

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 49:1–7

- ¹ Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from
afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named
my name.
- ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
- ³ And he said to me, “You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
- ⁴ But I said, “I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and
vanity;
yet surely my right is with the LORD,
and my recompense with my God.”
- ⁵ And now the LORD says,
he who formed me from the womb to be
his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him;
and that Israel might be gathered to
him—
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength—
- ⁶ he says:
“It is too light a thing that you should be
my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end
of the earth.”
- ⁷ Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the
nation,
the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate
themselves;
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen
you.”

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:1–9

- ¹Paul, called by the will of God to be an apos-
tle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,
²To the church of God that is in Corinth,
to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to

be saints together with all those who in every
place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you
because of the grace of God that was given you
in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were
enriched in him in all speech and all knowl-
edge—even as the testimony about Christ was
confirmed among you—⁷so that you are not
lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for
the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who
will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day
of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by
whom you were called into the fellowship of
his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Holy Gospel: John 1:29–42a

²⁹The next day [John] saw Jesus coming
toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of
God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
³⁰This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes
a man who ranks before me, because he was
before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know him, but
for this purpose I came baptizing with water,
that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³²And John
bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from
heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I
myself did not know him, but he who sent me
to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom
you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is
he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I
have seen and have borne witness that this is
the Son of God.”

³⁵The next day again John was standing with
two of his disciples, ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as
he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of
God!” ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this,
and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned and saw
them following and said to them, “What are
you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi”
(which means Teacher), “where are you stay-
ing?” ³⁹He said to them, “Come and you will
see.” So they came and saw where he was
staying, and they stayed with him that day,
for it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰One of the
two who heard John speak and followed Jesus
was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first
found his own brother Simon and said to him,
“We have found the Messiah” (which means
Christ). ⁴²He brought him to Jesus.

Who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29



About the Cover: The popular painting on the cover by Francisco de Zurbarán is named *Agnus Dei*—“The Lamb of God.” The light of Epiphany, illumined by the words of John the Baptist, declares Jesus to be that perfect lamb without blemish. Just as we sing in the liturgy of the same name, our Agnus Dei takes away our sins in God’s merciful Meal.

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)
8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254
309-949-2516

January 15, 2023 Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Divine Service Setting Four (Lutheran Service Book, p. 203)

Hymn of Invocation 397 As with Gladness Men of Old

Invocation and Versicles (p. 203)

Introit *Psalm 19:1-4a, b; antiphon: v. 14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

**The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.**

Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
**There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.**

Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun.

**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.**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

The Kyrie (p. 204)

Salutation and Collect of the Day (p. 205)

P Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

Readings (on back of bulletin)

Gradual

Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8

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

Alleluia and Verse (p. 205)

Nicene Creed (p. 206)

Hymn of the Day 402 The Only Son from Heaven

Sermon

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

P ...one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

Presentation of the Offering

Service of the Sacrament (p. 208)

(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the Sacrament at St. John's.)

Distribution Hymns

540 Christ, The Word of God Incarnate

602 The Gifts Christ Freely Gives

517 By All Your Saints in Warfare (sts. 1, 5, 3)

Nunc Dimittis (p. 211)

Hymn to Depart 728 How Firm a Foundation

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

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Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org
https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo

**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

Rev. Timothy Nerud **Pastor**
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Carl Freeman

Organist: Corinne Luckinbill

Greeter: Janet Bertsons

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Holy Gospel: John 1:29-42a

WE PRAY: Holy Spirit, charged with the presentation of the Son of the living God to the world, lead us continually to Your Scripture where Christ is presented for us, to the gathering where Christ has promised His presence, and to those who bring Him to us, that seeing Christ, we are renewed for our daily round of bearing witness to our Redeemer; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Father are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)
(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm
(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—15 Adult Bible Class—11 Worship—62

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday \$5,421.00
Weekly income needed per 2023 Budget \$4,212.60

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS/ Adult & Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Youth Group
Monday		OFFICE CLOSED
Tuesday	6:00 pm	Adult Instruction class
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation class
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS/ Adult & Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship
	11:00 am	Quarterly Voters' Assembly

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

JOHN 1:29 – "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" The Israelites of old offered a lamb to God at Passover so that death might pass over them and do no harm. Over those long centuries of sacrifice, did they understand that this was actually God's gift? That God would be the true Giver of the true Lamb? Truly, we can never out-give God, for all that we have is His.

ATTENDANCE PADS are at the end of each pew. Each family (members and guests) should sign using only **ONE** box per household, naming all family members present in the one box. **EVERYONE** needs to indicate their intention to receive Holy Communion on a Communion Sunday. Return pad to the right end of your pew. Thanks for your help with this.

QUARTERY VOTERS' ASSEMBLY will be next Sunday immediately after the worship service. We pray all will see the importance of your active participation in the business of this congregation and stay for this meeting.

