

THE CONGREGATION AT PRAYER

By Faith We Are Prepared for Christ's Return

Isaiah 65:17–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11; Matthew 25:1–13

“The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–11). The arrival of the bridegroom will be sudden and unexpected. Therefore you are to be watchful and ready like the five wise virgins, **“for you know neither the day nor the hour”** when the Son of Man returns (Matthew 25:1–13). The lamps are the Word of



Christ. The oil in the lamps is the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word to create and sustain the flame of faith in Christ. The foolish are those who do not give proper attention to the working of the Holy Spirit in baptism, preaching, and the supper, and so their faith does not endure. The wise, however, are those

who diligently attend to these gifts of the Spirit, and who therefore have an abundance of oil. The flame of faith endures to the end. By God's grace they are received into the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth created by the Lord for the joy of His people (Isaiah 65:17–25).

✠ THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR ✠

INVOCATION *(make the sign of the holy cross and say)*

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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 is seated 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.

PSALMODY *(sing or read out loud each day)*

Psalms 149

LEARN BY HEART LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM: Christian Questions with Their Answers

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament.

17. *What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?* **His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.**
18. *Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?* **That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.**
19. *What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?* **First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.**
20. *But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?* **To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.**

These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter, for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter 6: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."

DAILY READINGS

Sunday:	Psalm 144	Job 33	Isaiah 56-57	Revelation 15-16
Monday:	Psalm 145	Job 34	Isaiah 58	Revelation 17
Tuesday:	Psalm 146	Job 35-36	Isaiah 59	Revelation 18
Wednesday:	Psalm 147	Job 37	Isaiah 60	Revelation 19
Thursday:	Psalm 148	Job 38	Isaiah 61-62	Revelation 20
Friday:	Psalm 149	Job 39-40	Isaiah 63-64	Revelation 21:1-22:5
Saturday:	Psalm 150	Job 41-42	Isaiah 65-66	Revelation 22:6-21

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

LSB 516

PRAYERS

The following suggestions are offered as an aid in developing the habit of praying for ourselves and others each week:

Sunday: For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by Word and Sacrament.

Monday: For faith to live in the promise of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

Tuesday: For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.

Wednesday: For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to God's Word; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.

Thursday: For the Church and her pastors; for deacons, teachers, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

Friday: For faithful preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.

Saturday: For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors as they prepare to administer and for people as they prepare to receive Christ's holy gifts.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, send forth Your Son, we pray, to lead home His Bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

O Lord, look down from Heaven. Behold, visit, and relieve Your servants who stand in need of our prayers: **[insert the names of family members, friends, church members, government officials, those in need, etc.]** Look upon them with the eyes of Your mercy. Grant them comfort and sure confidence in You. Defend them from all danger, and keep them in perpetual peace and safety, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.

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.

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.

BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit ✠ be with us all.

Amen.

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT SUNDAY: *The First Sunday of Advent (Ad Te Levavi)*

Jeremiah 23:5–8

Psalm 24

Romans 13:8–14

Matthew 21:1–9

Hymn of the Day

Savior of the Nations, Come

LSB 332