PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Isaiah 40:20, Psalm 66:1, 17, 19-20

With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth. Alleluia.*

The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob! Alleluia.
Make a joyful shout to God, to all the earth!* Sing out the honor of His name.
I cried to Him with my mouth,* and He was extolled with my tongue.
Certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God, who has not turned a way my prayer, nor His mercy from me!

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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.

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 MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning: 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 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.

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK  TLH 458, LSB 766

Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above

1. Our Father, Thou in heaven above,
Who biddest us to dwell in love,
As brethren of one family,
To cry in every need to Thee,
Teach us no thoughtless word to say,
But from our inmost heart to pray.

2. Thy name be hallowed. Help us, Lord,
In purity to keep Thy Word,
That to the glory of thy name
We walk before Thee free from blame.
Let no false doctrine us pervert;
All poor, deluded souls convert.

3. From evil, Lord, deliver us:
The times and days are perilous.
Redeem us from eternal death,
And when we yield our dying breath,
Console us, grant us calm release,
And take our souls to Thee in peace.

4. Amen, that is, So shall it be.
Confirm our faith and hope in Thee
That we may doubt not, but believe
What here we ask we shall receive.
Thus in Thy name and at Thy word
We say: Amen. Oh, hear us, Lord! Amen.
**THEME OF THE WEEK:** He is Risen to Carry the Prayers of Believers to God

Jesus is alive and so the victory is ours. Jesus is alive and so He sits at the right hand of the Father mediating as our High Priest. Jesus is alive and so He has sent the Holy Spirit to intercede with prayers and groanings too deep for words that our sinful flesh does not know to pray. Jesus is alive and so death is dead, Satan is vanquished, and sins are forgiven. Jesus is alive and so the Father sees us through the lens of His risen Son; sees us perfect and righteous and holy. Jesus is alive and so even though we sit in the “now but not yet” we have everything given to us that our risen Christ has given to Him. Jesus is alive and so we have nothing to fear.

**SCRIPTURE: John 16:23–30—This is High Priest Sort of Stuff**

Jesus is our High Priest. That is what He ascended to 40 days after His resurrection. A High Priest mediates between God and man, grants access to the Father through His office as Priest. That is Jesus. That is what He accomplished on Good Friday, set in place on Easter Sunday, and fulfilled on Ascension Day. This is all for you! You no longer must go through a sinful priest in order to get access to God. You no longer have to question whether or not you are deserving enough for God to listen to or care about you. Jesus gives you all these things. He sets in place the way in which you can have full access to your Heavenly Father through His office as Priest. That is Jesus. That is what He accomplished on Good Friday, set in place on Easter Sunday, and fulfilled on Ascension Day. A High Priest mediates between God and man, grants access to the Father through His office as Priest. That is Jesus. That is what He accomplished on Good Friday, set in place on Easter Sunday, and fulfilled on Ascension Day.

**SCRIPTURE: Psalm 84—A Doorkeeper for God**

Sometimes we feel like singing this Psalm: sometimes. Sometimes we see the gifts given by our Lord to us in the Divine Service and want to express our wonder and gratitude in any way imaginable. Sometimes we delight in our place within the courts of our Lord, the cross that is on our back, knowing that God is our strength and shield, knowing that He withholds nothing that we need. Sometimes we feel like this. Sometimes we don’t. Sometimes desiring to be a doorkeeper in the house of God is difficult, the last thing that we want. It is at these times that we know for sure that God finds a home, even for the sparrows: How much more important am I to Him? He is my Sun and My Shield and bestows on me favor and honor, not sometimes. Always. Hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE: James 1:22–27—The Law of Liberty**

James talks an awful lot about the Law and our works. We might not like that, but maybe the reason that we are so uncomfortable is because we don’t understand the Law and the liberty that Christ grants to us. The perfect Law is perfect freedom and liberty, when fulfilled in Christ. The merits are given to us on the basis of our baptism into the death of Jesus Christ. In Christ we are free to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are free to look on the needs of those around us and to love them by serving them, without any hope of salvation attached to these good works. In Christ we are set free from the Law unto salvation so that we can look to the Law as a good gift to help us serve our neighbor. Holy Spirit, make us doers of the Word by hearing the Word. Amen.

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