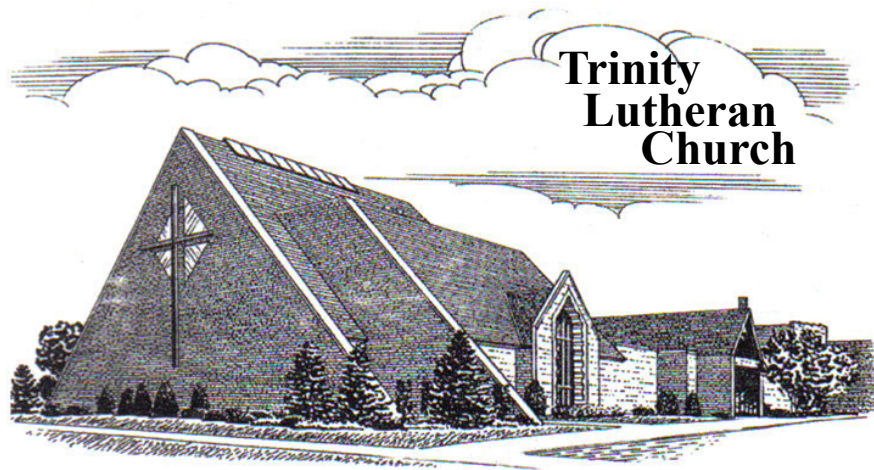


Proper 11



July 13-19, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation

L: You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you,

C: because he trusts in you.

L: Almighty Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us after your great goodness; according to the multitude of your mercies, do away our offenses; wash us thoroughly from our wickedness, and cleanse us from our sins; for Jesus' sake,

C: Amen.

Scripture

July 13: Isaiah 44:6-8

July 15: Romans 8:18-27

July 17: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Devotion

Closing Prayer

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

C: Amen.

Monday

The First Commandment: You shall have no other gods. What does this mean: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things. These are the first words in Luther's Small Catechism, which makes them the first words memorized by us when we were young. They are to be etched on our minds. However, we no longer live in a world that acknowledges the First Commandment. And as the violation of the First Commandment has become more blatant, those who know the true God have often grown more timid.

When God laid the earth on its foundations and stretched the heavens as a canopy over it, there were no other gods that helped him. He alone is God. So that he would always have a witness to himself on earth, he chose a people and called them Israel. By the time of Isaiah, Israel had grown timid. They lived in a world where there were many gods and many lords. But God says in Isaiah 44, "Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people...Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses!" There was no need for Israel to be afraid. They alone knew the true God. They alone had been chosen to see his mighty deeds and record his oracles. No other nation could boast of that. They were his witnesses, and there was no competition.

Like Israel, we live in a time where there are many gods and many lords, and the church has grown timid. Is it possible that of all the people on earth, the Christian people alone know God? Yes! The true God has revealed himself through one person, Jesus Christ. And Jesus entrusted this revelation to one people, his own people—Christians. We alone know the true God, and there is no need for timidity. Besides this God, there is no other. So let those words we all learned together be at the forefront of our minds once more: You shall have no other gods. And let us be his witnesses, so that others would come to know him and be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

Most of life is waiting because there is always something in the future that we want today. A fourteen-year-old is waiting to turn 16 so he can get his license. The 16-year-old is waiting to turn 18 so he can graduate. The 18-year-old is waiting to start college. Then he is waiting to graduate. We wait for marriage, for our first child, for the next promotion. We wait to buy a house, sell a house, and for the kids to move out of the house. We wait to retire, then we wait for something to do! But there is something we are all waiting for that we wish we could put off all together. Even as a young pastor, I've seen it often. A person waiting to die.

