

FAMILY HOME DEVOTIONS

July 13-19, 2026



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

2012 Sullivan Trail, Easton, PA 18040

(P) 610-253-1625 (E) faithlcms@outlook.com

(W) faithlcms.com (F) [facebook.com/faithlcmseaston](https://www.facebook.com/faithlcmseaston)

Monday

Psalm 122

Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

122 I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

2 Our feet have been standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together,

4 to which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,

as was decreed for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

5 There thrones for judgment were set,
the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
“May they be secure who love you!”

7 Peace be within your walls
and security within your towers!”

8 For my brothers and companions' sake
I will say, “Peace be within you!”

9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.

Judges 13:1-25

The Birth of Samson

13 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2 There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. 3 And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4 Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, 5 for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.” 6 Then the woman came and told her husband, “A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name, 7 but he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.’”

8 Then Manoah prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born.” 9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, “Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.” 11 And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to this woman?” And he said, “I am.” 12 And Manoah said, “Now when your words come true, what is to be the child's manner of life, and what is his mission?” 13 And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe.”

15 Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “Please let us detain you and prepare a young goat for you.” 16 And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “If you detain me, I will not eat of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord.” (For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the Lord.) 17 And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?” 18 And the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?” 19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the Lord, to the one who works wonders, and Manoah and his wife were watching. 20 And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the Lord went up in the flame of the altar. Now Manoah and his wife were watching, and they fell on their faces to the ground.

21 The angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the Lord. 22 And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen God.” 23 But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.” 24 And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

July 13

Galatians 2:1-21

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. 6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul Opposes Peter

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

Justified by Faith

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

The Sacrament of the Altar - What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

These words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Tuesday

Psalm 123

Our Eyes Look to the Lord Our God

A Song of Ascents.

123 To you I lift up my eyes,

O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants

look to the hand of their master,

as the eyes of a maidservant

to the hand of her mistress,

so our eyes look to the Lord our God,

till he has mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us,

for we have had more than enough of contempt.

4 Our soul has had more than enough

of the scorn of those who are at ease,

of the contempt of the proud.

Judges 14:1-20

Samson's Marriage

14 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 Then he came up and told his father and mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife." 3 But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. 6 Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in Samson's eyes.

8 After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. 9 He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

10 His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do. 11 As soon as the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. 12 And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, 13 but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." 14 And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat.

Out of the strong came something sweet."

And in three days they could not solve the riddle.

15 On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?" 16 And Samson's wife wept over him and said, "You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" 17 She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. 18 And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?

What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,

you would not have found out my riddle."

19 And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

July 14

Galatians 3:1-22

By Faith, or by Works of the Law?

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” 12 But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

The Law and the Promise

15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The Sacrament of the Altar - How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: “forgiveness of sins.”

Wednesday

Psalm 124

Our Help Is in the Name of the Lord

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

124 If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—
let Israel now say—

2 if it had not been the Lord who was on our side
when people rose up against us,

3 then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

4 then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;

5 then over us would have gone
the raging waters.

6 Blessed be the Lord,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth!

7 We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped!

8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Judges 15:1-16:3

Samson Defeats the Philistines

15 After some days, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat. And he said, "I will go in to my wife in the chamber." But her father would not allow him to go in. 2 And her father said, "I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead." 3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines, when I do them harm." 4 So Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches. And he turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines and set fire to the stacked grain and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards. 6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. 7 And Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged on you, and after that I will quit." 8 And he struck them hip and thigh with a great blow, and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

9 Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us." 11 Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so have I done to them." 12 And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves." 13 They said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. 15 And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men. 16 And Samson said,

"With the jawbone of a donkey,
heaps upon heaps,
with the jawbone of a donkey

have I struck down a thousand men."

17 As soon as he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand. And that place was called Ramath-lehi.

18 And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the Lord and said, "You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" 19 And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkore; it is at Lehi to this day. 20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

July 15

Samson and Delilah

16 Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her. 2 The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him." 3 But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron.

Galatians 3:23-4:11

23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Sons and Heirs

4 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years! 11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

The Sacrament of the Altar - Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

Thursday

Psalm 125

The Lord Surrounds His People

A Song of Ascents.

125 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds his people,
from this time forth and forevermore.

3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
on the land allotted to the righteous,
lest the righteous stretch out
their hands to do wrong.

