**PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK**  
*Psalm 93:5, 2, 1, 3-4*  

Your testimonies are very sure;* 
holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, for ever.*  
Your throne is established from of old;* 
You are from everlasting.*  
The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty;* 
The Lord is clothed with strength.  
Surely the world is established, so that it can not be moved.  
The floods have lifted up their voice;* 
The floods lift up their waves.  
The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,* 
than the mighty waves of the sea.

**BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:**  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**SAY THE APOSTLES’ CREED**  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER**  
Our Father, who art in heaven, 
hallowed be Thy name, 
Thy kingdom come, 
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; 
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; 
and lead us not into temptation, 
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER**  
*Morning*  
I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You.  
For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

*Evening*  
I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**SAY THE VERSE OF THE WEEK**  
*Luke 2:21*  
And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)**

**SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
*TLH 103*  
**To Shepherds as They Watched by Night**  
by Martin Luther

1. To shepherds as they watched by night
   Appeared a host of angels bright:
   Behold the tender Babe, they said,
   In yonder lowly manger laid.

2. At Bethlehem, in David’s town,
   As Micah did of old make known:
   ‘Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,
   Who doth to all salvation bring.

3. Oh, then rejoice that through His Son
   God is with sinners now at one:
   Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
   Your brother is the eternal God.

4. What harm can sin and death then do?
   The true God now abides with you.
   Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,
   Christ is your Brother—ye are safe.
Around the Word Devotions + the week of January 1-7, 2017

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Christ Child in the Temple

St. Luke’s account of Jesus’ early life revolves around the temple and the fulfillment of the ceremonial law. This shows that all the ceremonial laws, particularly the ones governing sacrifice, point us to the incarnation of Christ, and in particular, His crucifixion and death. Already at eight days old, the child Jesus shed his first drops of blood at his circumcision to redeem us from sin and death (Luke 2:21). Because Jesus was born under and fulfilled the Law for us, we are redeemed and made sons of God (Galatians 4:1-7). The readings this week reveal the Christ, who came to save us.

**SUN**

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:21: The Circumcision and Name of Jesus

The Lord commanded circumcision beginning with Abraham and his household in Genesis 17 as a sign of covenant between God and His people. St. Luke highlights the circumcision of Jesus to show how He already began to fulfill the Law for us. The Lord’s name, Jesus, which means “savior,” begins to be fulfilled. This event brings about the first shedding of Christ’s blood for us sinners. As the hymn puts it, “While from His mother’s bosom fed, His precious blood He wills to shed: A foretaste of His death He feels, An earnest of His love reveals.” Lord God, You made Your beloved Son subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins. Amen.

**TUE**

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4:1-7: God’s Son is Born to Make Us God’s Sons

From the time of our conception and birth, we are enslaved under the power of sin and death. But the Son of God was born under the same Law that held us under captivity to fulfill it. Now, we may look to the ceremonial Law and see in it the promise of Christ. We may even look into the moral law (Ten Commandments) and see the righteousness of God, which Christ has also fulfilled for us by actively doing what God commands. Even though we cannot possibly hope to live up to those demands, Christ has covered us in His righteousness in Baptism, making us sons of God and an heir of eternal life. Heavenly Father, grant us confidence to pray to You, even as children approach their dear father. Amen.

**WED**

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-5: The Righteous Branch

Jesus, as true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, is certainly righteous in Himself. But this also applies to Christ’s human nature, too. Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father’s will by actively fulfilling the whole Law of God for us. Additionally, Christ also obeyed the Father’s will by His passive obedience, His suffering in our place. Jesus’ desire to obey the Father in all things shows that He is of one will with the Father. By His life and death, Jesus clothes us with His own righteousness in Holy Baptism. O Lord, remove our sin-tattered robes and clothe us in the perfect righteousness of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that we might stand in the judgment with the righteous. Amen.

**THU**

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:22-32: The Lord Comes to His Temple

Part of the ceremonial law included purification rights for the mother and a sacrifice to be made to redeem a mother’s firstborn son. While the holy family is in the temple with Jesus, Simeon gives a stunning prophecy about the child: that Jesus is the Lord’s salvation in the flesh. Perhaps even more amazing, especially for us, is that this child is the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. Though we are not of the house and line of Abraham, we are blessed by His Offspring, who has shed His blood for us, that we might receive the inheritance of Abraham—the righteousness of faith in Christ Jesus. O Lord, grant that we may behold the salvation accomplished for us in the pure preaching of Your Word. Amen.

**FRI**

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:1-12: The Epiphany of Our Lord

The visit of the Magi, sometimes called the wise men, ends the Christmas season and begins the season of Epiphany, where the flesh and blood of Christ is revealed to the nations as the Son of God. The collect for the day (prayed in part below) speaks of the star leading them to Jesus. However, it is worth noting that God’s Word from Micah is what leads all who wondered about these events to see that the child born in Bethlehem was the one born King of the Jews. Thanks be to God that He still reveals this same Christ to us in His Word today. O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your Only begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence. Amen.

**SAT**

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 111: He has Shown His People the Power of His Works

It is a unique feature of Christianity and the claims made by the Word of God that they are based on historical events. On Sunday, we heard about the historical event of Christ’s blood being shed at His circumcision. On Thursday, we heard about Christ coming to His temple, as Simeon bore witness to these things. Yesterday, we heard about the visit of the Magi, who learned about the place of Christ’s birth from the Prophet Micah. The salvation God accomplished for us was not done in secret or in a hidden, spiritual manner. The Lord’s works are done in the sight of all people, and He caused them to be recorded for us in His holy Word. O Lord, grant that we might see and believe the salvation accomplished for us as we hear it in Your Word. Amen.

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