

our immediate sin. Jesus told us to realize that we don't deserve God's grace. People to whom bad things happen are no worse people than we, and because of our sin, God could justifiably destroy us in some horrible way. Jesus, explained that we are to recognize God's patience as He waits for us to show forth our faith; the faith that the Holy Spirit has (as is His work,) placed in our hearts. The care and compassion of the caretaker (Jesus) and the extended time, are signs of the Divine owner of the garden's Love. We are trees planted in God's garden. Either we show forth the fruits of faith He gives out freely, or we will be placed into the fire to be burned as worthless. It is a wonder of God's grace and Mercy that we believe and do in fact show the fruits of our faith.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ Lord God most Holy, You Who dwell in Heaven, without Whom there is no help and in Whom there is nothing to be afraid. We come before You as the Guardian and Defender of all who lift up their hearts to You. In our desolation, affliction and sorrow we come before You seeking Your Eternal Mercy. We thank You for the Love of Jesus. In His compassion and grace He freely gave Himself as the satisfaction for our sins by giving up His perfect life as an offering for our redemption and salvation. We thank You for the work of our Lord which finished all the work were we have failed: His Holy life, His blessed example, His gracious teaching, His Loving companionship, and His atoning death. With grateful hearts we thank You for the willing spirit in which He gave Himself as Your suffering Servant.

Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may have the inheritance in Your Eternal kingdom. Help us imitate the example of Christ and walk in love showing forth the fruits of our faith that you shower down on us daily. Grant that as children of the heavenly light we may earnestly repent of our sins, forsake the ways of darkness and error, and follow in the paths of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Fill our souls with holiness, love of Your Word, and every pure grace and virtue.

For all who are in any want of body or soul, for all of our loved ones who are in distant places, for all who have strayed from Your truth, for all who are in temptation, for all who are suffering illness and pain, for all who mourn, we pray this day, O Lord. Pour down Your blessing on them according to their need, hear their prayers, comfort them with Your presence and surround them with Your Holy angels.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Make us one in spirit in Your church on Earth and bring us to Your eternal heavenly kingdom. We pray, O Father, for these matters, in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ by Whose blood we are freed to be Your people.

© Amen.

## LENT THREE

### Chant Tone



### Introit

The Lord knows the way of the  
—righteous,\*  
but the way of the wicked will —perish.  
  
For You are not a God Who delights in  
| wickedness;\*  
evil may not | dwell with You.  
The boastful shall not stand be |fore  
Your eyes;\*  
You hate all evil —doers.  
You destroy those | who speak lies;\*  
The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty  
and de | ceitful man.

But I, through the abundance of Your  
steadfast love, will en | ter Your house.\*

I will bow down toward Your holy  
temple in the | fear of You.

Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness  
because of my | enemies;\*

Make Your way straight be —fore me.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy —Spirit;  
as it was in the be —ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. —Amen.

The Lord knows the way of the  
—righteous,\*  
but the way of the wicked will —perish.

(Antiphon, Psalm 1:6;  
Psalm 5:4-8)

### Collect of the Day

O God, Whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

### Gradual

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] —Jesus,\*  
the founder and perfecter | of our faith,  
Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despis | ing the shame,\*  
and is seated at the right hand of the | throne of God.

(Hebrews 12:2)

### Verse

[The Lord] is patient toward you, not wishing that any should —perish,\*  
but that all should reach —repentance.

(2 Peter 3:9b, c)

**ENTRANCE PRAYER:** When we consider the perfection of Your laws, O Lord, we realize how far we have strayed from the path which You laid out for us. We too often love and trust other things and people more than You. For our transgressions we implore Your forgiveness. Send us Your Holy Spirit that He gives us power to overcome our sin and bless the witness of Your Church in the world, that the world may be led to know the goodness of Your Law and accept Your authority to rule and govern our lives. Only then will we see our confidence exists only in the Gospel and the authority of Jesus, in Whose name we pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

**A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WAS ASKED BY HIS FRIENDS WHAT HE HAD GIVEN UP FOR LENT.** As a Lutheran he had never really worked with the idea of giving up something for Lent. His mother too, wondered what he should have answered. They decided that he should say that he had given up his sin for Lent. During Lent we take the time to see what has been done for us through the life, suffering, and death of Jesus. He Who is without sin, took on our humanity. Then He gave over His sinless life, to take on our suffering and death, our punishment for sin. The result is that we are made over into the perfect people who belong in Heaven. He suffered unjustly that we would be justified through His birth, life, suffering, and death.

**THEME OF THE DAY:**

God Always Wins

**INTROIT**—(Antiphon: Psalm 1:6;) Psalm 5:4-8

Psalm 1 was written by whomever collected up the Psalms (likely Ezra) as an introduction. It is paired with our other Propers as an exposition of good verses evil, life and death; we should follow the blessing and avoid the curse. This is our first ever use of Psalm 5. David wrote this Psalm at a time when the enemies of the nation were doing them great harm. The verses we have chosen to use are a contrast of the fact that God's grace and mercy always triumphs over sin, death and Satan.

**COLLECT**

We pray that those who have gone astray will return to the truth of God's Word. This prayer was added to our Propers in 2006 to more accurately reflect the theme of the three lessons.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**—Ezekiel 33:7-20

Historically, the book of Ezekiel was read during the season of Easter. We added verses 7-9 to our Pentecost 16 readings in 1982 and now we read more. Danger surrounds us because of sin. Our flesh, the world and Satan are constantly at work keeping us from the good and wonderful will of God. Ezekiel was called as one of God's servants to deliver the message of repentance to a disobedient people. There is within this message the obligation to tell others about their sin, there is also the obligation to listen to others as they tell us of our sin against them/against God.

**GRADUAL**—Hebrews 12:2

The author (I say Luke) encourage us to look to Jesus (the Living Water) Who teaches us patience and perseverance.

**EPISTLE LESSON**—1 Corinthians 10:1-13

From the history of Israel in the desert, Paul draws a clear lesson: The experience of Old Testament Israel serve as warnings for New Testament Corinth. Paul presented a list of the offenses and then repeated that these things happened as a warning and were written for our instruction, as we live our life in these last days.

**VERSE**—2 Peter 3:9b, c

God keeps His time. God fulfills His promises. If there is any delay in a response from God, it is specifically designed that the elect will receive from Him forgiveness for their repentence.

**GOSPEL LESSON**—Luke 13:1-9

The verses of this text teach of the grace of God's kingdom, even as judgment is at hand. We often worry about being punished by God for