

THE INVOCATION

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

HYMN 305

1
Today Thy mercy calls us
To wash away our sin,
However great our trespass,
Whatever we have been;
However long from mercy
Our hearts have turned away,
The precious blood can cleanse us
And make us white today.

2
Today Thy gate is open,
And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome,
And pardon for their sin;
The past shall be forgotten,
A present joy be given,
A future grace be promised,
A glorious crown in heaven.

3
Today our Father calls us,
His Holy Spirit waits.
His blessed angels gather
Around the heavenly gates;
No question will be asked us
How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered,
It is our Father's home.

4
O all-embracing mercy!
O ever-open door!
What will we do without Thee
When heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us,
To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open,
One ear will hear our prayer.

THE CONFESSION

Dear friends in Christ: Let us draw near to God our Father with a true heart to confess our sins, and ask Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

He made heaven and earth.

I said, I will confess my sins to the Lord.

Then He forgave the guilt of my sin.

Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we confess to You that by nature we are sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy and plead for Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most merciful God, You have given Your only Son to die for us: Have mercy on us, and for His sake grant us forgiveness of all our sins. By Your Holy Spirit increase our knowledge of You and Your will, and make us obedient to Your Word, so that by Your grace we may come to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us, and has given His only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in His name He has given the right to become the children of God, and has given them His Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptised will be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all. Amen.

THE INTROIT **Psalm 1**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of wicked people, stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers.

Rather, his delight is in the Law of the LORD, and on His Law he meditates day and night.

He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which produces its fruit in its season, and has leaves that do not wither; and whatever he does will prosper.

The ungodly are not like that, but are like the chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore, wicked people will not stand up in the judgment, or sinners in the assembly of righteous people.

For the LORD knows the way of righteous people, but the way of wicked people will perish.

THE GLORY TO THE FATHER

Glory to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be for evermore. Amen.

THE LORD HAVE MERCY

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

THE GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace, among men with whom He is pleased. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God, the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us. For You alone are holy, You alone are Lord, You alone, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people, that we, who justly suffer the consequence of our sin, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness, to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FIRST READING

The First Reading is written in chapter ____ of ____, beginning at verse _____.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

5 This is what the LORD has said: “Cursed is the man who trusts in a human being, who makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD! 6 He will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see when anything good comes. He will live in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salty land where no one lives. 7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD! The LORD will be his confidence. 8 He will be like a tree planted beside water, which spreads out its roots beside a stream. He will not be afraid when the hot season comes, but his leaves will be green. He will not be anxious in a year of drought or stop producing fruit.”

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE SECOND READING

The Second Reading is written in chapter ____ of ____, beginning at verse _____.

1 Corinthians 15:(1-11) 12-20

1 My fellow-Christians, I am telling you the Good News that I told you, which you also received and on which you also stand. 2 You are also saved by it if you cling to the Word that I have preached to you, unless you have become believers in vain. 3 For I delivered to you, first, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins as the Scriptures said He would, 4 and that He was buried and that He was raised again on the third day as the Scriptures said He would, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, He appeared to more than five hundred Christians at the same time, most of whom are still living, but some have fallen asleep. 7 Then He appeared to James and then to all the apostles, 8 and, last of all, He appeared to me also, as to someone abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not deserve to be called an apostle, because I had been persecuting the church of God. 10 However, by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been without effect; but I have worked harder than all the others have — yet not I, but the grace of God, which has been with me. 11 Now, whether I have done it or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you have believed.

12 If it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised either. 14 If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless, and your faith is also useless. 15 We are also found to be false witnesses of God, because we have testified about God that He has raised Christ; but He did not raise Him if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For, if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins. 18 Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all other people. 20 However, now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

THE GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel is written in the ___ chapter of the Gospel according to ____, beginning at verse ____.

Glory be to You, O Lord.

Luke 6:17-26

17 Jesus went down with them and stood on a level place with a large crowd of His disciples and a great many people from all over Judea, Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. 18 They had come to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled by unclean spirits were made well. 19 All the people were trying to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.

20 Jesus looked at His disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor! For yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now! For you will be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who are weeping now! For you will laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For, you see, your reward is great in heaven. For that is how their fathers used to treat the prophets.

