherans everywhere.

[363](#) (Now Sing We, Now Rejoice) still retains some of its folk tune character.

[364](#) (Love Has Come) is a new text to a familiar French folk tune.

[383](#) (The Only Son from Heaven) is an old Lutheran hymn that has gained some modern popularity.

[761](#) (Our Father, by Whose Name) became familiar in CW93.

[919](#) (Blessed Jesus, at your Word) is a familiar favorite.

[979](#) (The Boyhood of Christ) is a new hymn with a valuable text that needs to be taught.



Year B (2027) – Epiphany and Sundays after Epiphany

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

SERIES EXPLANATION

A “jack of all trades” is someone who can do many kinds of work. Such a person may fix a sink, paint a room, repair a car, or help with taxes. The phrase usually means versatility, but it often ends with the reminder, “master of none.” That means a person may know many things but not be the best at any one of them. Human skill has limits. We learn some things well, but no one can master everything.

During the Epiphany season, we find out that Jesus stands in striking contrast. He is not merely capable of many things. He is perfect in all things. As true God, he rules creation, calms storms, heals diseases, teaches truth, and raises the dead. As true man, he worked with his hands, likely learning carpentry from Joseph, yet he also carried out the greatest work of all, saving sinners. Jesus is the master of all trades because every ability, every calling, and every good gift comes from him. He is the perfect Savior for every need.

Our worship follows this pattern.

Epiphany of our Lord	<i>Jesus Is the Savior of All</i>
First Sunday after Epiphany	<i>Jesus Is the Perfect Substitute</i>
Second Sunday after Epiphany	<i>Jesus Is the Messiah</i>
Third Sunday after Epiphany	<i>Jesus Is the Commissioner</i>
St. Timothy, Pastor & Confessor	<i>Jesus Is the Commissioner</i>
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	<i>Jesus Is the Prophet</i>
Transfiguration of Our Lord	<i>Jesus Is the Son of God</i>

Resource Reminder

CW21’s *Altar Book* contains eight seasonal prayers of the church. These are spoken by the pastor, not responsively. *Service Builder* contains a wealth of additional prayers of the church. For the Epiphany season, there are prayers for Epiphany, Baptism of our Lord (not responsive), and Transfiguration. There are also dialogues for Epiphany and Transfiguration that may be used to begin the service and “Farewell to Alleluia” to end Transfiguration. To find these, “Insert / Rite.” Then find the dialogues in the drop down at the top left under Seasonal Inserts. “Farewell to Alleluia” includes click on it, click delete, and select “Introduction to Holy Week” in the delete dropdown.



Epiphany of Our Lord

January 6, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The Twelve Days of Christmas are the days between Christmas Day and January 6. What is special about January 6? It is the day when the Christian Church celebrates the Festival of the Epiphany. Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning “reveal.” When the Savior was born, he was first revealed to Israelites: Mary, Joseph, the shepherds. Today we see the Lord miraculously guiding foreigners across countless miles so his mastery of everything necessary for our salvation could be revealed to them as well. The Festival of Epiphany is sometimes known as Christmas for the Gentiles. We Gentiles (non-Jews) rejoice in the good news that this Jewish baby is a gift for everyone. Jesus the Savior of all.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Numbers 24:15-17a – Out of the nation of Israel would come a person who would shine like a star for all people to see.

*Romans 11:13-15, 28-32 – Paul writes about his passion for sharing the good news with all people.

Matthew 2:1-12 – Magi from the east were the first in a long line of Gentiles who would worship Jesus as King.

Preacher Notes

A few will celebrate Epiphany in a special service on Wednesday, January 6. More will celebrate it on the Sunday before (January 3), replacing the Christmas 2 readings (which are used in four out of seven years). Some will omit its celebration in worship. It is not recommended to celebrate it on the First Sunday after Epiphany (January 10), replacing the Baptism of Jesus readings.

The Second Reading is chosen as the sermon text. The last verse is helpful in explaining how everyone needs a Savior because of original sin. Because we are all in the same condition, Jesus’ saving work is for everyone. Paul is proud of his ministry because it is not only for Gentiles but also for Jews.

[Psalm 72](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

Recognizing the reference to kings bowing down and presenting gifts to the great King, the Church sings Psalm 72 in services that celebrate the Epiphany.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	344	371	364
HOD	370	370	370
Third/Distr	362	372	352
Closing	904	373	386:1

[344](#) (What Child Is This) is well known.

[352](#) (Joy Has Dawned) is the most popular of the new Christmas hymns in CW21.

[362](#) (Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising) is sung by Lutherans everywhere.

[364](#) (Love Has Come) is a new text to a familiar French folk tune.

[370](#) (How Lovely Shines the Morning Star) should be learned by congregations who don't know it.

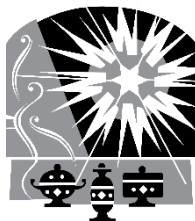
[371](#) (A Child Is Born in Bethlehem) is a newly translated text set to a classical tune.

[372](#) (As with Gladness Men of Old) is usually sung on the Festival of the Epiphany.

[373](#) (Brightest and Best) is CW93 Hymn 92 set to a different tune.

[386](#) (Songs of Thankfulness and Praise) can be sung in single stanzas with this new tune.

[904](#) (O Christ, Our True and Only Light) is familiar in both text and tune.



MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE PERFECT SUBSTITUTE

(The Baptism of Our Lord)

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

John carried out his public ministry beautifully. But Jesus carried out his public ministry perfectly, beginning at his baptism. John was the forerunner, sent by God to prepare the way for the Savior through preaching repentance and baptizing. His work was important, but it pointed beyond himself to Christ. Jesus came not merely to announce salvation, but to accomplish it. John could call sinners to repentance, but Jesus could forgive sins. John preached about the Lamb of God, while Jesus became that sacrificial and substitutionary Lamb by his holy life, innocent death, and glorious resurrection. John's ministry prepared hearts for the kingdom, but Jesus established the kingdom and opened heaven for all believers. He is the master of all, and the perfect substitute.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Isaiah 49:1-6 – The Messiah himself tells us the work he will do when anointed at his baptism.

Romans 6:1-11 – St. Paul connects our baptism to Christ.

*Mark 1:4-11 – The public ministry of Jesus begins at his baptism.

Preaching Note

The Gospel is chosen, providing the preacher the opportunity to explain how John's work was important, and Jesus' work was even more important. Jesus stands in the place of sinful human beings, first at the font and then at the cross. At his baptism, heaven was torn open. At his death, the temple veil was torn (same word in Greek), and the Most Holy Place was open.

[Psalm 2](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 2 in services that emphasize the relationship of the Father and the Son.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	704	704	385
HOD	377	377	378
Third/Distr	374	374	379
Closing	692	379	679

[374](#) (The Star Proclaims the King is Here) returns to the melody from TLH.

[377](#) (To Jordan's River Came Our Lord) has the same words and melody as CW93, but the organ accompaniment is easier.

[378](#) (To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord) has the melody from Luther's day, which should be practiced before singing.

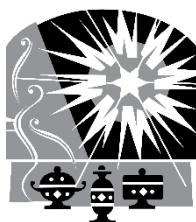
[379](#) (Christ, Your Footprints through the Desert) has the words from CWS but is set to a new tune which is unfamiliar but not difficult to sing.

[385](#) (Christ Begins) is new and easier to sing than to play.

[679](#) (God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It) has become beloved since it was introduced in CWS.

[692](#) (All Who Believe and Are Baptized) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[704](#) (Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus) is familiar in both text and music.



Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 17, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

“Christ” is not the family name of Jesus. It is a title. The Greek word “Christ” and the Hebrew word “Messiah” both mean the same thing: “The Anointed One.” Anointing was the practice of pouring liquid over the head of someone to signify selection for some special task. When the Lord had someone anointed, he also poured his Spirit over them. It was the fulfillment of promises made over centuries.

In the Old Testament, prophets were anointed. Priests were anointed. Kings were anointed. No one could serve in all three positions. In the New Testament, Jesus is anointed into all three positions, fulfilling them perfectly. Jesus is the master of all trades. He is the Messiah.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*1 Samuel 3:1-10 – Both a current priest and a future prophet learn to listen to the Word of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 – Faithful ministers of the gospel pass on the teachings of the Word of God.

John 1:43-51 – Jesus demonstrates that he knows everything about us and still calls us to follow him.

