

WITNESS AND OUTREACH BULLETIN SENTENCES

(The following “Witness and Outreach Bulletin Sentences” are made available by the Witness and Outreach Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Simply copy and paste the appropriate sentence for inclusion in your weekly Sunday bulletin.)

Year A

Advent 1

Matthew 21:1-11 or Matthew 24:36-44: While we wait with expectancy, what do those who do not know the Gospel of Jesus Christ wait for? Most are not sure of what to expect - the world to spiral out of control with increasing uncertainty, loss of hope, fear of judgment or the end? You have the truth that will make a difference as they face each day. Pray for the Lord to give you the opportunity to share the Good News over a cup of coffee, a friendly conversation, or a good book, because God’s Word of hope may make their day.

Advent 2

Matthew 3:1-12: John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for the first coming of His Son as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We, like John the Baptist, have the opportunity to give a bold witness to Jesus, our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. May the Holy Spirit bless our witness and use it to change hearts for eternity.

Advent 3

Matthew 11:2-15: John the Baptist was put in prison for confronting the political leaders of his day with divine truth. While in prison, he was put to death by King Herod for his straightforward witness to the coming of the Lord, the true and righteous Judge. John, like our Lord’s disciples, was happy to suffer for the name of Jesus. John’s example encourages us also to be bold witnesses for Jesus as the One who came to bring light and salvation to a darkened world. You may be the only Scripture some people hear. Give them the light of the Gospel in your words and actions and shed some light with the truth of Jesus.

Advent 4

Matthew 1: 18-25: At first, Joseph had trouble believing that the Holy Spirit was directly involved with Mary’s pregnancy. He planned to divorce her quietly until an angel of the Lord came to assure him that Mary would bear a Son and he was to give this special Child the name “Jesus” because He will save His people from their sins. What a blessed privilege we have to share the Good News of Jesus for the salvation of many people. By just sharing the truth of His name, you are sharing God’s plan to save us from the slavery of sin, the wretchedness of the devil, the defeat of the grave and the challenges of the sinful flesh. It’s all in a name. It’s all in Jesus - the reason for the season.

Christmas 1

Matthew 2:13-23: After the visit of the wise men from the east to find and worship the newborn King of the Jews, Herod in a rage tried to kill the Child. God used faithful Joseph to take the Child and Mary to Egypt to flee from the wrath of Herod. May God also use us as faithful followers of Jesus by worshipping Him with our whole heart and sharing Him with those whose lives we touch.

Christmas 2

Luke 2:40-52: At the age of twelve, Jesus obediently went to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary to celebrate the Passover. But, Jesus was also aware of the truth that He was the only-begotten Son of God and needed to be in constant contact with His Father. He needed to be able to have a connection with His Father to carry out the mission He was sent to Earth to accomplish. Christmas reminds us that Jesus is God's greatest gift to the world. What a privilege we have to share God's gift of a Savior with others. May we always be ready and willing to share this Good News whenever and wherever the opportunity arises!

Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12: The celebration of Epiphany is the Gentile Christmas Day. With the sending of the star to mark His Son's birth, God announced to the world His desire for everyone to be saved, and He did something about it. He sent His Son in recognizable form: human flesh. The celebration of Epiphany reminds us that our mission is to let Jesus shine for all the world to see, so that everyone might be saved. Pray for God to fill your heart with mission zeal and to recognize the next opportunity to bear His shining truth.

Baptism of Our Lord

Matthew 3:13-17: Jesus came to fully carry out the will of His Father. This included being baptized to fulfill all righteousness and take our place under the Holy Law of God. He lived in perfect obedience to that Law in our place, so that we might be the redeemed children of God who now have God's Good News to share with others who need to hear it. Don't deprive your friends, co-workers, or neighbors of the blessing of hearing from God, "You are Mine! By the grace of God, you walk now in the newness of life in Christ!" God makes all things new: the new day, the new start, and the grace that makes things new, and this is exactly the news you can't just get anywhere. This News is found only in Christ - so share it boldly!

Epiphany 2

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.