24 “However, how terrible for you who are rich! For you have already received your comfort.

25 “How terrible for you who are well fed now! For you will be hungry.
“How terrible for you who are laughing now! For you will mourn and weep.
26 “How terrible for you when all people speak well of you! For that is how their
fathers used to treat the false prophets.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to You, O Christ.**

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, dead and 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.

HYMN 308

1
“Come unto Me, ye weary,
And I will give you rest.”
O blessed voice of Jesus,
Which comes to hearts oppressed.
It tells of benediction,
Of pardon, grace, and peace,
Of joy that has no ending,
Of love which cannot cease.

2
“Come unto Me, ye wanderers,
And I will give you light.”
O loving voice of Jesus,
Which comes to cheer the night.
Our hearts were filled with sadness,
And we had lost our way;
But He has brought us gladness
And songs at break of day.

3
“Come unto Me, ye fainting,
And I will give you life.”
O peaceful voice of Jesus,
Which comes to end our strife.
The foe is stern and eager,
The fight is fierce and long;
But Thou hast made us mighty
And stronger than the strong.

4
“And whosoever cometh
I will not cast him out.”
O welcome voice of Jesus,
Which drives away our doubt;
Which calls us, very sinners,
Unworthy though we be
Of love so free and boundless,
To come, dear Lord, to Thee.

TRUST IN THE LORD

Sermon for the 6th Sunday after the Epiphany 2025

Luke 6:17-26

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel read before, Luke 6:17-26:
Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.
Dear friends in Christ,

I suppose that if you had some nagging illness that was impeding you, especially if it was an illness that no one else could help you with, and you heard of someone who could cure you, you would rush to see that person.

So it was with Jesus. Many people were drawn to Him because of the healing miracles He performed. In today's Gospel, we see "**a great many people from all over Judea, Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon**" flocking out to be "**healed of their diseases.**" Others "**who were troubled by unclean spirits were made well.**" It's a safe bet that many others who were perfectly healthy came also just to see these wondrous displays of power. Humans are always attracted to the spectacular, and it's good that so many were present to see Jesus perform these miracles because it confirmed that this man Jesus was far more than just any man—He was indeed the promised Saviour, God in flesh, come in mercy and power to rescue His people.

But it's precisely because we are drawn to the spectacular that we, like so many of those who flocked to Jesus back then, tend to forget that the healing miracles of Jesus were only a sideline to His main ministry, which was *teaching*. Jesus was primarily a religious teacher. He revealed, taught, and explained the Word of God. As our Prophet, Jesus proclaimed the Word of God. That's what the Apostle Peter reminds us when he writes, "*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil*" (Acts 10:38). It's vital that we put the emphasis there, because all of the people whom Jesus healed became sick again, or they were injured in accidents, or they went blind, deaf, and even lame. Eventually, they all died—even the ones to whom, at one point, He had raised from the dead. But the people He taught, those who held fast to His words and believed in Him, they live even though they died, and their bodies now long since returned to dust will rise again on the Last Day and live forever in the perfect Paradise of the New Creation because of the things He taught them.

So which is more important? The fact that Jesus healed a lot of people in time or that He taught us the Words of eternal life? The answer is obvious. With that in mind, we turn our full attention to the *content* of what Jesus taught—for in that is our life and salvation.

Before us today are the opening verses of what is known as the Sermon on the Plain in Luke's Gospel. In these verses, we hear clear echoes of the Beatitudes from the much better-known Sermon on the Mount as it is recorded in Matthew's Gospel, but besides being shorter, there are two other significant differences. The first is that Matthew narrows the statements to spiritual concerns, whereas Luke is much broader. So where Matthew specifies, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*" in Luke, it's just "**Blessed are you who are poor!**" And where Matthew has "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,*" in Luke, it's simply "**Blessed are you who are hungry now!**" Luke does not exclude spiritual matters but reminds us that Jesus is also concerned about physical things, our complete well-being.

