

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

**A BIBLICAL, CONFESSIONAL AND TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION IN THE CHICAGO REGION
COMMITTED TO MINISTERING TO SINNERS
WITH THE FORGIVING PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

FEBRUARY 14, 2021

✠ DIVINE SERVICE ✠

Setting 1



A WELCOME IN JESUS' NAME WELCOME TO OUR CONGREGATION. Today the Church Year marks the festival of the "Transfiguration of our Lord." The Transfiguration is the culmination of the Epiphany season and stands at the threshold of the season of Lent which begins this week with the Ash Wednesday service.

As we look back to the Epiphany Season now ending, we see the many events that have marked the life of Jesus whereby He has revealed that He is true God - His Baptism with the anointing by the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven of the Father, His miracles, and His teaching. Throughout Epiphany the Gospel accounts have pointed us to the divinity of

Christ and to the glory His human nature possessed. As we look forward, we behold the season of Lent.

During Lent we are witnesses as Jesus purposefully moves toward the Mount of Calvary where He suffers and dies for the sins of the whole world. But before we leave this season there is one more event in the life of Jesus we will observe - the event on the Mountain of Transfiguration.

Today we gather to receive from God a glimpse of the glory which He gave to His Son, and which His Son shares with the Church through Word and Sacrament. That glory was manifested in the light that shone at Bethlehem and as the light that shone on the Mountain of Transfiguration.

But the death of the transfigured Christ is God's greatest glory. Nowhere does God's glory shine more brightly than as the light that pierces the darkness of Calvary, where Christ gives himself for us as the sacrifice for our sins. Again, today He gives us His body and blood to eat and to drink that we might share in that glory.

It was *"a hard thing"* that Elisha asked, but by his persistence he was able to see the prophet Elijah being taken *"by a whirlwind into heaven."* Although *"chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them,"* Elisha received Elijah's cloak and a *"double portion"* of his spirit for preaching the Lord's Word (2 Kings 2:9–11). It was a hard thing, too, for Israel to see Moses and come near to him, when *"the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God"* (Ex. 34:29–30). Therefore, after *"he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai,"* Moses *"put a veil over his face"* (Ex. 34:32–33). Only the Word of the Gospel lifts the veil, and *"only through Christ is it taken away"* (2 Cor. 3:14). Thus are we able to behold *"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,"* who is *"the image of God"* (2 Cor. 4:4–6). For the Law and the prophets are all fulfilled in Him. Therefore, *"listen to him,"* and fix your sights on *"Jesus only"* (Mark 9:7–8).

Prayer before Worship

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P	designates the parts of the liturgy spoken or chanted by the pastor
C	designates the parts of the liturgy spoken or chanted by the congregation
✠	designates the parts of the liturgy where the sign of the cross may be made
△	designates a hymn that ends with a Trinitarian stanza; please stand for the final stanza

✠ PREPARATION ✠

HYMN OF INVOCATION

413 O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair



1 O won - drous type! O vi - sion fair
 2 With Mo - ses and E - li - jah high
 3 With shin - ing face and bright ar - ray
 4 And faith - ful hearts are raised on high
 △ 5 O Fa - ther, with the e - ter - nal Son

Of glo - ry that the Church may share,
 The in - car - na - tion Lord holds con - verse high;
 Christ deigns to man - i - fest to - day
 By this great vi - sion's mys - ter - y,
 And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er one,

Which Christ up - on the moun - tain shows,
 And from the cloud the Ho - ly One
 What glo - ry shall be theirs a - bove
 For which in joy - ful strains we raise
 We pray Thee, bring us by Thy grace

Where bright - er than the sun He glows!
 Bears rec - ord to the on - ly Son.
 Who joy in God with per - fect love.
 The voice of prayer, the hymn of praise.
 To see Thy glo - ry face to face.

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INVOCATION

Matthew 28:19-20

The sign of the cross (✠) may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C Amen.



CONFESSION OF SINS

1 John 1:8-9

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C** **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**
- P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**



✠ SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

Introit

Psalm 99:1-5; antiphon, V. 9

The 99th is a psalm of instruction that exhorts the people of Israel to praise their God in Zion – despite the fact that the nations rage against them because they are a special people of God before all others. They suffer much on that account. The psalmist praises Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, who were chief among the people of Israel. However, (as the words declare) he also teaches the people of Israel themselves that they should know that true worship consists not in the sacrifice of many cattle, but rather in knowing God's wonders and giving Him thanks for making them godly and redeeming them from sin.

