

Holy Cross Day



September 14, 2025

***Salem Lutheran Church
Farrar, Missouri***

Church Office: 573-824-5728

E-Mail: salemlutheran@hotmail.com

Rev. John Hellwege, Pastor

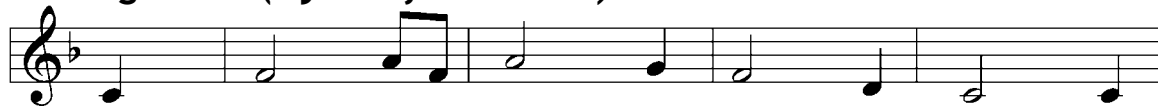
Cell: 314-808-5499

E-Mail: pastorhellwege@gmail.com

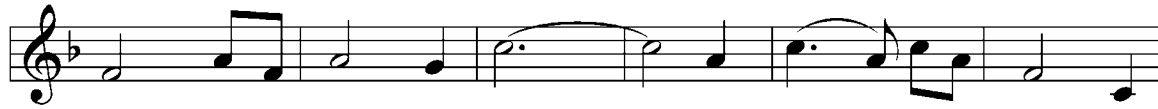
Website: salemlutheran8.wixsite.com/SalemandZion

744 Amazing Grace (*Hymn of the Week*)

sts. 1–5



1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound— That
 2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but
 Word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and
 have al - read - y come; His grace has brought me
 mor - tal life shall cease, A - maz - ing grace shall
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to



now am found, Was blind but now I see!
 por - tion be As long as life en - dures.
 safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.
 then pre - vail In heav - en's joy and peace.
 sing God's praise Than when we'd first be - gun.

Text (sts. 1–4): John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.; (st. 5): A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790, Richmond
 Tune: Columbian Harmony, 1829, Cincinnati
 Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

Opening Versicles

- P** This is the day which the Lord has made;
- C** let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- P** From the rising of the sun to its setting,
- C** the name of the Lord is to be praised.
- P** Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere;
- C** I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- P** Make me to know Your ways, O Lord.
- C** Teach me Your paths.
- P** Sanctify us in Your truth.
- C** Your Word is truth.

- P** From the rising of the sun to its setting,
- C** the name of the Lord is to be praised.