And there is a connection. Those who are poor financially have to look to charity to meet their needs. They know they depend on the kindness and generosity of others. So it's easier for them to see spiritually this way, too, that the kingdom of God is theirs only as a free gift of God's grace. Likewise with hunger: if you have to line up at the soup kitchen to get something to satisfy the empty feeling in your stomach, it's easier for you to understand the same thing applies to your standing before the Lord, that when it comes to righteousness, I've got nothing. It can only be given to me by the Lord. I look to Him to fill me up.

It's all about trust. To whom do we look for all our needs? Shall we look to ourselves, to our powers and abilities, or shall we look to the Lord? Do we trust Him completely? This is basic First Commandment stuff. As it is written in the catechism, "*What is the First Commandment? You shall have no other gods. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.*" So, if we fear something more than we do the Lord, then that thing is our god. If we love something more than we do the Lord, that thing is our god. And the one thing that gets us the worst is if we trust something more than we do the Lord, then that thing is our god. And what are we most likely to trust in apart from the Lord? *Ourselves*. We make ourselves our own god, which is a pretty poor choice considering that there's an infinitely better alternative. Human beings make bad gods. Only the Lord will do; He doesn't care for competition.

That's why, besides the blessings Jesus pronounces in the Sermon on the Plain, He also declares the woes on the rich, the full, and the laughing. This is the other big departure from the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. When Jesus says, "**How terrible for you,**" He means that you are under the curse of God, and well, you should be because of your *self-idolatry*.

Now, please don't misunderstand. This doesn't mean you can't be rich, have plenty to eat, laugh, and still be a faithful Christian. Jesus is speaking in generalities here, and in general, we tend to make evaluations based on appearances. When you see someone who appears to be blessed with health, wealth, and happiness, the natural assumption is that the favour of God rests on that person. Likewise, when you see someone who is poor, starving, and filled with sorrow, it appears that the Lord is punishing that person. But this thinking is wrong. No, we ought to know that God sometimes brings hardships on us precisely to show us what pathetic gods we are when we place our trust in ourselves.

Part of what's going on here, too, is that Jesus is playing the long game. He's asking us to recognise that this life is merely the corridor to the next, where real living begins. This world is not our home. We are not staying here forever. But what happens here determines where we shall be residing forever. This life is under the curse of sin. It's dirty, often hard, filled with trials and sadness, but it's only temporary. Yet a lot of people live like this life *is all there is*. They want their pleasures *now*. They want to live it up, play with their toys, enjoy the good things, and always be happy. They see their success and happiness as signs of God's favour when what they are really worshipping *is the false god of self*. They gain the world but lose their souls; their end is eternal destruction.

It is not so for those whose trust is in the Lord because they see the present for what it is. So, it doesn't matter whether the Lord gives sunshine or rain, wealth or poverty, health or sickness, happiness or sorrow. Whatever He gives, He gives in His perfect wisdom so that we shall learn all the more to trust in Him and give Him thanks for all things, to satisfy our material needs and, more importantly, our spiritual needs, which He does by grace freely for the sake of Jesus our Saviour, who gave His life for ours.

We set our sights on the future that Christ has earned for us, but that helps us even now in the present. In this fallen world, hardship, sorrow, pain, and loss eventually come to all. And when they do, those who have placed their trust in themselves don't know what to do—their false god has failed them. As Jeremiah said in our First Reading today, “*Cursed is the man who trusts in a human being, who makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD! ⁶ He will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see when anything good comes. He will live in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salty land where no one lives*” (Jer. 17:5-6). Such people have shallow roots. So, when the hot season comes, they dry up and die.

But the person who trusts in the Lord is like that tree with deep roots planted by a stream. When the hot season comes, and the stream dries up, there's still plenty of groundwater down deep. The tree stays green and bears fruit. That person understands that the hot season—what appears to be a curse—is, in fact, a blessing because by it, the Lord destroys sinful trust in self and directs all faith and hope to Him where it belongs.

Through such disguised blessings, may the Lord increase our faith so that each one of us may truly say with the writer of Hebrews, "*I shall put my trust in Him*" (2:13). Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.

HYMN 386

1
In Thee is gladness
Mid all our sadness,
Jesus, joy of every heart;
By Thee are given
Blessings from heaven:
Thou the true Redeemer art.
Our sins Thou takest,
Our bonds Thou breakest;
Trusting Thee surely,
We build securely,
We stand for ever.
Hallelujah!
Our hearts are turning
To Thee with yearning;
Unto Thee cleaving
Dying or living,
Naught can us sever.
Hallelujah!