4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts!

5 But those who turn aside to their crooked ways
the Lord will lead away with evildoers!
Peace be upon Israel!

Judges 16:4-30

4 After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver." 6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you."

7 Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound." 11 And he said to her, "If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." 12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

13 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." 14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.

15 And she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies." 16 And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. 17 And he told her all his heart, and said to her, "A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up again, for he has told me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. 19 She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him. 21 And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison. 22 But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

The Death of Samson

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." 24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us." 25 And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, that he may entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars. 26 And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them." 27 Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women, who looked on while Samson entertained.

28 Then Samson called to the Lord and said, "O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. 30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.

July 16

Galatians 4:12-31

12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. 13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, 14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. 18 It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, 19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! 20 I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Example of Hagar and Sarah

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written,

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;

break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!

For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.”

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” 31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

Table of Duties -

What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Gal. 6:6–7

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.” 1 Tim. 5:17–18

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 1 Thess. 5:12–13

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Heb. 13:17

Of Civil Government

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong-doer. Rom. 13:1–4

Of Citizens

Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s. Matt. 22:21

It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Rom. 13:5–7

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior. 1 Tim. 2:1–3

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. Titus 3:1

Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 1 Peter 2:13–14

Friday

Psalm 126

Restore Our Fortunes, O Lord

A Song of Ascents.

126 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,

“The Lord has done great things for them.”

3 The Lord has done great things for us;
we are glad.

4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negeb!

5 Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

6 He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.

1 Samuel 1:1-20

The Birth of Samuel

1 There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. 2 He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. 4 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. 6 And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. 7 So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. 8 And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

9 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 11 And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

12 As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. 14 And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” 15 But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. 16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” 17 Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” 18 And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. 20 And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the Lord.”

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Galatians 5:1-26

Christ Has Set Us Free

5 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. 11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. 12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Keep in Step with the Spirit

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Table of Duties -

To Husbands

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Col. 3:19

To Wives

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Eph. 5:22

They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 1 Peter 3:5–6

To Parents

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Eph. 6:4

To Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and your mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Eph. 6:1–3

Saturday

Psalm 127

Unless the Lord Builds the House
A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

127 Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.
2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.
3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.
5 Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

1 Samuel 1:21-2:17

Samuel Given to the Lord

21 The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever." 23 Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. 24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young. 25 Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. 27 For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. 28 Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord."

And he worshiped the Lord there.

Hannah's Prayer

2 And Hannah prayed and said,
"My heart exults in the Lord;
my horn is exalted in the Lord.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.
2 "There is none holy like the Lord:
for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.
3 Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
4 The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.
5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
6 The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
8 He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.
9 "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;

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against them he will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

11 Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.

Eli's Worthless Sons

12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord. 13 The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, 14 and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” 16 And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” 17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

Galatians 6:1-18

Bear One Another's Burdens

6 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5 For each will have to bear his own load.

6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Final Warning and Benediction

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Table of Duties -

To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. Eph. 6:5–8

To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. Eph. 6:9

To Youth

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. 1 Peter 5:5–6

To Widows

The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. 1 Tim. 5:5–6

To Everyone

The commandments ... are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Rom. 13:9

I urge ... that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. 1 Tim. 2:1

Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well shall fare.

Sunday

Psalm 119:57–64

Heth

57 The Lord is my portion;

I promise to keep your words.

58 I entreat your favor with all my heart;

be gracious to me according to your promise.

59 When I think on my ways,

I turn my feet to your testimonies;

60 I hasten and do not delay

to keep your commandments.

61 Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,
I do not forget your law.

62 At midnight I rise to praise you,
because of your righteous rules.

63 I am a companion of all who fear you,
of those who keep your precepts.

64 The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love;
teach me your statutes!

Isaiah 44:6–8

Besides Me There Is No God

6 Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel

and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

“I am the first and I am the last;

besides me there is no god.

7 Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.

Let him declare and set it before me,

since I appointed an ancient people.

Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen.

8 Fear not, nor be afraid;

have I not told you from of old and declared it?

And you are my witnesses!

Is there a God besides me?

There is no Rock; I know not any.”

Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43

The Parable of the Weeds

24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

July 19

Christian Questions with Their Answers

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

Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Rom. 6:21, 23.

5. Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ?

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?

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."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

Christian Questions with Their Answers continued

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

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