[Reading the Psalms with Luther, p. 233]



A Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy | mountain;*
for the LORD our God is | holy!

C The LORD reigns; let the peoples | tremble!*
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the | earth quake!

The LORD is great in | Zion;*
he is exalted over all the | peoples.

Let them praise your great and | awesome name!*

Ho- | ly is he!

The King in his might loves | justice.*
You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in
| Jacob.

Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his | footstool!*

Ho- | ly is he!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen..

A Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy | mountain;*
for the LORD our God is | holy!

Kyrie

Mark 10:47

- A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.
- C** (Sung) **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.
- C** (Sung) **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.
- C** (Sung) **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.
- C** (Sung) **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
- C** **(Sung) Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

Luke 2:14; John 1:29

- P** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.
- C** (Sung) **Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father:
We worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God:
You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer.
For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Salutation and Collect of the Day

2 Timothy 4:22

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** (Sung) **And also with you.**
- P** Let us pray.

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C** **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

2 Kings 2:1-12

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha



were on their way from Gilgal. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." ⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the

LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." ¹⁰ And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." ¹¹ And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8

A Praise the LORD, all | nations!*
Extol him, all | peoples!
For great is his steadfast | love toward us,*
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for- | ever.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due his name;*
bring an offering, and come in- | to his courts!



Epistle

2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end.

^{4:1}Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ²But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia and Verse (Sung)

John 6:68

C Alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Mark 9:2-9

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the ninth chapter.

C (sung) **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. ⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C (sung) **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

Sit

The Body of Our Lord - (Sung to the Tune “*What is the World to Me*” - #730

**The Body of our Lord In His Transfiguration
Shone brightly as the sun In full illumination.
In nature one with God, The Son partakes in love
Of human flesh that we Partake of God above.**

**The prophets had foretold His coming Incarnation:
The Word would make our flesh His only habitation.
Now what their mouths foretold Elijah, Moses see—
The Son of God made man That men God’s sons might be.**

**God’s glory in a cloud Once filled the Tent of Meeting;
The God enshrined therein All Israel was entreating.
But now the Father’s cloud Has filled a human tent—
His own beloved Son, The Glory whom He sent.**

**The Body of God’s Son, Transfigured on the mountain,
Now clothes the sons of God, Adopted in the Fountain.
When earth’s dark grave we leave Transfigured we shall be;
Christ’s glory we shall share Through all eternity.**

Sermon

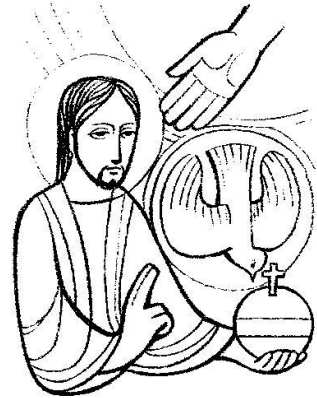
Stand



Nicene Creed

**☩ I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came
down from heaven and was incarnate by the
Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made
man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and
was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**



**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 2:1-4

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

After the final petition:

... one God, now and forever.
Amen.

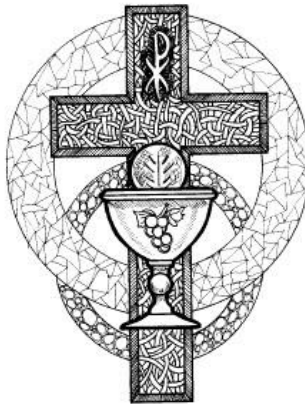
Offering (You may place your offering in the plates in the back of the nave as you are leaving.)

Offertory

Psalm 116:12-13, 17-19

C (Sung) **What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?**
I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠



Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; Colossians 3:1; Psalm 136

P The Lord be with you.

C (Sung) **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C (Sung) **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C (Sung) **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P It is truly good, right, and salutary..... evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9

C (Sung) **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He ☩ who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **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.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

*Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

John 20:19

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C (Sung) **Amen.**

Agnus Dei (Sung)

John 1:19

- C** **Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Sit

Dear Visitors and Friends: THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD reminds us that there is so much more to life than meets our eyes. The glory of the Lord on the Holy mountain gives testimony to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven. The **Lord's Supper** is also a reality which goes far beyond our human reason and physical sight. Herein our glorious King comes to us with the very body and blood with which He purchased our redemption.

The congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have agreed to follow the Biblical and historical practice of **"Closed Communion."** If you desire to receive the Lord's Supper and are not a communicant member of Divine Shepherd or a sister congregation in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod we respectfully ask that you not commune this morning. Rather, we would invite you to speak with Pastor Zimmer about Holy Communion and about becoming a communicant member of this congregation. It is the sincere prayer of this congregation that our careful practice of the administration of the Lord's Supper will not be a hindrance to our fellowship with you but instead that it would lead you to appreciate the high regard we have for Christ and His Word concerning this precious gift. **Thank you for your understanding.**

DISTRIBUTION

hymns are sung as needed

414 'Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here



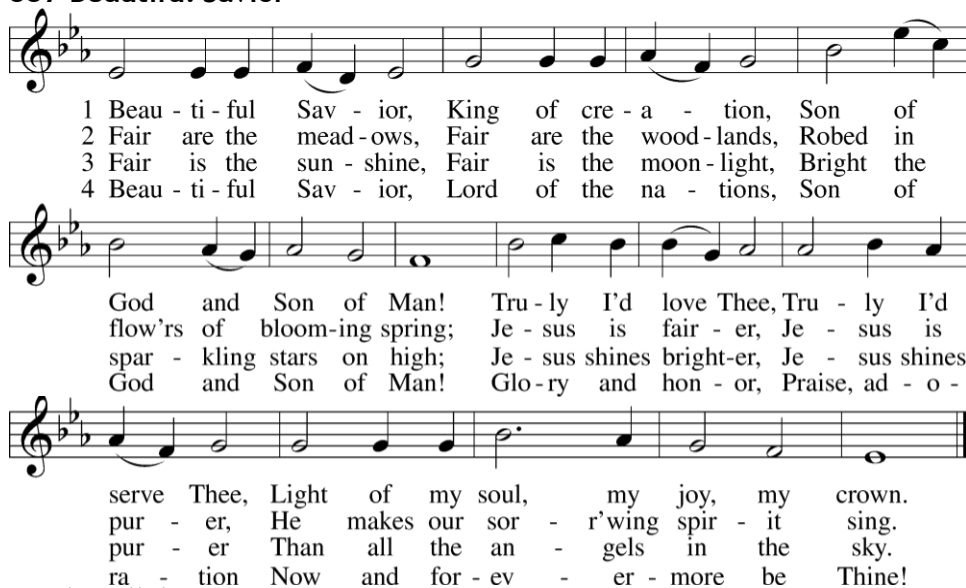
1 'Tis good, Lord, to be here! Thy
 2 'Tis good, Lord, to be here, Thy
 3 Ful - fill - er of the past And
 4 Be - fore we taste of death, We
 5 'Tis good, Lord, to be here! Yet

glo - ry fills the night; Thy face and gar - ments,
 beau - ty to be - hold Where Mo - ses and E -
 hope of things to be, We hail Thy bod - y
 see Thy king - dom come; We long to hold the
 we may not re - main; But since Thou bidst us

like the sun, Shine with un - bor - rowed light.
 li - jah stand, Thy mes - sen - gers of old.
 glo - ri - fied And our re - demp - tion see.
 vi - sion bright And make this hill our home.
 leave the mount, Come with us to the plain.

Tune and text: Public domain

537 Beautiful Savior



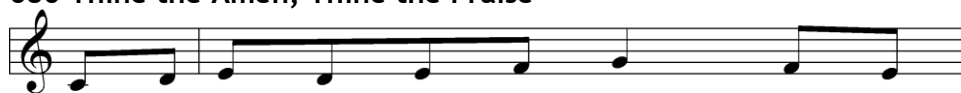
1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion, Son of
 2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair are the wood - lands, Robed in
 3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair is the moon - light, Bright the
 4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions, Son of

God and Son of Man! Tru - ly I'd love Thee, Tru - ly I'd
 flow'rs of bloom - ing spring; Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is
 spar - kling stars on high; Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines
 God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or, Praise, ad - o -

serve Thee, Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
 pur - er, He makes our sor - r'wing spir - it sing.
 pur - er Than all the an - gels in the sky.
 ra - tion Now and for - ev - er - more be Thine!