2
In Thee we rest us;
Naught can molest us:
World nor death nor evil foe.
We have protection
'Neath Thy direction,
Thou canst turn aside all woe.
Our heart rejoices,
We lift our voices,
Tuned to Thy glory,
Telling Thy story
Now and for ever.
Hallelujah!
With adoration
And exultation
We love and praise Thee;
Zealous we raise Thee
Glad hymns for ever.
Hallelujah!

THE OFFERTORY

What can I offer to the Lord: for all His goodness to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation: and call on the name of the Lord.

I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving: and call on the name of the Lord.

I will keep my promises to the Lord: in the presence of all His people;

In the courts of the house of the Lord: in your midst, O Jerusalem.

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

O God our Father, You are our rock and our fortress, our joy and our salvation, our light and our life, our sun and our shield. You are always ready to hear those who come before You. Therefore hear us as we come before You with our prayers and praise.

We thank You that You have called us by Your Spirit to believe in Your Son Jesus Christ, made us citizens of His eternal kingdom, given us righteousness as our dress, and equipped us with power, love, and self-control. Continue to give us these blessings, and fill us with the fruits of faith. Make us living letters that speak of Jesus Christ, that people around us may read of Your mercy and saving power in human lives.

We praise You for Your grace in calling us to work in Your vineyard. Bless our work, witness, and giving in Your name. Use us to bring many people to Your glory. Make us glad to obey Your great commission, ready to accept every service, eager to perform every duty well, and strong to do every task faithfully. Make us patient and willing even when service in Your kingdom is long and difficult. Give us the joy of seeing others come to worship You, and give us the grace to welcome them warmly as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Keep us all safe in Your loving care, and lead us to the heavenly land of promise. Grant that we may run our daily race by the presence and power of Your Spirit. Give us self-control over everything that could endanger our faith and disqualify us for the prize. Grant that we may seize every opportunity to live the new life. Prevent us from boasting in our own wisdom, wealth, or power. Enable us to glory only in knowing You as our Father. May our only treasure be to possess Your wisdom and power in the life, death, and resurrection of Your Son.

Be with us, dear Father, in all that we do. Strengthen and direct us in our daily work. Protect us in our leisure. Shelter us in our homes. Guide us as we travel. Teach us in our problems. Shield us in our afflictions. Comfort us in our sorrows. Hear us as we pray, and lift up our spirits to You as we worship.

Accept these sacrifices of humble prayer and joyous praise that we offer before You, for the sake of Jesus Christ. And to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, be all glory and praise, for ever and ever. 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour, and give us peace. **Amen.**

HYMN 511

1
Almighty Father, bless the Word
Which through Thy grace we now have heard;
O may the precious seed take root,
Spring up, and bear abundant fruit.

2
We praise Thee for the means of grace,
As in Thy courts we seek Thy face;
Grant, Lord, that we who worship here
May all at last in heaven appear.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

23 February 7 Epiphany	2 March The Transfiguration	9 March 1 Lent
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR (Student Matthew Sippel to lead) 9.00am MARBURG LR 9.00am AUB HC Conf.	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR (Student Matthew Sippel to lead) 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC Conf.

CONGREGATIONAL AGM'S:

Marburg: Sunday, 23 February after divine service.

Greenwood: Sunday, 23 February, 10.45am.

Oakey: Sunday, 23 February, 1.00pm.

Lowood: Sunday, 9 March, after divine service.

Robert Ritter has various church music vinyl records that used to belong to his mother available for sale. Any sales will be donated to the Seminary Committee. If you would like to find out what he has, give him a call at 0419 722438.

FEBRUARY BIBLE STUDIES

Wednesday the 19th, 7.30pm. St Pauls Greenwood.

Friday the 28th, 7.30pm. Oak/Aub at Trinity Oakey.

Forward Announcement: Saturday, 8th March, 10am, at Trinity Marburg. CoC/Sem meeting. Any agenda items, please forward to the secretary, Ian Manz at igm64@hotmail.com.