DOLLARS FOR MISSION—One dollar each week to be added to the many other dollars given, multiplying a small gift into a might amount. Your gift will spread the Gospel far and wide. Thank you for your gift.

POINSETTIAS maybe taken home after the worship service. They will be removed from the sanctuary after today.

NEWSLETTER articles need to be in the office no later that Wednesday of this week. Thank you.

ALTAR FLOWERS—The new flower chart is on the bulletin board. Please consider providing flowers for a Sunday. Sign the chart and put your money in a yellow envelope. The rest will be done for you. Thank you.

CHRISTIAN LIVING—John 1:29-42a: John simply said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” What would the world stop and take notice of today? The word, “Behold,” means to stop everything you’re doing and take notice of something. For John, and for each of us, this Jesus would serve as the Lamb who would give His life as the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. Who or what is worthy of you stopping everything in your life and pointing out that this ONE person or thing is worthy of all your praise and the one for whom you have life? If it is anyone other than Jesus Christ, then they cannot give forgiveness and life that lasts for eternity. That’s why John said, “Behold,” and pointed everyone to Jesus. And that’s why we live our lives in faith every day, because true life is found only in the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The world around us needs to hear us proclaim, “Behold,” with our thoughts, words and deeds and needs us to point to Jesus.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Give thanks as you pray:

MISSION—*Pray that God would strengthen our hope and impact by encouraging partnerships in the Gospel that clearly confess Christ.*

ST JOHN’S—Mr. Kyle Miller—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Kyle and ask Your blessings upon him.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Jessica Johnson
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Drew Schillinger
Jim Dahl	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Lois Esterlein		

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

Andrew/Sarah Hill & family (2022/23 seminary student)

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

Rev. Justin Kane (son of Sandra Kane)

Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

Susan Mayden (sister of Michele Barry)

Russ Klavon (brother of Carolyn Werner)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Zachary/Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“Christians are to love their neighbors, including the unborn ... (Proverbs 24:11, 29:8-9) ... This means we can and ought to pray for the unborn, for women who have the choice of preserving or ending the life of their unborn child, for women who have had abortions and who need forgiveness in Christ—freely given through faith, for abortion doctors who are directly responsible for killing these children, and for our governing officials.” *Pastor David Thompson, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Lombard, Illinois – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

NOW OPEN, SWADDLING CLOTHES @ Concordia Lutheran Church, Geneseo. This is a mission of Concordia, created as a place for moms and moms-to-be find some help gathering all the items needed for a new bundle of joy. (We are also here to help dads, custodial grandparents, and foster parents). Our free shopping room is open every 2nd Thursday from 4-7 pm and every 4th Saturday from 9 am-noon. Tell anyone who maybe in need of this help. Concordia is at 316 S. Oakwood Ave, Geneseo. For more information call, 309-944-3993 or visit www.swaddlingclothes.org.

CAMP CILCA is already planning for next season’s summer camps. Early Bird registration is underway. Brochures are in the mailbox of families with children. Additional brochures can be found on the counter between the mailboxes. Scholarships are available from both St. John’s and Camp CILCA.

LCMS MEN’S/WOMEN’S BOWLING LEAGUE—Join us for fun and fellowship. All skill levels are welcome. We begin Monday, January 9th @ 6 pm and the following 11 weeks (new short season) @ Highland Park Bowl, 4204 Avenue of the Cities, Moline. Direct questions, call or text, Jim Pearson @ 563-293-6456 or Michael Wagner @ 309-453-7206. We will have a great time.

ROCK ISLAND YOUTH GROUP—Please join us for a Movie Night on Sunday, January 15th at Immanuel in Rock Island from 6-8:30 p.m. We will start the evening with a short devotion followed by the movie "The Princess Bride". Please bring your own drinks. Popcorn and cotton candy will be provided. Seating will be provided in the gymnasium, however feel free to bring your sleeping bag and a pillow if you wish. We look forward to seeing you there! If you have any questions, please contact me at 309-714-5491.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 15, 2023

Text: John 1:29-42a (Gospel Reading)

Other Texts: Isaiah 49:1-7 (Old Testament); 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (Epistle)

“What Are You Seeking?”

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As I indicated last Sunday, the season of Epiphany, Greek for “manifestation,” stresses the divine nature of Christ, indicating that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, is God’s incarnate eternal Son. His deity manifests in various ways, as the appointed Gospel readings record His working miracles, His teaching with divine authority, and the testimonies of others concerning Him. And it is that last one, the testimony of another, by which today’s Gospel reveals Jesus’ divine nature as we hear John the Baptist proclaim, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’...And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”¹

Referring to the Passover lambs, the twice daily temple sacrifices, and especially to their fulfillment in Isaiah’s Suffering Servant prophecy, “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,”² John the Baptist declares Jesus to be God’s chosen Lamb whose sacrifice offers universal atonement, removing the sin of the world, that is, all sin of all people throughout all of time. Consequently, Jesus must be divine as this clearly is something that the sacrifice of neither a normal lamb nor a normal human could do.