Epiphany 3

Matthew 4:12-25: God keeps calling and our calling is to keep witnessing. God called to Adam and Eve in the cool of the afternoon; Ezekiel by the river Chebar; Isaiah in the temple; Samuel while he slept; and Peter, James and John while they were fishing. From God's call comes His direction, guidance, correction, instruction, enlightenment, loving relationships, new missions, acts of care and fellowship bearing His name. So we pray: God, keep calling. Help me to hear Your call. Please don't ever quit calling just because I don't answer, or when I'm slow to respond or when obedience to Your call involves discomfort or trouble. God's call means so much to our witness in this life and for eternity. We belong to Him. We have life now and for eternity through Him. And because of His calling, our life and witness have significance. So, God keep calling - and we'll witness always!

Epiphany 4

Matthew 5:1-12: When someone asks you, "How are you today?" How do you respond? So often we instinctively quip, "fine, okay, good as can be expected." But those responses do not elicit much of a reaction. Today's Gospel, the grace of God and the power of the Cross give us the opportunity to joyfully respond to that question with a bold, "Blessed!" "I am blessed in Christ!" We have the right and the privilege to boast in the Lord and the blessedness found only in Him. Why not make manifest the blessedness that is found in Jesus - and let that response be your sharing of the Good News that is found in you and through you only because of Christ!

Epiphany 5

Matthew 5:13-20: We have been blessed to be a blessing to others as salt and light. Isn't it wonderful that God Himself refers to YOU as His salt and His light for His world that He seeks to love and save? Empowered by the grace and forgiveness of Christ crucified, we have the privilege and responsibility of bearing witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in our every thought, word and deed. We are blessed salt and light that bring glory to God and lead others to praise God rather than praising us for our deeds. While this is hard to accomplish as sinners, we have the righteousness of Christ crucified to carry it out. May God bless us so we can "season" others with His salt and light to make an eternal difference everywhere we go.

Epiphany 6

Matthew 5:21-37: As Jesus teaches about sin, be that murder, adultery, divorce, or swearing falsely, it all begins in the heart. Jesus knows the heart of the matter begins with repentance and being made right with Him. Once our hearts are made right and confirmed in the truth, they can share the truth. Nothing is easier for us to share with one another than something that we have confirmed in our hearts. If in our hearts we are convinced that dark chocolate is better than white chocolate, we will speak about it with a conviction that rivals defending our favorite sports team. But it all begins in the heart, which the Bible says controls our thought, words and deeds. Let God create a clean heart in you and then reach out to the world with the truth that fills your heart from God.

Epiphany 7

Matthew 5:38-48: I once heard it said that a prayer life centered on ourselves robs us of a prayer life. To pray our petitions may only take a few minutes, but if you start including your enemies, your competition, your neighbors, and the world, then you have a prayer life. Single out someone with whom you've had a difficulty or where there has been a tension, or worse, a heated, unresolved battle, and lift them up in prayer, and then let them know you prayed for them. Your prayer life will be following God's will and both of you will be blessed by the love of God that has been shared. God's Word empowers us to go the extra mile with great love and to reach out to the world around us that is begging for compassion and grace that comes from our prayers for them.

Epiphany 8

Matthew 6:24-34: Fret means to be dissatisfied to the point of worry. Many people think, "Maybe I'll concern myself with the Kingdom later, when I'm about to die, but right now I have more pressing matters." People will always fret because they will never be satisfied with the things they give priority to now. They need the Kingdom to face the daily challenges they are facing. Share with someone the joy of being fret-free while putting the Kingdom and God's righteousness first knowing that the God of the Kingdom has promised to give you all that you need in addition to it.

Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-9: Jesus was flesh and blood like you and me and each one of the disciples. In many of their day to day situations that was all they could see; they couldn't begin to comprehend that He was at the same time the perfect and holy Son of God. As His outward appearance changed (transfigured) before them, they were given a glimpse of the full glory of who Jesus is as both God and Man. During the ups and downs of our daily lives, we can see Jesus, only Jesus when we are in the Word - as Peter tells us in His Epistle - which is even better than seeing the transfigured Jesus - because the Word is the Living Jesus for us to see every single day. Share Him. Listen to Him in His Word. And share the power of His Word and presence by sharing a verse from His Word today!

