



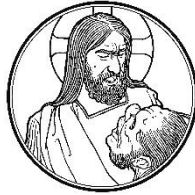
# ABOUT THE PROPERs

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 15, 2024



### *The Need for Followership*

Followers of Christ Are Armed for the Battle

What is the worst war in human history? One might point to World War II, which has the highest death toll of at least 90 million people. Or consider the Three Kingdoms War, which not only resulted in over 40 million deaths but also lasted for most of the third century. There is no end to the sad list of nominations: the Thirty Years War, the Taiping Rebellion, the American Civil War, World War I.

None of those is the correct answer. The worst war in human history began when the first shot was fired in Eden. It has been raging since. It is a war against “spiritual forces of evil” (Ephesians 6:12). This is not a war over land or resources. It is a war for souls. The reality is that there are demonic forces that want to do more than kill you; they want to claim you for all eternity. The good news: Christ has already called you his own and equipped you for this war. Followers of Christ are armed for the battle.

#### **First Reading**                      1 Kings 18:21-39

In a showdown between Elijah and the prophets of the idol Baal, the LORD makes it clear that all the combined forces of hell are nothing compared to the almighty power of God.

#### **Second Reading** <sup>2</sup>                      Ephesians 6:10-18

There is a life-and-death struggle going on with us, as Satan strives with all his might to pull us back into sin and unbelief. The only help that avails in that life-and-death struggle is the help of God’s own Word, the covering of the gospel and the confidence of faith which comes from it. Armed with the promises of God, we storm the gates of heaven with our prayers for assistance, in the certainty that God will hear us and, in his Word, answer us. May our awareness of the battle and of the victory Christ gives permeate all that we do at work and at play, at home and away, in our lives with family, with friends, with foes as well.

#### **Gospel**                                      Mark 9:14-27

As we fight spiritual battles, Jesus assures us that “Everything is possible for the one who believes,” that is, the one who relies on Christ, who has already won the war.

#### **Psalm of the Day** <sup>4</sup>                      Psalm 54 B                                      “Lord, You Are My Strength”

The Church sings Psalm 54 to pray for deliverance from enemies. Verse 4 is the confident confession of faith in the center of a very symmetrical composition. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 54 is a prayer psalm against persecutors, people who rise against believers because of the Word of God. David had been called by the word of God to be the king, but Saul and the Ziphites tried to kill him. The psalmist prays for help and deliverance from his enemies.”

#### **Gospel Acclamation**                      Psalm 32:1

“In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.”

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day**                      517 “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness” (Rusty Edwards, b. 1955)

**Church Year Season** <sup>1</sup>                      Season after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

**Minor Festivals**                      St. Matthew, Apostle (September 21)

**Colors & Symbolism**                      Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

**Nain Paraments**                      Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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