In addition, though John’s ministry began first and he was six months older than Jesus, still John declares Jesus his superior both by rank, the Messiah over the forerunner, but even more, by testifying that Jesus was *before* him, thereby confessing Jesus’ preexistence from eternity, testifying that He is the very Son of God. So this text records quite an epiphany indeed! And it is in this particular “epiphany” context that we shall take time this morning to consider our Lord’s critically important question, “What are you seeking?”³

Those who came to John the Baptist to hear his preaching were obviously seeking something. His call to the Jewish people to repent and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins was gathering large crowds indeed, certainly in the hundreds, perhaps even the thousands. Truly, at this time John is all the buzz. And not only were numerous people responding in repentance and faith to John’s sermons, some were attaching themselves to him as devoted disciples. Yes, under God’s blessing John was accomplishing the mission given to him as shown by people being eager for the coming Savior. Some even wondered if John himself might be that promised Messiah. But he would have none of that and so confessed plainly, “I am not the Christ.”⁴

John knew the Messiah was near, both by God’s Word to him, but even hearing from his mother Elizabeth, at a minimum, about the Christ’s miraculous conception in her relative Mary. Yet, knowing of Him and knowing Him are two different things. John says,

“I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel. I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”⁵

Of course John had seen this when he had baptized Jesus which we spoke about last week. But after being baptized Jesus had left John and the crowds, going into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for forty days and nights.⁶ But now Jesus returns and, seeing Him, John cries out “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”⁷ It is as if John says to his faithful followers, “*There is the One you are to follow for He is the Messiah!*” For that was the purpose of his mission, to prepare the way, not for himself, but for the Lord. John himself would say, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”⁸ And so it is no betrayal when two of John’s disciples started following Jesus. One of these was Andrew, Peter’s brother. The other, though unnamed, was likely John, the author of the Gospel, as he never names himself in it.

These two, along with all faithful Jews, had been waiting for and seeking the Messiah. But many were seeking a messiah who would bring freedom from the oppression of Rome, who would restore Jerusalem as a capital of a mighty Jewish kingdom, and who would work miracles of healing to bring relief from God’s judgment. So yes, they were seeking the Messiah, but false teaching had led them to seek after a false one. A Savior that seems great to the earthbound mind trapped in time, but who cannot bring the heavenly goods of eternity. So Jesus’ question, “What are you seeking?” is not asked on some generic, surface level. It *is* an invitation to them. But it is wrapped in a question that invites, truly demands, *self-reflection*, so that they are *seeking rightly*.

And it remains that same invitation wrapped in a penetrating question to this very day. All humanity is seeking something, as there is an emptiness of sorts within us. So people seek after that which they *feel* they need, what they think will fill the emptiness and so fulfill them. So some seek after power, trying to gain control over their earthly lives, often by controlling others in some way. Some seek wealth, so that they can buy whatever bring life’s joys and pleasures. Some seek after knowledge, not for its own sake, but to impress others, control others, solve problems, both their own and that of others, and so gain renown, respect, and reward. And many seek after relationships in order to find those who will fulfill their emotional and physical needs.

Based upon that, there are very few people would claim to be seeking deliverance from sin and its effects; yet that is what they’re seeking comes down to. They are seeking a sense of identity, “Who am I?” They are seeking a sense of security. They are seeking meaning and purpose. And this makes sense as sin has destroyed mankind’s connection with their Creator. So people are left confused in their relationship to others and to the creation as a whole. Losing God as the source of all goodness, they look to others for their good, and so feed the increasingly large graveyard of marriages ending in divorce and broken families since when one person quits making them happy they leave them, seeking anew for the “right one” who will fill their longings.

Again, losing the reality that they are God’s special creation, people are left with trying to deal with being the product of a cosmic accident, scrambling to find security in the things of this world, even as they believe that it is up them to save the world itself. No wonder fear and

hopelessness abound. Losing the purpose of being the highest visible creation with dominion over the earth to care for it as God's stewards, being called to serve God by serving others in love, people are again forced to find meaning and purpose in themselves, in what they can earn and do. So jobs either become their source of meaning, which is then easily lost. Or they are nothing but a depressing necessity to pay the bills. Either way people are slaves to them, with the end being emptiness. For in all these things, when death approaches, these sources of identity, security, and purpose will prove to be vanity, vapor, meaningless, useless.⁹

God calls us to repent when and where we would seek identity, security, and meaning in such. Not just because they are bad choices that cannot help us. That is true, but it is much worse than a bad choice. It is a sin since such seeking is idolatry, as we are seeking that which we should seek from God alone in someone or something else. The power, the wealth, the knowledge, the relationships, these become our idols. Or perhaps, they become the means by which we worship our real idol, which is *ourselves*, for we seek after only our own good outside of God.