Preaching Note

The First Reading serves as the sermon text. An anointed high priest fulfills his role imperfectly. A future prophet is taught the importance of listening to the Word of the Lord. As the one about whom both Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus perfectly fulfilled his roles of both High Priest and Prophet, Son of God and Son of Man. Jesus as Prophet is the theme of Epiphany 4, so it is best not to develop that line of thought in great detail this week.

[Psalm 139](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 139 in services that observe the plans God has for his children even before they are born.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	631	631	518
HOD	375	375	375
Third/Distr	384	384	519
Closing	520	380	380

[375](#) (Arise and Shine in Splendor) returns to the melody from TLH.

[380](#) (Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun) covers the kingly aspect of the anointing as Messiah.

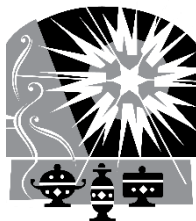
[384](#) (Hail to the Lord's Anointed) has the familiar words and tune, but the organist accompaniment is easier than in CW93.

[518](#) (Christ Be My Leader) is harder to play than it looks while its singability is fine.

[519](#) (There Is a Redeemer) is simple to play, to learn, and to sing.

[520](#) (Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing) is not the tune from TLH and CW93, but it's even easier to sing.

[631](#) (Speak, O Savior, I Am Listening) is familiar from TLH and CW93.



Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 24, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE COMMISSIONER

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

When we hear the word commissioner, we often think of powerful leaders such as the commissioner of a sports league or a police commissioner overseeing officers and enforcing rules. A commissioner is someone entrusted with authority and responsibility. Yet the most perfect Commissioner is Jesus Christ. After winning salvation for the world through his death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned his disciples to proclaim the gospel to all nations. He continues to send believers into the world with the good news of forgiveness and eternal life. Unlike earthly commissioners whose authority is temporary and whose execution of their jobs is always imperfect, Jesus rules forever and masterfully empowers his people to serve as witnesses of his saving love.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Jonah 3:1-5,10 – The reluctant Jonah was commissioned to proclaim a message from the Lord to the people of Nineveh.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21– Christ has committed to us the message of reconciliation as his ambassadors.

*Mark 1:14-20 – Jesus commissioned Simon and Andrew to fish for people.

Preaching Note

The Gospel is the recommended sermon text. When Jesus commissioned his disciples, it changed the focus of their lives. Fishermen became fishers of people. The message of reconciliation changes the emphases and purposes of our vocations.

[Psalm 62](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 62 in services that emphasize the rest we find in Jesus, not in anything we ourselves accomplish or endure.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	792	711	716
HOD	904	743	743
Third/Distr	375	745	376
Closing	381	517	580

[375](#) (Arise and Shine in Splendor) restores the melody from TLH.

[376](#) (Rise Up and Shine) is a new text to one of the very familiar tunes for “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

[381](#) (The People Who in Darkness Walked) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[517](#) (Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness) is familiar as CW93 Hymn 353. It has the same melody, but the accompaniment is changed so it can be more easily sung in parts.

[580](#) (All I Have Is Christ) is a modern text and tune that must be practiced but is easy to learn.

[711](#) (Jesus Calls Us o’er the Tumult) is the familiar text and tune in a lower key for ease of singing.

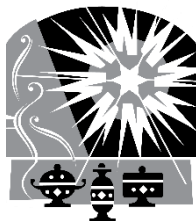
[716](#) (O Christ, Who Called the Twelve) may be familiar as CWS Hymn 770.

[743](#) (I Hear the Savior Calling) was CW93 Hymn 560.

[745](#) (Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying) is well known to most worshipers.

[792](#) (O Trinity, Most Blessed Light) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[904](#) (O Christ, Our True and Only Light) is a classic Lutheran text and tune.



Third Sunday after Epiphany - ALTERNATE

January 24, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE COMMISSIONER

(St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor)

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Jesus masterfully commissioned Saint Timothy to serve as a pastor and faithful confessor of the Christian faith. Through the work of the apostle Paul and the laying on of hands, Timothy was entrusted with the ministry of preaching the Word, teaching sound doctrine, and caring for Christ's flock. Jesus also commissions us to fight the good fight of the faith and to remain steadfast in the truth despite hardship and opposition. The Christian Church worldwide remembers Timothy on January 24.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Acts 16:1-5 – The young man Timothy joins the apostle Paul as a missionary.

*1 Timothy 6:11-16 – Paul encourages Timothy to carry out his commission.

John 21:15-17 – Jesus commissions his followers to feed his sheep.

Preaching Note

The Second Reading is the recommended sermon text. Any of the admonitions can be preached as part of the commission which Jesus gives to his believers. Timothy needed encouragement and so do we.

[Psalm 71](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 71 in services that mention the saving work of the Lord in all the stages of life, from infancy to old age.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	578	743	736
HOD	745	571	571
Third/Dist	702	702	906
Closing	576	892:1,11,3	892:1,11,3

[571](#) (O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth) is familiar text set to a famous new tune, must be practiced.

[576](#) (Amazing Grace) is as well-known as any hymn.

[578](#) (Chief of Sinners Though I Be) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[702](#) (Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

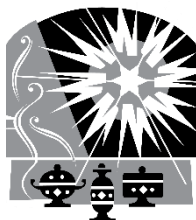
[736](#) (Lord, You Call Us as Your People) has a tune from CWS 763 but a new text.

[743](#) (I Hear the Savior Calling) is familiar as CW93 Hymn 560.

[745](#) (Hark, The Voice of Jesus Crying) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[892](#) (By All Your Saints Still Striving) is familiar from CW93 Hymn 552, where the St. Timothy verse (sung as the second stanza) was verse 5. In CW21 the St. Timothy verse is verse 11 (still sung as stanza 2).

[906](#) (May God Bestow on Us His Grace), Martin Luther's mission hymn, was in both TLH and CW93, but it was not sung very often because of its difficult original melody.



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

January 31, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE PROPHET

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Moses was a great prophet chosen by God to lead Israel out of slavery, deliver the law, and speak God's Word to the people. Yet Moses was still a sinful human being who made mistakes. In anger and frustration, he disobeyed God at the waters of Meribah and faced consequences for his sin. His life reminds us that we cannot enter the promised land by keeping the law. By contrast, Jesus Christ is the greatest Prophet of all. Jesus masterfully revealed God's truth, perfectly obeyed his Father's will, and never sinned or made a mistake in word, thought, or deed. He is the ultimate Prophet.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Deuteronomy 18:15-20 – Moses prophesies that the Lord would raise up another prophet even greater than him.

Hebrews 3:1-6 – As great as Moses was, Jesus is worthy of infinitely greater honor.

Mark 1:21-28– Jesus demonstrates absolute authority, even over demons.

Preaching Note

The First Reading is the recommended sermon text. Insofar as Moses represents the law, his death on Mount Nebo demonstrates that we cannot enter the promised land by keeping the law. Since Jesus kept the law perfectly and masterfully, we can enter the promised land following him. Note the similarities of the names Joshua and Jesus. We honor Jesus as the ultimate Prophet by listening to him.

[Psalm 29](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 29 in services that emphasize the power of all three persons of the Trinity speaking, especially Jesus speaking as the Son of God and the ultimate prophet.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	629	639	633
HOD	816	744	744
Third/Distr	799	537	830
Closing	849	849	636

[537](#) (Word of God, Come Down on Earth) is a new text to a familiar tune.

[629](#) (O God from God, O Light from Light) is a long sing but not difficult.

[633](#) (Speak, O Lord) is familiar as CWS Hymn 735.

[636](#) (Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing) is a new text and tune that must be practiced.

[639](#) (God Has Spoken by His Prophets) is familiar from CW93.

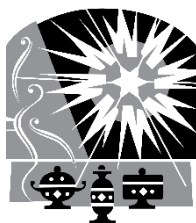
[744](#) (Rise, Shine, You People) is familiar from CW93.

[799](#) (I Leave All Things to God's Direction) has the familiar melody, CW93 wording, and a simpler organ accompaniment.

[816](#) (I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus) is very familiar, easy both to play and sing.

[830](#) (We Walk by Faith) is a little harder than it looks to play.

[849](#) (Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me) is familiar as CW93 Hymn 439.



Last Sunday after Epiphany – Transfiguration of Our Lord February 7, 2027

MASTER OF ALL TRADES

JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

(The Transfiguration of Our Lord)

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

How do we know that Jesus was the master of all trades, doing everything perfectly? We get a glimpse of his perfect holiness with Peter, James, and John at his transfiguration, when his clothes became dazzling. Such a display of righteousness reminds us that he was truly the Son of God.