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

Old Testament Canticle

LSB 261

Refrain

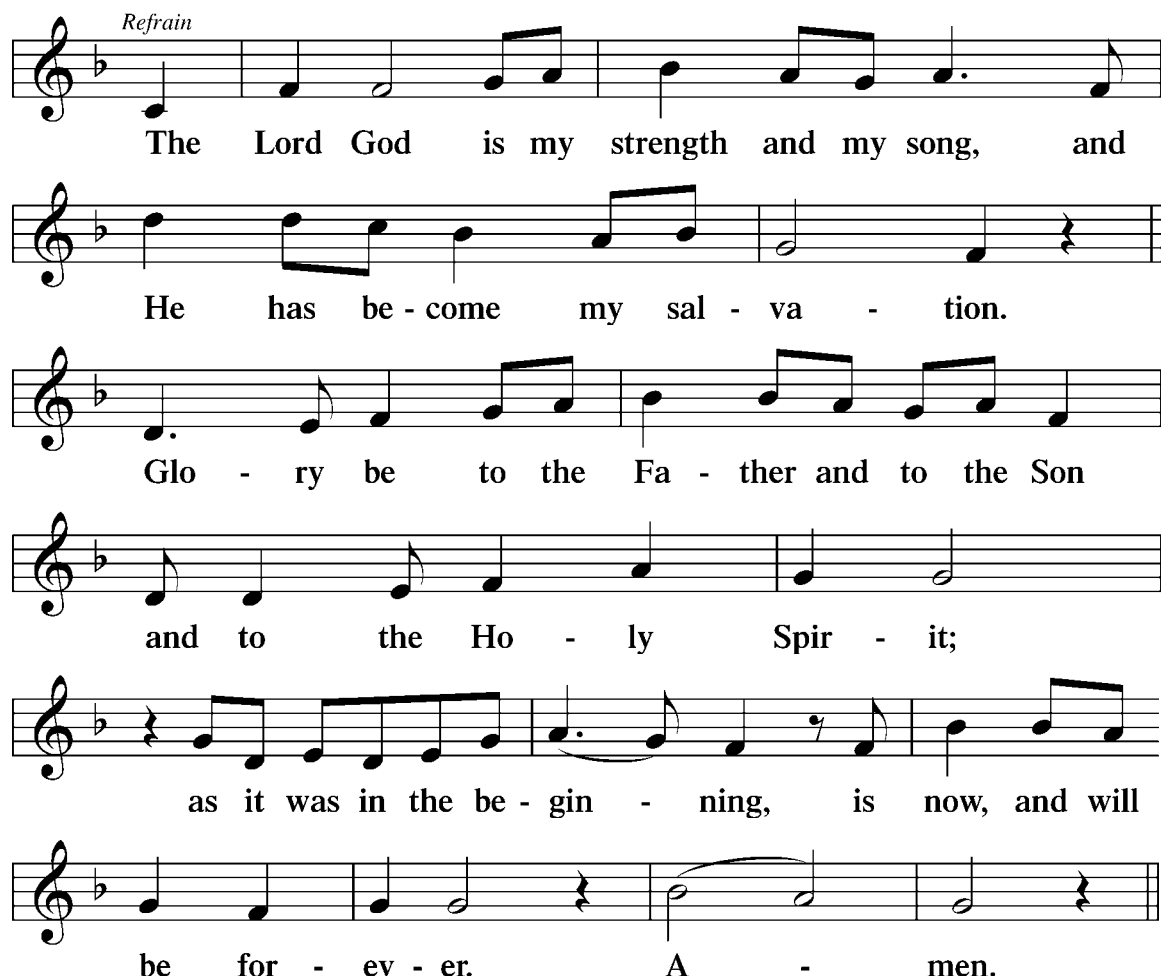


C The Lord God is my strength and my song, and
He has be - come my sal - va - tion.
With joy will you draw wa - ter from the
wells of sal - va - tion. And you will say in that
day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call up - on His name,
make known His deeds a - mong the peo - ples, pro -
claim that His name is ex - alt - ed."
Refrain
The Lord God is my strength and my song, and
He has be - come my sal - va - tion.
Sing prais - es to the Lord, for He has done
glo - rious - ly; let this be made known in all the



earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O in -
 hab - i - tants of Zi - on, for great in your midst is the
 Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

Refrain



The Lord God is my strength and my song, and
 He has be - come my sal - va - tion.
 Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther and to the Son
 and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;
 as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will
 be for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



The Lord God is my strength and my song, and
 He has be - come my sal - va - tion.

Readings From Holy Scripture

Old Testament

Numbers 21:4–9

P A reading from Numbers, the twenty-first chapter.

⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18–25

¹⁸The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Holy Gospel

John 12:20–33

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. ²⁷“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Responsory

P Forever, O Lord, Your Word is firmly set in the heavens.

C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.

P Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.

C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.

P Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.

Sit

763 When Peace, like a River



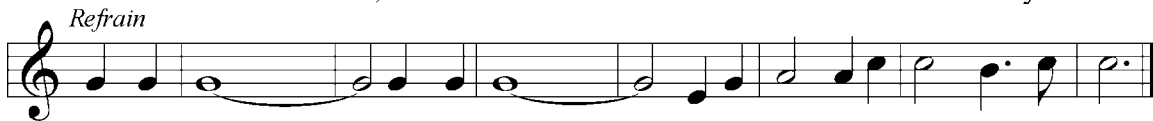
1 When peace, like a riv - er, at - tend - eth my way; When
2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, Let
3 He lives— oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought; My
4 And, Lord, haste the day when our faith shall be sight, The



sor - rows, like sea bil - lows, roll; What - ev - er my lot, Thou hast
this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, That Christ hath re - gard - ed my
sin, not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to His cross, and I
clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trum - pet shall sound and the



taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.
help - less es - tate And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
Lord shall de - scend; E - ven so it is well with my soul.