When we recognize the idolatry that we practice and repent of it, we also recognize that Andrew and John are headed in the right direction as they follow Jesus. For He is the Lamb of God sacrificed on the cross, His blood taking away our sin, including our idolatry. And He, resurrected and ascended, restores our identity with our Creator, reestablishing our relationship with Him that we might once again call Him "dear Father." And being restored in Christ Jesus to the Father, we are also restored to one another, being God's family, brothers and sisters in Christ.

And we are secure once again, knowing that we are not subject to the whims of a cold, uncaring evolutionary process, but are children of the Heavenly Father, protected by His holy angels and divine providence. So while the many moments that make up our lives might seem uncertain, we know they are not, for God holds us securely in His omnipotent and gracious hand even as He hears our prayers for help for ourselves and others. So also meaning and purpose are restored to us, since even the seeming lowliest of works done in faith in Christ and for the love of others are holy and receive our Lord's commendation.¹⁰ A commendation that does not end with our death since death itself is defeated by the risen Christ and so our deeds will follow us into eternity.¹¹ We have the promise that no work done by faith in our Lord is ever done in vain.¹²

And in a bit of divine irony, we find that those things which we foolishly sought after outside of Christ God gives us when we are in Him. Power—does not Scripture promise that our bodies will be raised in power and immortality?¹³ Wealth—are not the very treasures of heaven open to us, even now, and all the more in the new creation? Knowledge—are we not enlightened by the Holy Spirit to know Christ and His Word and so live in holy wisdom? Relationships—are we not restored to God and to one another, able to have much more filling relationships in this life since we do not expect from others what they cannot give? Truly, are we not restored to all the angels and saints of glory, a mighty kingdom of priests unto God?

Having such hope, like Andrew we now seek others that we might tell them about Christ Jesus in whom they too can have all they truly would seek after, just as we have. For in the Lamb of God, sin is taken away, as will be its consequences in the new creation. So when we ponder "What are we seeking?" God grant our answer be always and only one thing: Jesus! Amen!

¹ John 1:29-30, 34. All quotes are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

² Isaiah 53:7.

³ John 1:38.

⁴ John 1:20.

⁵ John 1:31-33.

⁶ We read this event on the First Sunday in Lent.

⁷ John 1:29.

⁸ John 3:30.

⁹ Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:2.

¹⁰ Matthew 25:40.

¹¹ Revelation 14:13.

¹² 1 Corinthians 15:58.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

Second Sunday after the Epiphany (A)
15 January 2023

Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form

O Lord, let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You, for You are our Rock and our Redeemer. Answer us according to Your promises and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, You formed Your Son in the womb of Your servant Mary to be a light for the nations. Preserve that light among Your people. Gather us around Your Word and Sacraments, enlighten and strengthen us by Your grace, and grant that we might reflect the light of Christ to those around us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, the heavens declare Your handiwork, and each day and night testify to Your majesty. Bless all teachers and students, that in their explorations of the arts and sciences they may see Your creativity and glorify You. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You watched over the tribes of Jacob, providing them both daily bread and redemption in abundant measure. Watch over the homes of Your people. Bless them with all that they need for this body and life, and preserve them in the glad confidence that Christ is their strength and their salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, Your Son consented to be the servant of rulers and to be abhorred by the nations so that He might redeem the world. Fortify all in authority with courage and wisdom to govern justly, and cultivate penitent hearts among them so that they may gladly prostrate themselves before their Redeemer on the Last Day. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, Your Son became the Lamb of God to take away all of our sins and infirmities by His death and resurrection. We thank You for the earthly healing You so graciously provide, especially that given to Carter and Carolyn. Remember all who need Your help and healing, especially Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Jim, Don, Lois, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Justin, Russ, Jodi, Susan, Marilyn, Laurie, Drew, and Marilyn. Deliver them according to Your merciful will, and preserve them in the certainty of eternal life since their sins are taken away. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Father, remember Kyle Miller. Bless him in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, John the Baptist first revealed Your incarnate Son as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and foretold His victory over sin by the sacrifice of His body and blood on the cross. Prepare the hearts of all who receive that same body and blood of our resurrected Savior this day, that they would welcome Him in repentance and faith. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant that we who have celebrated the incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ, may die to sin and rise to new life, that we may treasure up and ponder in our hearts the Christ announced by Your forerunner; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Presentation of the Offering

Long ago the sages brought their tribute gifts to You, We bring our offerings now with joy that we may praise You too. O, help us, dearest Jesus, to love You with all our heart, that we may practice now and ever, this blessed sacred art. Amen.