After he came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus went to Jerusalem to suffer and die. It is good for us to view Jesus in glory on the mountain. It prepares us for Lent and it prepares us for life, whether we are suffering or rejoicing.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

2 Kings 2-12a – The prophet Elijah never tasted death but was taken directly to heaven.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 – We see the glory of Christ's light in the gospel before we see the glory of heaven.

*Mark 9:2-9 – The transfiguration of our Lord.

Preaching Note

A sermon on the Gospel is a wonderful way to close the season of Epiphany. On the first Sunday, the Father called Jesus his Son at his baptism. On this Sunday, the Father calls Jesus his Son at his transfiguration. His identity as the Son of God is demonstrated by the glimpses of the glory of the Lord. We join Peter in wanting to remember that. As the Son of God, Jesus lived life masterfully. He did all things well, earning our salvation.

[Psalm 2](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 2 in services that emphasize the relationship of the Father and the Son.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	389	391	390
HOD	388	388	388
Third/Distr	700	390	392
Closing	522	389	977

[388](#) (Down from the Mount of Glory) is familiar as CW93 Hymn 97.

[389](#) (How Good, Lord, to Be Here) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[390](#) (Jesus, Take Us to the Mountain) became familiar as CWS Hymn 712.

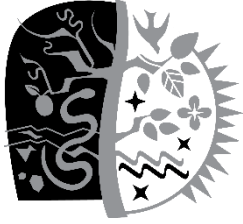
[391](#) (O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair) was CW93 Hymn 96. It's a little harder to sing than it first appears.

[392](#) (This Brightness, Lord! What Shall I Say) is a new text set to an American folk tune. It must be practiced.

[522](#) (Beautiful Savior) is well-known and beloved.

[700](#) (Draw Us to Thee) is familiar from TLH and CW93.

[977](#) (Farewell to Alleluias) is in the accompaniment book and *Service Builder* but not in the pew edition hymnal. It's fairly easy to play and sing.



Year B (2027) – Lent

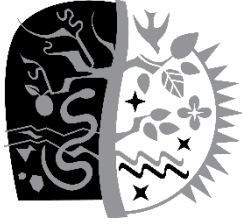
HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE

SERIES EXPLANATION

Life can be a battle. We recognize our own weaknesses. We are caught off guard by attacks from Satan. The world encourages us to take credit for small successes but then slams us for small failures. It's easy to lose focus and to lose heart. But Jesus Christ is the champion who fights for us. There's a double meaning in the words "for us." The battle he wages is in our place. The battle is also for our sake, that he may claim us as his own. He fights for our lives, and he will win the battle.

Our worship follows this pattern.

Ash Wednesday	<i>The Battle Is Now</i>
First Sunday in Lent	<i>Victory over Temptation</i>
Second Sunday in Lent	<i>Cross before Crown</i>
Third Sunday in Lent	<i>Keeping the Focus</i>
Fourth Sunday in Lent	<i>By Faith We See the Goal</i>
Fifth Sunday in Lent	<i>To the Glory of God</i>



Ash Wednesday

February 10, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE ***The Battle Is Now***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Sometimes we struggle to remember the seriousness of our sin. We get used to doing the wrong thing and rationalizing it, and we put off thinking about it or doing something about it. On this day we are reminded of our mortality and of the urgency of sorrow over transgression. Jesus will forgive us. Let's turn to our Savior in repentance *now*.

ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY *(can be printed in the bulletin)*

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, reminding us of our mortality and calling us to repent. The ancient practice of imposing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful is what gives Ash Wednesday its name. The church father Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-215) writes of the practice as a public expression of repentance and of our human frailty that stands in need of Christ. Ashes can remind us forcefully of our need for redeeming grace as they recall words from the rite of Christian burial, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Joel 2:12-19 – Our top priority is to repent before the Lord who is gracious and compassionate.

Revelation 3:1-3 – God makes an urgent call for the spiritually dead to wake up and repent.

Luke 12:13-21 – Jesus tells a parable about a man who forgot that we are all turning back into dust.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading serves as the basis for the sermon. Each liturgical year offers a different focus for Ash Wednesday. Year B focuses on mortality (while Year A focuses on humanity and Year C on reconciliation). The urgent message in the face of impending doom is pure hope: "Return to me."

Alternatively, the preacher may use the NPH Lenten kit suggested text (Genesis 3:15-19) from the "Word Made Flesh" series.

[Psalm 51](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 51 in services that emphasize repentance, both contrition and faith.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	420	407	393
HOD	130F	650	650
Third/Distr	653	658	652
Closing	402	519	654

[130F](#) (From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee) in the *Psalter* is almost exactly TLH 329.

[393](#) (Savior, When in Dust to You) is the text from CW93 but to a different tune (CW93 Hymn 357).

[402](#) (Glory Be to Jesus) is unchanged through the years and very easy to play.

[407](#) (When I Survey the Wondrous Cross) is just what you expect.

[420](#) (Jesus, I Will Ponder Now) was the first hymn in the TLH Lenten section.

[519](#) (There Is a Redeemer) is new but simple to learn and sing, even in parts.

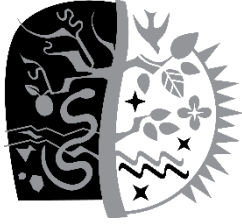
[650](#) (From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry) has the same tune but a new translation.

[652](#) (Lord, Have Mercy) takes some preparation to follow the order of things in the music.

[653](#) (Lord, to You I Make Confession) is the standard text and tune simplified to sing in parts.

[654](#) (Jesus Sinners Does Receive) is even easier than it looks to play and to sing.

[658](#) (With All My Heart I Praise You, Lord) is a spectacular new translation of a classic Lutheran chorale.



First Sunday in Lent

February 14, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE ***Victory over Temptation***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

We recognize our inability to defend ourselves against spiritual enemies. The world is against us, but we look for ways to imitate it. We try to master our own sinful flesh, but we recognize desires in ourselves that war against our soul. And when it comes to the devil, we fall into temptation again and again. Our impending death proves that we have sinned.

We realize that what we really need is a champion. God the Father realized it too. He sent his Son to be our Savior. Through the obedience of the Son of God, we have victory over temptation. Jesus will win the battle every time.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Genesis 22:1-18 – God gives Abraham a test.

*Romans 8:31-39 – The proof of God's love is not that he removes all trouble. The proof of God's love is that he gave us his Son.

Mark 1:12-15 – Jesus overcame Satan's temptations.

Preachers Notes

The Second Reading serves as the basis of the sermon. Satan's defeat is complete. But we still need to hear the facts that assure us of our victory. We can be sure because God did not spare his own Son. We are more than conquerors because Christ conquered Satan and temptation.

[Psalm 25](#)

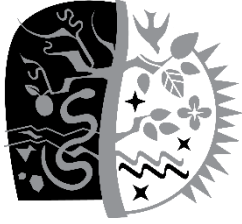
Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 25 in services that encourage a Christian life of repentance and faith.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	819	510	535
HOD	863	863/864	863/864
Third/Distr	836	800	867
Closing	842	832	879

[510](#) (In Christ Alone) has become familiar and beloved.
[535](#) (Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery) is unfamiliar but easy to learn.
[800](#) (How Firm a Foundation) is set to the tune used more frequently by Christians around the world.
[819](#) (If God Himself Be for Me) is familiar and quite singable.
[832](#) (Immovable Our Hope Remains) can be learned by the average congregation.
[836](#) (I Walk in Danger All the Way) can be shortened to stanzas 1 and 5 for time in this service.
[842](#) (Jesus, Still Lead On) is comforting and familiar.
[863](#) (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God) is the tune and text from TLH with minor language updates.
[864](#) (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God) is the tune from Bach cantatas with text different from Hymn 863.
[867](#) (Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near) is rapidly gaining in popularity.
[879](#) (Though All Our Life Is Like a Scroll) is a striking new text with a tune that must be practiced.



Second Sunday in Lent

February 21, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE ***Cross before Crown***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

When God allows us to suffer, it's a battle to remember that it's for our good. We are tempted to complain or to despair. Jesus warns us that those who follow him must deny themselves and take up their crosses. A cross is not pleasant. But God assures us that our crosses are constructive and connective. Jesus wins the battle by using our crosses to connect us to him and to train us in our walk of faith.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Job 1:13-22 – Job is given a heavy cross, but it does not crush his faith.

Romans 5:1-11 – God works through our suffering to shape our Christian character.

Mark 8:31-38 – Jesus teaches the necessity of the cross, both his and ours.