It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Text: Horatio G. Spafford, 1828–88, alt.
Tune: Philip P. Bliss, 1838–76
Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

Responsive Reading from the Catechism: The Ten Commandments

Pages 321-322

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

The Close of the Commandments

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exodus 20:5–6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

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.**

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.**

Sit

938 In Peace and Joy I Now Depart



1 In peace and joy I now de-part Since God so wills it.
2 Christ Je - sus brought this gift to me, My faith - ful Sav - ior,
3 You sent the peo - ple of the earth Their great sal - va - tion;
4 Christ is the hope and sav-ing light Of those in blind - ness;



Se - rene and con - fi - dent my heart; Still - ness fills it.
Whom You have made my eyes to see By Your fa - vor.
Your in - vi - ta - tion sum - mons forth Ev - 'ry na - tion
He guides and com-forts those in night By His kind - ness.



For the Lord has prom-ised me That death is but a slum - ber.
Now I know He is my life, My friend when I am dy - ing.
By Your ho - ly, pre - cious Word, In ev - 'ry place re - sound-ing.
For Your peo - ple Is - ra - el In Him find joy and glo - ry.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; (st. 1): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913-2001, alt.; (sts. 2-4): tr. Christian Worship, 1993, alt.
Tune: Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn, 1524, Wittenberg, ed. Johann Walter
Text (st. 1): © 1979 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003338
Text (sts. 2-4) and tune: Public domain

Sermon “Nunc Dimittis” Luke 2:29-32

For obvious reasons, death has taken the forefront of our cultural dialog. Since Aug 22 we have witnessed the shooting at Annunciation Catholic School, the stabbing of Iryna Zarutska on a tram in Charolette, NC and now the assassination of Charlie Kirk. At the same time, we have witnessed the Federal Government taking over law enforcement in Washington, DC, because of violent crime. This has led to questions about things like violence, political violence and transgenderism.

But there is also the question of death. How are we to face death? One good thing that I have heard following the shooting of Charlie Kirk is that some have pointed to his faith in Christ and the promise of eternal life that Charlie held to.

All of this talk about death should also make us ask ourselves: “Am I ready to die?” What will it take for you to be ready to die? Now, obviously, no-one wants to die. But what is it that will really make you ready to die?

Many put it in terms of having a bucket list, a list of things we want to do before we die. The problem is that we tend to be selfish, thinking about what we want to do or accomplish. As human beings we tend to want to do our own things and go our own ways. As a result, the most important aspect to the question “are you ready to die?” is not what we want to do first; rather it is, “are you ready for what comes after your death?”

In Heb. 9:27 we are told “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” As much as people tend to fear death, the real issue is what comes after death. If you face death, at any age or stage of life, with guilt before God, you are in trouble! To go to the judgment with guilt before God will lead to eternal damnation!

It doesn't matter how “big” or “small” our guilt is. God expects, God demands perfection. The reason is that any sin is a rebellion against Him. Anything you do wrong is, in essence, saying to God: “I don't want to follow your ways.” It's really a declaration that we think we know better than God what's right. This means that any and all guilt condemns us.

Therefore, if we are going to be ready to face death, and the judgment, we need grace.

To truly be ready to die, we need the assurance that God loves and forgives us. We need to know that we are not going to face God's eternal wrath, but can have the promise of His mercy.

In Luke 2, we meet a man named Simeon. We are told he was “Righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.” In other words, he was waiting for God to bring the promised salvation. Simeon was even given a unique promise from God, for “it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.”

So, Simeon waited for the One who would bring salvation. We don't know how long, but he waited. Then, when Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the Temple, God's promise to Simeon was fulfilled.

When he finally saw and held Jesus, Simeon, filled with joy praised God saying: “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

Simeon was declaring that He could die in peace, for by depart he meant to leave this life. He could die in peace, because he saw the savior. Simeon could die in peace, for he had held in his hands the One who would die to redeem all people.