Lent 1

Matthew 4:1-11: As you know, Sundays in Lent are not part of the Lenten season. They serve as "Islands of Refreshment" during the course of Lent, as every Sunday is a "Little Easter." Our Scripture takes us to the temptation of Jesus, but our Lord shows us the importance of His Word in our everyday lives. Trust in God plays out against Satan and can also be seen in God's Word. The Word is our DAILY refreshment. Have you spent time reading God's Word, the Portals of Prayer, Daily Bread, or a Lenten Devotional? These aid us in returning to the daily nourishment and Godly armor to battle any and all temptations. Pray that the blessing of every test would be to direct us to put all our trust in God. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to the Word for all you need to nourish both body and soul. Then you are prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in you to the world in which you live every day, and you can do it with confidence that Satan does not have the final word, but instead, God has the victorious Word.

Lent 2

John 3:1-17: Do you ever have questions about what you hear in worship, in a Bible reading or in a sermon? Is there something that we teach as a church that you're just not absolutely crystal clear on? Do you think you're alone? Nicodemus was a highly trained Pharisee and a teacher of the Law. But he had questions. Instead of ignoring his questions and leaving it alone, he came forward and asked them. There is no place to properly raise your hand and ask questions during the worship service. That's why time spent together in Bible study is so critical. And here's the key point: Once you have the question resolved, you're more likely to share this Good News truth with someone else. And that's what we are called to do as the people of God! Step out! Ask a question. Get the truth resolved in your heart so you can reach out with the truth to the world around you.

Lent 3

John 4:5-26 (27-30, 39-42): Do you find yourself parched in the middle of this Lenten season? If you do, think of what the world that doesn't regularly taste the living water of God's Word must be going through. The Bible has what we have been thirsting for, and God's Spirit quenches our thirst with the life-giving sustenance of Himself. Do we know who is offering us the gift of living water? Or are we like the Samaritan woman looking everywhere else but the true fountain? The post-modern world in which we live is either not looking at all, or they are looking in all the wrong places for something to quench their thirst. The spiritual thirst mechanism is a gift from God. But Satan looks to satisfy the thirst with the things of this world rather than that which truly satisfies: Christ alone. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you draw from the only well that gives life, Jesus Christ Himself. Draw living water from this Well in the course of your daily living and satisfy the thirst of those around you by sharing Jesus Christ, freely pouring out His love and saving grace without limit.

Lent 4

John 9:1-41: Jesus is the Light of the world! Paul gives you your life story in a nutshell - once you were in darkness, but now you are to walk as children of Light. (Eph 5:8) You are salt. You are light. God has no plan B if we fail. You are His A plan to share the Good News of salvation with the world. You are His means for bringing His Kingdom of life to a dying world. And the One who calls you to be salt and light makes you this promise: I will be with you to the very end of the age. His presence is LIGHT. While we remain distinct from the ways of the world, we dare not lose sight of the fact that we are called to permeate that very same culture with the grace and love of Jesus. How? By being who we are: God's people through and through where we live and living as Light because we live in Christ. That's Christ's mission - and because it's His mission, it is our mission. He lives in us and His light shines through us in our thoughts, words and deeds. May God bless you as children of the Light! Go shine!

Lent 5

John 11:1-45: Do you know anyone who is facing a time of despair, a feeling of hopelessness or some struggle in the flesh? YOU HAVE A WORD OF RESURRECTION FOR THEM! Dry bones live! God calls what was dead to life! God has the power to bring change to your circumstances! God's Word of resurrection life breathes new life into every situation and circumstance of life and gives renewed hope. That's why you are a light-bearer; you are salt; you are living, breathing hope and a ray of Good News. Pray for someone today who is weighed down by the things of death in this world and the struggles that leaves one feeling like a bunch of dry, lifeless bones. God has given you a Word of resurrection to share with them, both in this life and for the next. Jesus is the I AM. He is a personal God. He is the Resurrection and the Life. May God send you to someone with this Word to be a breath of resurrection Good News.