Preachers Notes

The First Reading serves as the recommended sermon text. It's interesting that Job's cross came from out of nowhere, at least from his perspective. Unlike so many others who have been persecuted by an unbelieving world, Job was not aware that he was suffering for his faith. But the biblical account gives the backstory. Satan attacked Job because of Job's faith.

[Psalm 22](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

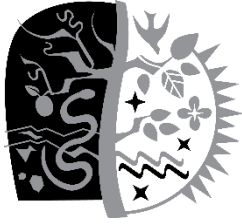
PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 22 in services that commemorate the suffering and death of Jesus.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	694	844/845	802
HOD	817	817	817
Third/Distr	428/429	428/429	428/429
Closing	831	570	847

- [428](#) (O Sacred Head, Now Wounded) has four stanzas to Bach's setting of the tune.
- [429](#) (O Sacred Head, Now Wounded) has seven stanzas to the familiar tune.
- [570](#) (God Loved the World So That He Gave) is familiar and beloved.
- [694](#) (Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken) is familiar and worth the effort
- [802](#) (All Is Well) should be introduced with a soloist or a choir.
- [817](#) (Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart) is worth learning if a church does not already know it.
- [831](#) (Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me) is completely doable.
- [844](#) (What God Ordains Is Always Good) is the familiar tune.
- [845](#) (What God Ordains Is Always Good) is a new tune, harder than the familiar tune, but learnable.
- [847](#) (Be Still, My Soul) is harder than it looks but familiar enough to be sung without extra practice.



Third Sunday in Lent

February 28, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE ***Keeping the Focus***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

We struggle to focus. We have so many concerns and so many distractions. It's easy to let the cares of everyday life drag us away from what is really important. God gives us the Ten Commandments to let us know what he really cares about, what is right and what is wrong. Then he directs our attention to Christ, who kept the Ten Commandments in our place and took the punishment for our disobedience. In worship we look to the cross, where Jesus has won the battle for us.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Exodus 20:1-17 – The Ten Commandments redirect our attention to God above all.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 – Christ crucified is the message that brings everything into focus.

John 2:13-22 – Jesus restores the attention of his Father's house to a proper focus.

Preachers Notes

The First Reading serves as the recommended sermon text. The preacher has an opportunity to deal with the Commandments as a whole, outlining the purpose and result of the Law. Shifting the focus from Law to Gospel will keep everything perspective.

[Psalm 19](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 19 in services that investigate the interplay between the natural knowledge of God and the revealed knowledge of his perfect Word.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	705	394	913
HOD	558	558	558
Third/Distr	400	405	635
Closing	839	407	580

[394](#) (Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain) is the same as CW93 Hymn 106.

[400](#) (Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing) is easy to play and to sing, even in parts.

[405](#) (On My Heart Imprint Your Image) has the same tune as 404, where the harmony is written out.

[407](#) (When I Survey the Wondrous Cross) is easy to play and to sing, even in parts.

[558](#) (Salvation unto Us Has Come) is a Lutheran classic.

[580](#) (All I Have is Christ) should be introduced with a soloist or a choir.

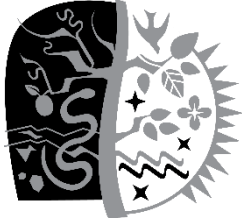
[635](#) (From High Atop the Mount) is a new translation set to a singable tune.

[705](#) (Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways) might be the easiest hymn to play and to sing.

[839](#) (Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me) was underused in TLH and CW93.

[874](#) (Preserve Your Word, O Savior) has the tune from CW93, with the four-part harmony written out in CW21 Hymn 384.

[913](#) (Come Away from Rush and Hurry) can also be sung to the tune of Hymn 708.



Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE By Faith We See the Goal

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

We struggle when we are threatened. When the Israelites were bitten by poisonous snakes in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole. Those who looked at it in faith lived. Jesus connected this event directly to his saving work. As the bronze snake was lifted up, so the Son of Man was lifted up on the cross. There he bore the deadly poison of our sin and suffered its curse. The goal of faith is not faith itself but Christ crucified and risen. We struggle to keep it all clear, but Jesus will win the battle.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Numbers 21:4-9 – Those who believed God’s promise stayed alive.

*Ephesians 2:1-10 – God’s solution to sin is received through faith.

John 3:14-21 – The goal of faith is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preachers Notes

The Second Reading serves as the sermon text. The apostle Paul establishes the foundation of salvation. These verses are famously exclusive, explicitly narrowing the means of salvation down to one method while entirely ruling out human effort and pride. The thread that ties this reading to the other ones is faith.

[Psalm 32](#)

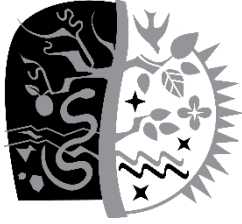
Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 32 in services that proclaim forgiveness for the penitent.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	576	868	854
HOD	570	570	570
Third/Distr	409	517	395
Closing	575	713	515

[395](#) (What Grace Is This) is familiar as CWS Hymn 715.
[409](#) (Jesus, Refuge of the Weary) is easy to play and to sing, even in parts.
[515](#) (Christ Is the World's Light) is the familiar text to a new tune.
[517](#) (Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness) is printed to be easily sung in four-part harmony.
[570](#) (God Loved the World So That He Gave) has been well known for a long time.
[575](#) (By Grace I'm Saved) is familiar, both playable and singable.
[576](#) (Amazing Grace) is familiar and beloved.
[713](#) (I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light) became popular as CWS Hymn 771.
[854](#) (Church of God, Elect and Glorious) became familiar as CWS Hymn 774.
[868](#) (By Faith) is easier to sing than to play.



Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2027

HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE To the Glory of God

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

When Jesus lives and dies for us, it does not seem all that glorious. When we go through difficulties in our lives, it seems like a battle, not like the aftermath of a victory. But Jesus has won the eternal victory, and we give glory to God even through life's dangers and messes. We trust in the presence of Jesus, and he will win the battle.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Isaiah 43:1-7 – We glorify God for his presence even in raging waters or a wall of fire.

Hebrews 5:7-9 – We glorify Jesus as the source of eternal salvation.

John 12:20-33 – Jesus was committed to glorifying his Father's name by winning eternal life for us.

Preachers Notes

The First Reading is the recommended sermon text. Israel would be taken into exile. Jerusalem would be burned. But we have no reason to fear as we watch this battle, even as we see challenges to our own faith and our own circumstances. Isaiah assures us of God's presence. The Lord uses first person pronouns 18 times in this reading. He speaks, his rescuing us is all his doing, and it gives him glory.

[Psalm 121](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 121 in services that celebrate the value of faith in God regardless of our circumstances.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	502	627	627
HOD	836	571	571
Third/Distr	396	700	834
Closing	700	813	849

[396](#) (Christ, the Life of All the Living) is unchanged in our hymnals for over 80 years.
[502](#) (Children of the Heavenly Father) is written to be sung easily in four parts.
[571](#) (O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth) has a tune different from CW93 to see if it gets more use.
[627](#) (To God Be the Glory) became familiar as Hymn 399 in CW93.
[700](#) (Draw Us to Thee) is a Lutheran classic.
[813](#) (He Will Hold Me Fast) is easy to sing and to learn if you don't know it already.
[834](#) (Still, My Soul, Be Still) is usually quickly learned.
[836](#) (I Walk in Danger All the Way) fits on one page in the hymnal with melody only.
[849](#) (Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me) became familiar in CW93.



Year B (2027) – Holy Week

BATTLE READY

SERIES EXPLANATION

Troops know what it takes to be battle ready. It means being fully prepared, equipped, and trained to engage in a conflict. It describes a state of immediate readiness and peak operational condition.

As we enter into the most holy week of the year for us, we witness Jesus in battle-ready condition. Having overcome each of Satan's attacks, he has a real victory in mind. He goes into the agony of this week with the powerful purpose of our salvation. He is fully prepared and equipped to do what it takes to accomplish his plan. He is battle ready.

Our worship follows this pattern.

Passion Sunday (or Palm Sunday)	<i>To Win</i>
Holy Thursday	<i>To Distribute Gifts</i>
Good Friday	<i>To Finish</i>
Vigil of Easter	<i>To Declare Victory</i>



Passion Sunday (or Palm Sunday)

March 21, 2027

BATTLE READY TO WIN

Passion Sunday option versus Palm Sunday option

The Sunday before Easter can be celebrated as Passion Sunday or as Palm Sunday.