Sometimes, that person is in the nursing home. Having lost all purpose, he sees nothing in the future but death. Sometimes that person is lying on the hospital bed, and though he doesn't want to go, he and his family are waiting for the inevitable. It is the last thing we wait for, the last thing that the future holds for us. Death. But that's only true from a worldly perspective. Paul writes in Romans 8, "For the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us." That glory is eternal life in the new creation. It is the resurrection of our bodies and the restoration of true life. Paul says that we "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved...But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

The Christian is never waiting to die. If we were, we would be of all people most to be pitied (1 Corinthians 15:19). But in Christ, we are waiting for something much better than death. We are waiting for our sufferings to end. We are waiting for our sinful flesh to be put off. We are waiting for a trumpet to sound and the Lord to descend. We are waiting for glory. Most of life is waiting. Don't lose patience. The very best is just ahead. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

Pastors are often asked questions like this, "If there is a God, why is there so much evil?" Jesus addresses this question in the Parable of the Weeds.

The owner of a field plants wheat. But while his servants are asleep, an enemy comes and plants darnel (darnel is a weed that looks identical to wheat until it fruits). By the time the weeds are noticed, their roots are intertwined with the wheat, so the owner of the field allows the plants to grow together until the harvest lest in pulling the weeds the wheat is damaged. In the parable, the source of evil is not God, who sent Christ to plant the good seed of his Word, but Satan, who has corrupted human hearts with the seed of sin. If we ask, "Why is there evil?" Jesus answers: There is evil because of men whose hearts are corrupted by sin, which includes all of us. The real mystery is why a good God tolerates weeds in his field. The answer is that God is patient toward us because of his desire to save us, which is exactly what we find in the parable. The owner tolerates the presence of the weeds so that some of the plants in the field might be saved. Peter teaches this as well when he writes in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord...is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." God does not delight in the death of the sinner. God does not delight in pulling weeds (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

It's true that there is a lot of evil in this world. That evil does not originate with God, but with Satan. It finds its way into the world through sinners. But since God has chosen to tolerate sin for a time so that some might be saved, who are we to question God's management of his own field? Who are we to rebuke God for his patience? But following the example of Christ, who was patient in his sufferings, we are to be patient as well, not wishing that any would perish, but that all would reach repentance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.



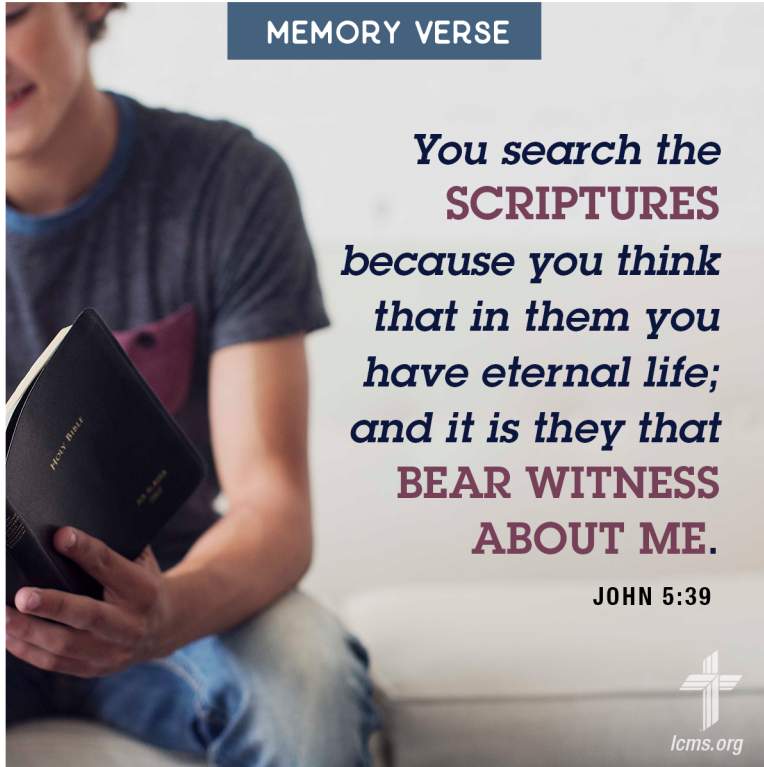
Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

A young man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue t-shirt and blue jeans, is sitting and holding a black Bible. He is looking down at the Bible with a focused expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

MEMORY VERSE

*You search the
SCRIPTURES
because you think
that in them you
have eternal life;
and it is they that
**BEAR WITNESS
ABOUT ME.***

JOHN 5:39



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