Tune and text: Public domain

680 Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise



1 Thine the a - men Thine the praise Al - le -
 2 Thine the life e - ter - nal - ly Thine the
 3 Thine the tru - ly Thine the yes Thine the
 4 Thine the king - dom Thine the prize Thine the
 5 Thine the glo - ry in the night No more



lu - ias an - gels raise Thine the ev - er - last - ing head
 prom - ise let there be Thine the vi - sion Thine the tree
 ta - ble we the guest Thine the mer - cy all from Thee
 won - der full sur - prise Thine the ban - quet then the praise
 dy - ing on - ly light Thine the riv - er Thine the tree



Thine the break - ing of the bread Thine the glo - ry Thine the
 All the earth on bend - ed knee Gone the nail - ing gone the
 Thine the glo - ry yet to be Then the ring - ing and the
 Then the jus - tice of Thy ways Thine the glo - ry Thine the
 Then the Lamb e - ter - nal - ly Then the ho - ly ho - ly



sto - ry Thine the har - vest then the cup Thine the
 rail - ing Gone the plead - ing gone the cry Gone the
 sing - ing Then the end of all the war Thine the
 sto - ry Then the wel - come to the least Then the
 ho - ly Cel - e - bra - tion ju - bi - lee Thine the



vine-yard then the cup is lift - ed up lift - ed up.
 sigh - ing gone the dy - ing what was loss lift - ed high.
 liv - ing Thine the lov - ing ev - er - more ev - er - more.
 won - der all in - creas - ing at Thy feast at Thy feast.
 splen - dor Thine the bright - ness on - ly Thee on - ly Thee.

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DISMISSAL

- P** The eating and drinking of your Savior's sacred body and blood strengthen and preserve you in the one true Christian faith unto life everlasting. Depart in the joy of His Peace.
- C** **Amen.**

Thank the Lord (Sung)

- C** **Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev'ryone what He has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear His name.
He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Post-Communion Collect

- A** Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
- C** **(Sung) Amen.**



CLOSING HYMN

417 Alleluia, Song of Gladness



1 Al - le - lu - ia, song of glad - ness, Voice of joy that
2 Al - le - lu - ia, thou re - sound - est, True Je - ru - sa -
3 Al - le - lu - ia can - not al - ways Be our song while
4 There - fore in our hymns we pray Thee, Grant us, bless - ed



can - not die; Al - le - lu - ia is the an - them
lem and free; Al - le - lu - ia, joy - ful moth - er,
here be - low; Al - le - lu - ia, our trans - gres - sions
Trin - i - ty, At the last to keep Thine Eas - ter



Ev - er raised by choirs on high; In the house of
All thy chil - dren sing with thee, But by Bab - y -
Make us for a while for - go; For the sol - emn
With Thy faith - ful saints on high; There to Thee for -



God a - bid - ing Thus they sing e - ter - nal - ly.
lon's sad wa - ters Mourn - ing ex - iles now are we.
time is com - ing When our tears for sin must flow.
ev - er sing - ing Al - le - lu - ia joy - ful - ly.

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Acknowledgments

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✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

The Lutheran Church retains ceremonies that underscore and support the Gospel—the good news that we are saved by *grace alone* through *faith alone* in *Christ alone*. Such laudable ceremonies include making the sign of the cross in remembrance of Holy Baptism. Those places in the service where Lutherans have traditionally made the sign of the cross are marked with a cross (✠).



Christ himself warned most gravely against changing his words when, for instance, he says in Matthew 5 [:19], “Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” Our Father in heaven himself has testified in a glorious voice, “This is my beloved son; listen to him” [Mark 9:7]. And in Psalm 2 [:11–12], “Cherish the Lord lest he be angry.” And in John 13 we read, “He who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me” [John 7:16], etc. O God in heaven, even though we accept Christ’s word in all fear and honor, we are still far from acting in accordance with it, as St. Peter says, “The righteous man is scarcely saved” [1 Pet. 4:18]. What then is to become of those who despise his word and alter it to suit themselves? Worst of all, what is to become of those who murder and persecute others just for not despising both Christ and his word? It is hideous and awful to contemplate.

✠ Martin Luther ✠

Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God. We cannot offer anything to God unless we have first been reconciled and reborn. The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness. About this worship Christ speaks in John 6:40, “This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.” And the Father says (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7), “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

The Book of Concord, Apology, Article IV - Justification