Passion Sunday is intended to allow people to hear, in one service, all the events of the final week before Jesus' crucifixion. If your congregation celebrates both Passion Sunday and midweek Lenten services, it is *not* suggested that the Passion readings then be omitted from the midweek services. Passion Sunday allows those who have attended midweek Lenten services to listen to these vital events a second time, but in close continuity. For people who are unable to attend midweek services, Passion Sunday allows them to meditate on Christ's suffering and death, rather than going from Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday right to his resurrection on Easter without having heard about Christ's passion.

With either option, the worship plan calls for the service to begin with a Palm Sunday processional. That rite is among the Seasonal Inserts in the Additional Rites menu of *Service Builder*. In the Passion Sunday order, the Palm Sunday reading is from the back of the sanctuary. In the Palm Sunday order, that Gospel reading comes in its usual place. In either order, the processional group gathers at the entrance of the nave for the start of the service. The assembly stands and turns to face the group at the entrance. The presiding minister leads the rite. After the invitation, "Let us go forth in peace, in the name of the Lord," the group processes while "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" is sung. The end of the processional path may lead to an appropriate place in the chancel where the palm branches are placed. The rite ends with the Prayer of the Day. If the processional group includes children who have prepared an anthem, the anthem may be sung from the chancel after the Prayer of the Day.

If the Passion Sunday option is utilized, the regular sequence of readings is replaced by the Passion History from Mark 14–15 in Year B. It is suggested there be no reading introductions. Even announcing the chapter and verses is unnecessary. Just let the text speak. Recognize that it is a big ask to have members sit and listen to that much reading. Whoever is reading can put in additional practice to read especially well. Options like antiphonal reading (e.g., having the congregation read text that is spoken by the crowd) or having different lectors can also enhance the reading. The simplest approach is to divide the Passion Gospel into five sections, with each followed by a stanza of the Hymn of the Day. Alternatively other hymns or choir selections could be sung.

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

On this sixth Sunday in Lent, we see the winner of the battle. He is crowned as the prophets predicted. The psalmist commands the gates to lift up their heads, that the King of glory may come in. He is clearly a different kind of king, but no less a winner. He handled every bit of shame and opposition for us and kept in mind the joy that was coming. His people witness him ready to win.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(for Palm Sunday option—to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Zechariah 9:9-12 – The prophet Zechariah foretold a winning king who is both infinitely strong and perfectly humble.

Hebrews 12:1-3 – Jesus demonstrated strength by enduring the cross for the joy set before him.

*Mark 11:1-10 – The almighty Son of God demonstrates absolute control of the situation.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel serves as the recommended sermon text for the Palm Sunday option. Jesus is battle ready. He knows the location of the colt and the reaction of its owners. He is determined to fulfill prophecy and enter Jerusalem. He arrives with both humility and purpose.

With the Passion Sunday option, it is common to simply let the passion story, as well as the hymn verses which break that reading up, serve as the sermon. However, it is also fine to include a devotion or sermonette. It can be placed before or after the Passion reading. The preacher might simply expand on what is mentioned in the explanation of the theme of the day.

Psalm 24

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 24 in services on the first Sunday in Advent and Palm Sunday, both anticipating the arrival of Christ the Lord.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	412	412	412
HOD	411	411	411
Third/Distr	543	413	415
Closing	413	397/399	414

[397](#) (My Song Is Love Unknown) is the same as CW93 Hymn 110.

[399](#) (My Song Is Love Unknown) is easier to sing than 397.

[411](#) (Ride On, Ride On in Majesty) is the same as TLH Hymn 162 and CW93 Hymn 133.

[412](#) (All Glory, Laud, and Honor) has the refrain sung both before and after the last stanza.

[413](#) (Hosanna, Loud Hosanna) is the same as CW93 Hymn 130.

[414](#) (No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet) has the text of CWS 716 but the tune of CW93 481 and 520.

[415](#) (Exult Today, Jerusalem) is very new, very deep, and very singable.

[543](#) (O Jesus, King Most Wonderful) is both familiar and appropriate.



Holy Thursday

March 25, 2027

BATTLE READY TO DISTRIBUTE GIFTS

HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE PLANNING OPTIONS

Often called Green Thursday in Germany, Maundy Thursday in England, and Holy Thursday in the US, this day begins a series of services that commemorate the key events of our salvation. *Service Builder* provides a unique beginning and that can be inserted into the chosen service. The Holy Thursday Confessional Rite is an extended confession of sins which replaces the usual beginning of The Service. The Service continues with the section entitled The Word.

Service Builder also provides two options for a unique conclusion of the service. Both options can be found under Holy Thursday: Stripping of the Altar. With the simpler option, the congregation is seated after the blessing, the minister reads the account of Jesus' arrest and abandonment (Mt 26:47-56), a final prayer is spoken, and the congregation disperses quietly. The more elaborate option is the actual stripping of the altar. Just as Jesus' disciples abandoned him in Gethsemane, so the altar, as a symbol of Christ, is stripped of its appointments and left barren for Good Friday. In this option, after the post-communion prayer, the blessing is omitted, and the congregation is seated. A cantor or choir sings various settings of Psalm 88 while the congregation watches as the ministers (and other assistants, if needed) simply and reverently remove the communion ware, candles, paraments, and all other items from the altar. When the altar is bare, no one should dismiss the assembly in a formal way. People may exit on their own.

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

We need to be washed clean in the blood of Jesus. Our own need can distract and overwhelm us with the details of our sin and our guilt. Blood always gets our attention, but it can make us feel queasy and uneasy. Jesus wants to lift our eyes above all that to his marvelous promise of forgiveness. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. The Lord's Supper gives us a glimpse of the heavenly feast where we will eat of the eternal manna and drink from the river of God's delights forever.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Exodus 12:21-30 – In anticipation of freeing his people, the Lord grants life through the shedding of blood.

1 Corinthians 10:16,17– In the cup of thanksgiving, God grants fellowship with him and with one another.

*Mark 14:12-26 – Jesus gives us his own body and blood.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel serves as the recommended sermon text. The body and blood of the Lord are extraordinary gifts for us. In Mark's account, the evangelical proclamation of the significance of those gifts is in the phrase, "my blood of the covenant." The preacher could spend time on understanding the covenant language of the Scriptures.

[Psalm 116](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 116 in services that celebrate the Lord delivering us from death.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	417	424	416
HOD	659	659	659
Third/Distr	661	662	662
Closing	425	672	418

[416](#) (When You Woke That Thursday Morning) is a striking new text designed to be sung in unison and accompanied by piano.

[417](#) (It Was a Dark and Dismal Night) is familiar and designed to be sung in four parts.

[418](#) (The Blood of the Lamb) is a striking new text designed to be sung in unison and accompanied by piano.

[424](#) (The Garden of Gethsemane) is a striking new text designed to be sung in unison.

[425](#) (Go to Dark Gethsemane) is the classic designed to be sung in four parts.

[659](#) (Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior) is TLH 311 and CW93 313.

[661](#) (Draw Near and Take the Body of Your Lord) is TLH 307 and CW93 309.

[662](#) (Draw Near) became known to WELS people as CWS 740.

[672](#) (Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence) is CW93 361.



Good Friday

March 26, 2027

BATTLE READY TO FINISH

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE PLANNING OPTIONS

Service Builder offers two services for Good Friday. Traditionally the altar is not used during Good Friday services. The minister may conduct the service from the lectern or the ambo.

The Service of Remembrance of the Cross is especially appropriate for an afternoon service, although it may be observed in the evening if that is the only service in a congregation's worship schedule. The service begins with either a procession or a dialogue. The confession is in reproach format. If the Psalm is used, the Gloria Patri is omitted. The Prayer of the Church is in bidding prayer format. The minister faces the people as he bids them to pray. If there are two participating ministers, one speaks the bid and the other speaks the petitions. At the end of the service, the congregation exits silently without a formal dismissal.

The Service of Seven Words from the Cross is especially appropriate for an evening service. It lends itself well to incorporating features from the Service of Darkness (*Tenebrae*). The main part of the service follows the same sequence seven times. One of Jesus' statements from the cross is read, followed by a responsive reading, a prayer, and a related hymn stanza. A short devotional address may precede each of the seven words. When the service is in the evening, a sevenfold candle holder may be in the chancel, lit ahead of time, and a candle is extinguished after each reading. Once again, the congregations exits silently without a formal dismissal.

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

On Good Friday we remember the crucifixion and death of our Lord. The victor finishes the battle once and for all. Because we love the one dying, remembering is hard. But because he loves us, we see our salvation. Our salvation is won completely and won forever.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 – Jesus is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament sacrificial system.

Hebrews 7:26-28 – Jesus was uniquely perfect for the battle.