We also know that the infant, Jesus, would grow up to suffer and die on the cross and rise again on the third day. He would do this to take away the wall that divides sinful human beings from God. Jesus took our guilt away from us, so we can now live in God's presence forever.

Jesus even takes away the barriers between people. As Simeon notes that Jesus is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." Therefore, the promise of Jesus' forgiveness is for all people of all colors, cultures and nations. All who receive Christ receive His love and grace. Here and here alone do we find the path forward to unity in our terribly fractured world!

What a wonderful experience for Simeon! Imagine, seeing Jesus with your own eyes! What joy to hold Him close.

Dear friends, this is what we also get to do in the Lord's Supper. When Jesus comes to us here, He comes in His very body and blood. He comes in the bread and the wine. While they still look like, taste like, and in fact are bread and wine, they are more than that. There we also receive the very body and blood of Jesus.

When you look at that wafer of bread, Jesus is really there!

When you look at that chalice of wine, Jesus is really there!

So, you too get a chance to see Jesus in His body and blood! You too get to hold Him close, even closer than Simeon, as He comes into you! And because of this, you receive the salvation Jesus came to bring.

Therefore, you, along with Simeon can in fact die in peace! This is the reason we sing Simeon's song, known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, after the Lord's Supper. As you might guess, *Nunc Dimittis* are just the first words of it in Latin, meaning "Let us now depart."

When we sing this, we need to remember Simeon's situation. He wasn't talking about departing the Temple to go home, he was talking about departing from this life. He could die in peace.

We leave church quite ready to die in peace. We are ready to die in peace with God, because we too have beheld Jesus.

Think of the words of the *Nunc Dimittis*: “O Lord, now let Your servant Depart in heavenly peace, for I have seen the glory of your redeeming grace: a light to lead the Gentiles unto Your holy hill, the glory of Your people, Your chosen Israel.”

We can depart from here and be ready to die in peace, because of the promises of God’s Word. We have seen His salvation!

We then follow Simeon’s song with a doxology, a praise of the Triune God. Some people bow during part of this, honoring the name of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Bowing is optional. But as we sing, we honor and praise God for His grace that He gives to us, even in the Sacrament. We close this by praising God, Father Son and Holy Spirit for His grace and mercy.

But, if the Sacrament is about our receiving Jesus, and Simeon first sang this when he held the infant Jesus, why do we sing a doxology to the three persons of the Trinity? The reason is that our salvation, like all things, is done by the whole of God. In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter describes our salvation in this way: it is “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.” This is why we immediately go from one person of the Trinity to the whole of the Godhead; because all three Persons are working for our salvation.

So, are you ready to die? If you have held and seen Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine, then you are.

Now that you have received Christ, you can depart in peace. You can leave this building to go back to life, knowing that you have peace with God. But even more than that, you can leave this life, knowing that because of God’s salvation in Christ, you are forgiven and have God’s love now and for all eternity. There is no reason for us to fear death. We have beheld and received God’s long-promised salvation.

Depart in peace.

Offering

Prayer

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For . . . *[additional bids for prayer may be inserted here]* . . . let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Collect of the Day

- P** Merciful God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, was lifted high upon the cross that He might bear the sins of the world and draw all people to Himself. Grant that we who glory in His death for our redemption may faithfully heed His call to bear the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Collect for the Word

- P** 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 take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Morning Prayer

