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 cannot 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 graciously kept me this night; 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.
THEME OF THE WEEK: The Christ-Child in the Temple

The parents of the Christ-child brought Him to the Temple to fulfill the things of the Law. Even right there, as a forty day old infant, Jesus fulfills the things of the Law. As Mary brought two turtledoves to the Temple for her purification, she also brought a Lamb. The Lamb would not be sacrificed that day, but He was already well on His way to the sacrificial altar of the cross. It was this sacrificial Lamb that Anna sang of. It was this infant, Jesus, whom Simeon took up in His arms, finally seeing the Lord's Christ. And it is this Jesus that we receive this very day as well. The fulfillment of the Law, the sacrifice and the priest, the Supper and the host, this is Jesus whom we praise, for He has come to fulfill the Law for us and save us from our sins.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 2:33-40—The Fall and Rising of Many

Jesus is the source of the fall and rising of many. He comes to do the things of salvation that seem so very backwards to the world. In fact, our sinful flesh hates the salvation of our Lord: hates the cross, hates the forgiveness, hates the righteousness of Christ. And yet Jesus came to fulfill the Law that we could not; even if we desperately try and hold onto it. Even as a little baby, He is brought into the Temple as the Lamb of God that will one day be offered up for the sins of the entire world. With the same faith of Simeon and Anna, granted to us by the Holy Spirit, we can come running to the cross, to Jesus, and give thanks to the Lord above for the salvation given to us through Christ. He kills and makes alive. He causes us to fall and then raises us up again. Holy Spirit, grant us the faith of Simeon and Anna. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 121—A Psalm of Ascent

This Psalm was meant to be sung by pilgrims as they first laid their eyes on the hills surrounding Jerusalem. For the Old Testament Israelite, their eyes would be lifted up to those hills and know that God had placed Himself in that city, within the Temple, in order to be with His people and deliver them salvation. We don’t hold Jerusalem in the same reverence as the Israelites did, but in a way we do cast our eyes to the hills in order to see where our help comes. It comes from that holy hill of Golgotha, where God placed Himself on a cross to be with His people and deliver them salvation. What other help could we ever need except the help of the cross? There salvation was won. So we receive it this very day in His Word and Sacraments. Lord, keep us from all evil: keep our life. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** Galatians 4:1-7—Sons of God

The Father sent His Son, born of the flesh just like us, born under the Law just like us, so that He could fulfill what we cannot. Before Christ we were slaves to the Law, but now we have been freed from it. None of this is from ourselves, none of it is of our own merit. Christ has fulfilled the Law and made us, worthless slaves, to be worthy sons and heirs: heirs of all that He has won and accomplished. We are heirs to everything that He has, even now, as all things are placed under His feet. What He has, we have too: even if we don’t experience it in full right now. But that is alright, for while we are still in this Vale of Tears where the Law still has its way with us and crushes us constantly, we can cry out in the Spirit to our Father in heaven and He has promised to hear His little children for the sake of His Son. Abba! Father! Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 2:22-32—Nunc Dimittis

Simeon sung a song that has stood the test of time. We get to sing it as well, after the Service of the Sacrament. It makes sense that we should sing the words that God put on Simeon’s lips as he took the Christ-child up into his arms. For we too, at the altar, have taken up the Christ, not into our arms, but He has placed Himself on our lips, body and blood. And thus, right there, we have seen the salvation of our Lord in bread that is more than bread and wine that is more than wine. We also get to sing this song at funerals and that is just as fitting. As for all of the years in which the departed had received Jesus, they have now gone peacefully from this Vale of Tears to their eternal home with their Savior. It’s a song of salvation. May the church never forget it and never cease to sing it. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 2:9-16—Crowned With Glory and Honor

When we think of Jesus crowned with glory and honor we usually think of Him sitting at the right hand of the Father with all things placed under His feet. And this is true. As we speak, Christ is crowned in the heavens. He is crowned not because of His otherworldly majesty and lordship as Creator, but because of His suffering and death. The Evangelist, Luke, will speak of Him in this way, and so will Paul when talking about the cross. Christ is crowned because He was crucified. He is crowned because He has freed the world, you and me, from our captivity to sin, death, and the devil. He is crowned because He was crowned with thorns that pierced His brow and shed His blood for the forgiveness of all peoples’ sin. If we want to ponder the glory of God, look no further than Christ Jesus on the cross. May I receive the glory of the cross for the salvation of my soul. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 111—The Greatness of the Lord’s Works

The works of creation are amazing. They truly are. May we never forget them and continually meditate on them, but let us not stop there. For a God who only creates is a God that does not save. May we always couple our pondering of Creation with the pondering of Salvation. May the Lord continually make known His great and majestic works: the works of a Law fulfilled when it could never be so: sin forgiv- en when it threatened to plague us forever: Satan’s head crushed through the death of Jesus: death killed through the resurrection of Christ. These are the works of God that bring redemption to an irredeemable people. When we ponder God’s works, let us ponder Christ and His passion, for there we find a work that outdoes Creation. Gracious Savior, bring to light the works of Your hands so that we might be redeemed. Amen.