*John 19:17-30 – Ready for the battle, Jesus finishes accomplishing our salvation.

Preacher Notes

For Good Friday, the First Reading and the Gospel are identical in Year A, B, and C. Only the Second Reading differs from year to year. The Gospel serves as the suggested sermon text this year. As far as the theme is concerned, the Second Reading may detail Jesus' readiness for battle, but the Gospel cannot be clearer: "It is finished."

[Psalm 22](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 22 in services that commemorate the suffering and death of Jesus.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	431	433	423
HOD	422	422	422
Third/Distr	435	436	436
Closing	426	427	561

[422](#) (A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth) is worth the effort it takes to sing.

[423](#) (The Power of the Cross) is new, rapidly becoming popular, and easy to sing.

[426](#) (Were You There) is CW93 119.

[427](#) (O Darkest Woe) is CW93 137 with one stanza added.

[431](#) (O Perfect Life of Love) is TLH 170.

[433](#) (God Was There on Calvary) is CW93 140.

[435](#) (Jesus, in Your Dying Woes) is the older hymn for the Seven Words.

[436](#) (The Seven Words) is the newer text for the Seven Words set to a familiar and appropriate tune.

[561](#) (Before the Throne of God Above) is new but quickly learned.



**BATTLE READY
TO DECLARE VICTORY**

VIGIL OF EASTER SERVICE PLANNING OPTIONS

Service Builder has the Vigil of Easter service available under Seasonal Services. Extensive service notes at the end of the *Service Builder* file help worship planners consider all the details necessary for the service.

The Vigil is meant to be celebrated on Saturday night. There is no sermon. The Vigil is divided into four sections: Service of Light, Service of Readings, Service of Holy Baptism, and Service of Holy Communion.

The Service of Light may take place outside the nave such as the narthex—if it is spacious enough for the assembly to gather—or the area just outside the main church entrance. Provision must be made for lighting the Paschal Candle. For services that begin outdoors, a fire pit brazier may be used to kindle the fire from which the Paschal Candle may be lit.

The Service of Readings includes four primary selections included in the rite, with eight more suggestions offered in the service notes. Psalm and canticle suggestions follow each reading. Worship planners may select other psalms and canticles beyond the ones suggested. Many of the psalms in *Christian Worship: Psalter* that are not appointed for lectionary use would make fitting choices. A substantial period of silence, perhaps one minute, should follow the psalm or canticle.

The Service of Holy Baptism follows the readings. New converts in the ancient Church were often baptized at this point in the Easter Vigil. *Service Builder* provides a baptismal rite that incorporates much of the Service of Holy Baptism (CW pp. 261-265) into the Vigil. *Service Builder* also provides an option when there are no candidates for baptism; in that case, the congregation remembers the blessings of baptism in a confession of faith that incorporates the Apostles' Creed.

This point of the service marks the formal transition from Lent to Easter and from anticipation to celebration. A period of silence should be given after the baptismal rite. If bells or chimes can be rung, they should sound for some time, perhaps 15 seconds or more, before the lights in the nave are fully lit. The minister and congregation address each other with the Easter Greeting: "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" The organist promptly intones, "This Is the Feast of Victory" (938) or another appropriate canticle. The canticle provides time for the minister to change from a purple stole, representing Lent, to a white or gold stole, representing Easter.

The song of praise is followed by the Prayer of the Day, the Gospel, and the Hymn of the Day. Any of the four Gospel accounts may be read. If a congregation does not have a sunrise service, the account from John 20:1-18, appointed for Easter Dawn, may be used. Matthew 27:62-27:7 would also be a suitable selection, which includes not only the resurrection but the futile attempt of Jesus' enemies to seal the tomb for three days after his death.

The Hymn of the Day may be one with substantial roots in Christian hymnody, such as “Christ Is Arisen” (458) or “Christ the Lord Is Risen Again” (459). Gerhardt’s hymn, “Awake My Heart with Gladness” (443), appointed for Easter Dawn, is also appropriate. It clearly declares the victory.

The Lord’s Supper may be celebrated using any musical setting of The Service. An option for a slightly briefer rite for The Sacrament is offered with the *Service Builder* Vigil. Some of the language in the Easter Proclamation earlier in the Vigil is quite similar to the language of the Preface and Proper Preface in the communion liturgy. That perceived redundancy is omitted in the Vigil’s shorter communion rite option.



Year B (2027) – Easter

RISEN TO GIVE

SERIES EXPLANATION

When Roman generals returned home victorious from battle, the conquering commander entered the city with his soldiers and the spoils of war. The victory belonged to the whole nation, so the general distributed gifts to the people. His triumph became their joy as they shared in the blessings won on the battlefield.

The risen Jesus is the true victor. On the cross he fought the great enemies of sin, death, and the devil. When he rose from the dead on Easter morning, he proclaimed that the battle was finished and the victory complete.

Like a victorious king, Jesus now gives gifts to his people. Through his Word and sacraments, he generously shares the blessings he has won. He brings the light of forgiveness to those walking in darkness. He gives eternal life that death can never take away. He speaks peace to troubled consciences, assuring believers that they are reconciled to God. Christ's victory is our victory, and as the risen Savior, he freely gives his gifts by grace to all who believe in him.

Our worship follows this pattern.

Easter Dawn	<i>Light in the Darkness</i>
Easter Day	<i>Life from Death</i>
Second Sunday of Easter	<i>Peace</i>
Third Sunday of Easter	<i>Repentance and Forgiveness</i>
Fourth Sunday of Easter	<i>A Good Shepherd</i>
Fifth Sunday of Easter	<i>Fruits of Faith</i>
Sixth Sunday of Easter	<i>Love</i>
Ascension	<i>Ministers of the Gospel</i>
Seventh Sunday of Easter	<i>Protection</i>
Pentecost	<i>Power to Our Words</i>

RESOURCE REMINDER

The *CW21 Altar Book* contains eight seasonal prayers of the church, all spoken by the presiding minister. *Service Builder* contains a wealth of additional responsive prayers of the church. For the Easter season, there are prayers for Easter Sunday, Good Shepherd Sunday, and Ascension. Another responsive prayer is available for Mother's Day on May 9, 2027. Two responsive prayers and a dialogue are available for Pentecost. There are also dialogues for Easter and Ascension that may be used to begin the service. To find these, choose "Insert / Rite." Then find the dialogues in the drop-down at the top left under Seasonal Inserts.



Easter Dawn

March 28, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Darkness can take many forms. It may be fear, guilt, grief, uncertainty, or the shadow of death itself. Left on our own, we cannot find our way out. But Jesus has risen from the dead, and his resurrection shines God's light into every darkness. By his victory over sin, death, and the devil, Christ assures us that our sins are forgiven and our future is secure. Through his Word, he continues to enlighten our hearts with the promise of eternal life. No darkness can overcome the light of the risen Savior, who leads his people safely into his everlasting kingdom.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Isaiah 25:6-9 – The prophet foresees the resurrection reality.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 – Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, and our faith is fulfilled.

John 20:1-18 – The followers of Jesus see the empty tomb.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. People may not know what a shroud is, and explaining it can quickly lead to the account of Peter and John finding Jesus' burial shroud folded up neatly at the dawn. With death conquered and tears dried, resurrection comfort can be applied to the many circumstances of people dealing with death.

Psalm 30

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 30 in services that celebrate God rescuing us, whether that is from unbelief, sickness, suffering, hardship, or death.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	442	938	442
HOD	443	443	443
Third/Distr	450	454	447
Closing	441	441	441

[441](#) (I Know That My Redeemer Lives) is well-known and beloved.

[442](#) (Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia) is the less familiar of the two hymns where every phrase has an “Alleluia.”

[443](#) (Awake, My Heart, with Gladness) would benefit from some leadership by a choir.

[447](#) (Christ Is Risen, He Is Risen Indeed) is new and must be introduced.

[450](#) (The Day of Resurrection) is one of the oldest hymns in the hymnal (along with 462).

[454](#) (Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen) is a new text to a tune introduced as CW93 Hymn 247 (Earth and All Stars).

[938](#) (This Is the Feast) became popular as CW93 Hymn 265. One refrain is eliminated in CW21.



***RISEN TO GIVE
LIFE FROM DEATH***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Death is humanity's greatest enemy. No amount of strength, wisdom, or determination can overcome its power. But Jesus did what no one else could. After dying on the cross to pay for the sins of the world, he rose from the dead in glorious victory. His resurrection proves that sin has been forgiven and death has been defeated. Because Christ lives, all who trust in him have the sure promise of eternal life. Through faith, God gives us confidence to face death without fear, knowing that the risen Savior will also raise us to live with him forever.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Job 19:23-27 – Even though Job would die and his body would decay, he knew that he would see God with his own eyes in the resurrection.