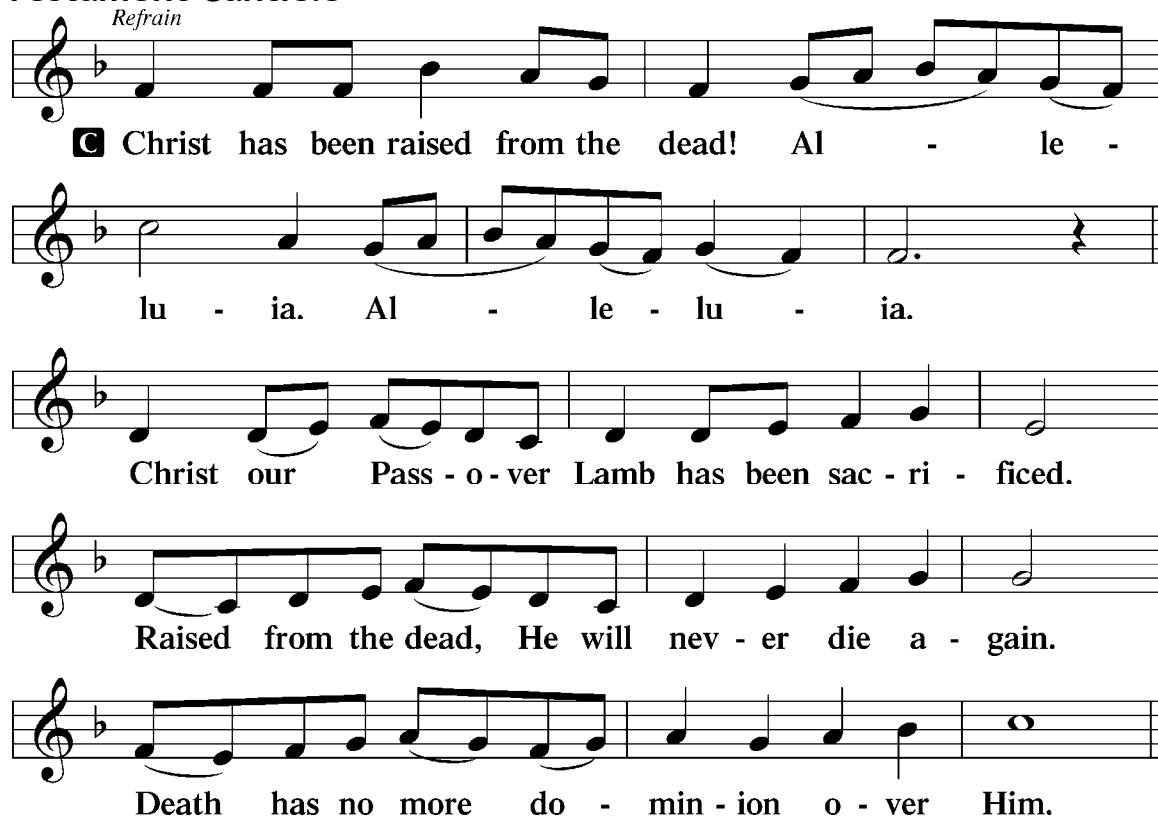
C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul,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

Amen.

New Testament Canticale

LSB 266

Refrain



C Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.
Christ our Pass - o - ver Lamb has been sac - ri - ficed.
Raised from the dead, He will nev - er die a - gain.
Death has no more do - min - ion o - ver Him.

Refrain

Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -

lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Dy - ing, Christ dies to sin, once for all. Liv - ing, He

lives to God. Count your - selves as dead to

sin and a - live to God in Christ Je - sus, our Lord.

Refrain

Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -

lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Blessing

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

937 Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace

1 Lord, bid Your ser - vant go in peace,
2 This is the Sav - ior of the world,
△ 3 With saints of old, with saints to come,
Your word is now ful - filled. These eyes have seen sal -
The Gen - tiles' prom - ised light, God's glo - ry dwell - ing
To You we lift our voice; To Fa - ther, Son, and
va - tion's dawn, This child so long fore - told.
in our midst, The joy of Is - ra - el.
Spir - it blest Be hon - or, love, and praise.

Text (sts. 1-2): James Quinn, 1919-2010; (st. 3): Henry V. Gerike, 1948-2025

Tune: American

Text (sts. 1-2): © 1969, 1989 OCP Publications; (st. 3): © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003338

Tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Service of Prayer and Preaching from Lutheran Service Book

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard

Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2025 Concordia Publishing House.