*1 Corinthians 15:19-26 – Christ's resurrection gives us hope in this life and in eternal life.

Mark 16:1-8 – An angel explains to the women at the tomb why they don't find Jesus' corpse there.

Preacher Notes

The Second Reading is chosen as the sermon text. An explanation of the history of firstfruits can easily lead to the context of the resurrection of Jesus. Although it appears that death is final, Jesus proves that the separation of soul and body is only temporary, not just for him, but also for us.

Psalm 118

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 118 in services that celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	438	438	438
HOD	439	440	440
Third/Distr	444	445	453
Closing	445	449	451

[438](#) (Jesus Christ Is Risen Today) is the more familiar of the two hymns where every phrase has an “Alleluia”

[439](#) (Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands) uses the historic melody.

[440](#) (Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands) uses the new melody.

[444](#) (Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won) has a distinguished Lutheran history.

[445](#) (He’s Risen, He’s Risen) was written by a former president of the LCMS.

[449](#) (This Joyful Eastertide) has become popular in our circles.

[451](#) (See, What a Morning) has a catchy tune that sticks in the memory.

[453](#) (The Tomb is Empty) has repetition at the beginning and the end but still needs to be introduced.



Second Sunday of Easter

April 4, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE
PEACE

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The risen Jesus first greeted his frightened disciples with the words, “Peace be with you.” They still faced opposition, uncertainty, and hardship, but Christ’s presence gave them lasting confidence. The same Savior is with his people today. Through his Word and sacraments, Jesus comes to reassure us that our sins are forgiven and that nothing can separate us from his love. His peace does not depend on calm circumstances but on his completed work of salvation. Even when conflict, worry, or sorrow surrounds us, the living Lord fills believing hearts with the peace and courage that only his presence can give.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Acts 18:1-11 – The promised presence of the living Lord gave peace and courage to the apostle Paul.

1 John 1:1-4 – St. John reminds us that there were witnesses who saw and touched Jesus after he rose from the dead.

John 20:19-31 – The risen Savior offers peace to his disciples.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. People may know the details of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances, but they are less likely to be aware of how the preaching of the risen Christ was received in Corinth. The preacher may tell the story and remind his hearers of Jesus’ special communication with Paul. The reassurance of Jesus’ special communication with us in Word and sacrament is important.

If you are using *Service Builder*, remember to insert the Paschal Greeting (M: Christ is risen! ALL: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!) after the invocation in every service of the Easter season.

Psalm 16

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 16 in services that celebrate the resurrection of the dead.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	452	452	467
HOD	456	456	457
Third/Distr	462	462	468
Closing	464	464	466

[452](#) (The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done) notes that the refrain is to be sung only two times rather than after each verse.

[456](#) (O Sons and Daughters of the King) has the better-known melody.

[457](#) (O Sons and Daughters of the King) has the melody written specifically for the text.

[462](#) (Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain) is one of the oldest hymns in the hymnal (along with 450).

[464](#) (I Am Content! My Jesus Lives Again) would benefit from some leadership by a choir.

[466](#) (Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia) is an African tune written to be sung in parts.

[467](#) (With High Delight Let Us Unite) would benefit from some leadership by a choir.

[468](#) (These Things Did Thomas Count as Real) is harder to sing than it looks.



Third Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The risen Savior came to his disciples with a message of grace. He opened their minds to the Scriptures and sent them to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations. That message is first for us. The Holy Spirit leads us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ's complete forgiveness, won by his death and confirmed by his resurrection. Then Jesus sends us to share that same saving gospel with others. What we have freely received, we freely proclaim.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Acts 3:11-20 – Peter shares an important message about the person the people of Jerusalem asked Pilate to crucify.

1 John 1:5-2:2 – John summarizes the meaningful message we have been called to declare.

*Luke 24:36-49 – The risen Savior calls on us to share the message of repentance and forgiveness.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel Reading is chosen as the sermon text. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that the message of the Scriptures is the same from front to back, all centered on Jesus. The Old Testament is promise, and the New Testament is fulfillment. The message of repentance and forgiveness is for believers on Easter evening, for us today, and for everyone until the end of time.

Psalm 150

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 150 in services that encourage God's people to proclaim his message.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	455	904	460
HOD	459	459	904
Third/Distr	904	461	448
Closing	458	458	458

[448](#) (Now Let the Heavens Be Joyful) is a familiar text set to a singable but unfamiliar tune.

[455](#) (Alleluia! Jesus Lives) is the setting from TLH.

[458](#) (Christ Is Arisen) has a thousand-year pedigree for use at Easter.

[459](#) (Christ the Lord Is Risen Again) is the more traditional hymn version of 458.

[460](#) (Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven) is surprisingly singable.

[461](#) (He Is Arisen! Glorious Word) has a repeat sign that turns it into a single verse.

[904](#) (O Christ, Our True and Only Light) is easy to sing and captures the mission focus.



Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE ***A GOOD SHEPHERD***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. But death could not hold him. By rising from the dead, he lives victoriously forever to shepherd his people with unfailing love and care. The risen Savior protects us from the devil's attacks, restores us when we wander, and carries us through every danger. In his grace, God has given us a living Shepherd who never abandons his flock. With Jesus as our Shepherd, we lack nothing that truly matters.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Acts 20:28-32 – The Good Shepherd asks his undershepherds to keep watch over the flock.

1 John 4:1-6 – St. John encourages us to test all those who claim to have a spiritual message.

*John 10:11-18 – Jesus explains how he is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel reading is chosen as the sermon text. In Year A, the John 10 reading emphasizes the Savior's voice. In Year C, the John 10 reading distinguishes sheep who belong to Jesus and those who do not. In this Year B, the emphasis is on the Good Shepherd's sacrifice for his sheep. He lays down his life for them. But because he has risen from the dead, he continues to serve as our Good Shepherd, and we can rely on his many gifts.

Psalm 23

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 23 in services that honor Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	551	551	625
HOD	552	552	552
Third/Distr	553	553	554
Closing	555	554	793

- [551](#) (Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep) is easy to play and sing, even in parts.
- [552](#) (The King of Love My Shepherd Is) is not easy to sing but is well-known.
- [553](#) (The Lord's My Shepherd) is a familiar Scottish setting.
- [554](#) (The Lord's My Shepherd) is new and should be introduced by a cantor or a choir.
- [555](#) (The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want) has been familiar to Lutherans for at least 80 years.
- [625](#) (Splendor and Honor) is majestic and easy to learn.
- [793](#) (Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me) has a familiar text set to an unfamiliar tune.



Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE ***FRUITS OF FAITH***

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

Jesus' resurrection is the assurance of life to come. It is also the source of new life today. Having conquered sin, death, and the devil, the risen Savior now lives to bless his people. Through his Word and sacraments, he gives the Holy Spirit, who creates and strengthens faith in our hearts. That living faith naturally bears fruit in acts of love, mercy, generosity, and service. We do not produce these fruits by our own strength. They grow because we remain connected to the living Christ. The victorious Savior supplies everything we need for living each day to God's glory.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Acts 4:32-27 – In the early church, as the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ, the living Lord produced the fruits of unity and generosity.

1 John 3:18-24 – John encourages us to demonstrate loving words and actions as fruits of faith.

John 15:1-8 – Jesus is the vine who gives us, his branches, the ability to produce fruits of faith.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. In every believer in every age, the Holy Spirit works his fruits of faith. With the resurrection of Jesus mentioned as the specific gospel preached by the apostles, the fruits in that early Jerusalem congregation included unity and generosity. Individual application opportunities abound. The history of Barnabas in the Scriptures could be highlighted.

[Psalm 63](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 63 in services that emphasize a saving connection to God as the most important aspect of life.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	470	521	732
HOD	469	469	469
Third/Distr	924	924	731
Closing	730	727	920

- [469](#) (Welcome, Happy Morning) should not be played and sung too slowly.
- [470](#) (Like the Golden Sun Ascending) is loved by Scandinavian Lutherans.
- [521](#) (Christ the Eternal Lord) is a new text to a very familiar tune.
- [727](#) (Where Charity and Love Prevail) has a striking text to go with a pretty simple tune.
- [730](#) (Blest Be the Tie That Binds) is easy to play and to sing, even in parts.
- [731](#) (Oh, How Good It Is) is easier than it looks to sing.
- [732](#) (In Unity and Peace) became familiar from CWS and is written in CW21 to make it easier to sing.
- [809](#) (Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled) was introduced in *Christian Worship: Supplement*.
- [892](#) (By All Your Saints Still Striving) verses 1,17,3 to highlight the role of Barnabas in the sermon text.
- [924](#) (Abide, O Dearest Jesus) is easy to play and sing, even in parts.



Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE LOVE

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The empty tomb is a great demonstration of Jesus' love. He willingly suffered and died to pay for our sins, and by rising from the dead he proved that his saving work was complete. The victorious risen Christ now assures us that nothing can separate us from his love. Filled with that confidence, we are moved to love others. We do not love to earn God's favor but because we have already received it through Christ. If we feel our love for one another weakening, we return to the love of Christ for strength.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Acts 9:36-42 – Because Tabitha loved Jesus, she helped the poor in the town of Joppa. Because Jesus loved the people of Joppa, he had Peter raise Tabitha from the dead.

1 John 4:7-11, 19-21 – Since God loved us, we ought to love one another.

John 15:9-17 – Remain in the love of the living Lord in order to love one another.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. The connection between resurrection from the dead and the ability to love is visceral. The miracle of the resurrection gets the attention of unbelievers. Amazing love that does not demand something in return gets the attention of unbelievers. The specific fruit of love for the poor helps distinguish Dorcas/Tabitha this week from Barnabas last week.

[Psalm 89](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 89 in services where we thank God for keeping his promises over long periods of time.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	606	606	539
HOD	557	557	557
Third/Distr	744	893	741
Closing	617	744	771

[539](#) (O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer) needs to be introduced by a cantor or a choir.

[557](#) (Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice) is a Lutheran classic.

[606](#) (Alleluia! Sing to Jesus) plays and sings more easily than you might expect.

[617](#) (Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow) is often sung from memory.

[741](#) (We Have a Gospel to Proclaim) is easy to sing but unfamiliar.

[744](#) (Rise, Shine, You People) became familiar as CW93 Hymn 556.

[771](#) (Lord, Who Left the Highest Heaven) is unfamiliar but easily learned.

[893](#) (For All the Faithful Women) verses 1,12,3 should work well.



Ascension

May 6, 2027

Can be observed on Sunday, May 9, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

(THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASCENSION)

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

After his victory over sin, death, and the devil, the risen Jesus ascended into heaven not to leave his people, but to bless them. From his throne of glory, he continues to pour out gifts for the good of his Church. Among those gifts are ministers of the gospel whom Christ calls to proclaim his Word and equip believers for lives of faithful service. Through their ministry, Jesus himself shepherds, teaches, comforts, and strengthens his people. The ascended Lord lovingly provides everything his Church needs until the day he returns in glory.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Acts 1:1-11 – Before Jesus ascends, he promises to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples.

*Ephesians 4:7-16 – Jesus ascended so that he could give gifts to his people.

Luke 24:44-53 – The risen Savior ascended, and his disciples responded with joyful worship.

Preacher Notes

The Second Reading is chosen as the sermon text. It was also the text for this set of readings three years ago. But the specific language of ascending to give gifts perfectly matches the overall theme of this series. A preacher should talk about the office of the ministry as a gift, not himself.

Service Builder includes an opening dialogue for Ascension. It replaces the confession of sins and “Kyrie.” The rubric calls for it to be followed by a doxological hymn.

Ideally, the festival of Ascension is observed on Thursday. But in some congregations, a Thursday evening service is poorly attended, and the message of Ascension goes unheard. If the local practice is to move the observation of the Ascension to a Sunday, the suggestion is that it replaces the Seventh Sunday of Easter. That places the Festivals of Ascension and Pentecost back-to-back, bringing the festival half of the Church Year to an end.

Psalm 47

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 47 in services that commemorate the Ascension of our Lord Jesus into heaven.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	474	474	473
HOD	472	472	472
Third/Distr	700	475	961
Closing	476	476	549

[472](#) (A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing) is the Ascension classic.

[473](#) (Look, Ye Saints, the Sight is Glorious) has a new tune for a well-known text.

[474](#) (Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise) is easy to play and sing, even in parts.

[475](#) (We Thank You, Jesus, Dearest Friend) will seem somewhat familiar to the average singer.

[476](#) (On Christ's Ascension I Now Build) is a remarkably sturdy text and tune.

[549](#) (Across the Lands) is new but surprisingly easy to learn.

[700](#) (Draw Us to Thee) is a Lutheran standard.

[961](#) (Hail Thee, Festival Day—Ascension) would benefit from being led by a choir.



Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 9, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE PROTECTION

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

By his victorious resurrection, Jesus conquered sin, death, and the devil. By his ascension, he took his rightful place at the Father's right hand, where he rules over all things for the good of his Church. From his throne, the risen and ascended Lord is never distant from his people. He watches over them and limits the power of their enemies. Though the world opposes believers and the devil seeks to destroy their faith, Christ remains their protection and their hope.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

Acts 6:1-9, 7:2a, 51-60 – Christ used the murderous intent of the Sanhedrin to enable the martyr Stephen to overcome this broken world.

1 John 5:1-6 – John explains that everyone born of God has protection and hope.

*John 17:11b-19 – Jesus, our great High Priest, prays that his Father would give us good gifts.

Preacher Notes

The Gospel Reading serves as the recommended sermon text. It's the part of the High Priestly prayer where Jesus asks the Father to protect us from the world and from the devil, with the resulting gifts of unity and joy. At his ascension, Jesus joined the Father to provide these gifts to us.

Psalm 124

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* –

The Church sings Psalm 124 in services that ask God to protect us from the devil and the world.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	465	465	686
HOD	446	446	446
Third/Distr	471	471	471
Closing	597	721	597

[446](#) (Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense) is a Lutheran standard.

[465](#) (Christ the Lord Is Risen Today) is easy to play and sing, even in parts.

[471](#) (Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds) allows you to sing an Easter text to an Ascension tune.

[597](#) (Now Thank We All Our God) is a Lutheran classic that cannot be sung too often.

[686](#) (Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying) is a new hymn that's worth the effort to learn.

[721](#) (What A Friend We Have in Jesus) is familiar and beloved.



Pentecost

May 16, 2027

RISEN TO GIVE

POWER TO OUR WORDS

EXPLANATION OF THE THEME OF THE DAY

The prophet Ezekiel stood before a valley of dry bones, and by God's command he spoke a message of life. The power was not in Ezekiel's words but in the Spirit who worked through them. In the same way, the Holy Spirit gives power to our words today. The risen and ascended victorious Lord Jesus promised to send the Spirit, and he fulfilled that promise in a special way on Pentecost. Through the Spirit, the gospel of Christ's victory over sin and death is proclaimed with power. When we share God's Word, the Spirit uses our words to bring faith, hope, and new life.

READING INTRODUCTIONS *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to the lesson)*

*Ezekiel 37:1-14— The Lord allows Ezekiel to see that the Spirit would give the prophet's words the power to raise the dead to life.

Acts 2:1-21 – The Day of Pentecost fulfills God's promise to pour out his Spirit.

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-11 – Jesus promised to send us the Spirit of truth to give us the courage and power to testify to the world.

Preacher Notes

The First Reading is chosen as the sermon text. The Israelites in exile felt like dry bones, dead and hopeless. Today on our pilgrimage to heaven we can feel like dry bones, dead and hopeless. But the prophet speaks the powerful Word, and the dry bones live. The Spirit who works through Word and sacrament is a gift from a victorious Lord Jesus (*filioque*).

[Psalm 104](#)

Click on the link to help choose which psalter setting will work best in your congregation.

PSALM INTRODUCTION *(to be printed in the worship folder and/or read prior to singing the Psalm)* – The Church sings Psalm 104 in services that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit.

Hymns

	<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Opening	588	596	962
HOD	585	585	585
Third/Distr	596	479	478
Closing	477	477	587

- [477](#) (O Day Full of Grace) is surprisingly appropriate on the Day of Pentecost.
- [478](#) (When God the Spirit Came) is more difficult than it looks but worth the effort.
- [479](#) (God's Holy Spirit Came) has a tune that is being revived and is quite singable.
- [585](#) (Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord) is a Lutheran classic.
- [587](#) (Come Down, O Love Divine) has an elegant text and tune.
- [588](#) (Come, O Come, Life-Giving Spirit) is a Lutheran standard.
- [596](#) (To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray) needs a carefully chosen tempo for this Lutheran classic.
- [962](#) (Hail Thee, Festival Day—Pentecost) benefits from a choir leading the congregation.