Palm Sunday

John 12:12-19: Hosanna: Lord, save us now! That's not the cry of many people in the world around us, is it? Most people don't know they need saving, and what would they need saving from? Taxes, maybe?! From higher prices, we wish! War, crime, corrupt government, terrorism, dangerous storms, we could make a long list of dangers, but do we really need to cry out, "Hosanna" from any of them? When it comes to sin, death and the devil, we do! Only Jesus is the answer to those villains who are seeking our very soul. Jesus has come to save us now. Wave your palm branches for Him alone. Hosanna! He is present always to save us - now. And that's a word we can share with the world around us. Why not take a palm branch from today's worship and let someone know why Jesus is the One who has come to stay with you - and the One who will stay with them to save!

Easter

Matthew 28:1-10: When Mary Magdalene saw her risen Lord, she went with great excitement to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and shared with them what Jesus had told her. We have seen our Risen Lord by faith and that sure faith inspires us to share with others the hope we have because Jesus lives! Celebrate the victory over Satan, death and the grave by telling someone else that Easter matters: it matters to you and it matters to them. Without Easter, they have no answer to the problem of sin and death. But with Jesus, a Savior who lives, there is joy and victory in the face of sin and death. Because Jesus lives, those who believe in Him live now and for eternity. Easter makes all the difference in this world and the next; to keep this message to yourself would be a tragedy. We have seen the Lord. He lives. What joy! What triumph! And it's all yours. Not to keep to yourself - but to share and share and share!

Easter 2

John 20:19-31: On Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to His disciples when Thomas was absent. In joy, the disciples told Thomas, "We have seen the Lord!" Their witness was true even though Thomas at first doubted. Just because someone does not believe our witness to Jesus as our Lord and Savior should not discourage us from sharing our faith openly and boldly. Sharing is our challenge! Changing hearts is God's work! And thanks be to God, we have a patient and compassionate Savior who welcomes and encourages us in our doubts to "poke and prod" and says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!" Pray for the opportunity to share your faith with someone who is doubting and ask the Holy Spirit to work mightily to change their heart. God is faithful and His Word works miracles of faith every day.

Easter 3

Luke 24:13-35: Once again, today, we celebrate the blessings of Easter with one another, focusing on Jesus' resurrection appearances. Did you notice that none of the resurrection appearances were marked by dramatic settings? Jesus was mistaken for a gardener. He showed up on a dusty road. He walked along the shoreline watching His disciples' fish. We notice the common, every day sights and sounds of Jesus' appearances and the ordinary routines which He blessed with His abiding presence. The resurrected Jesus comes to us in Word and Sacrament, ordinary means, and He appears to us at meal times, in fun times, amid our work and in the face of our worries. He comes to people of faith and to those plagued by doubt and worry. Did you miss Christ's presence with you today? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the eyes to see Jesus' abiding presence on your walk of life today, and then celebrate it, but also boldly share this truth with others. Jesus is alive! He is present with and for you. And He is alive for the world around you.

Easter 4

John 10:1-10: On this day, we remember with gratitude the gift of our risen Good Shepherd. King David, as a Psalmist, penned the words praising God for "tending" him through every detail of life. What details need attending in your life and the lives of those around you who need the Word of the Good Shepherd? Can you paint a picture of a sheep and a Shepherd, a person loving something precious to them, and share the truth that this is how God loves them? That's the privilege we have in sharing the Good Shepherd and His love.

Easter 5

John 14:1-14: When Jesus proclaimed Himself as "the Way, the Truth and the Life," He was telling His disciples and each of us that He came to "orient" us in this upside-down, mixed-up world of ours. The question of Thomas in our Gospel is a commonly asked question, "Lord, we don't know where You are going; we don't know where we should go or what we should be doing, so how can we possibly know the way? And it was then that Jesus gave us a reference point to orient us, to give us direction and to be our constant magnetic north, no matter where we are in life. The word "orient" literally means, "to position oneself with respect to one specific reference point." The specific reference point that our God gave to us was His Son, the Living Word. The reason we need Jesus to orient us in this world is that sin, the world and our flesh, and the working of the devil are seeking with all their might to disorient us. God needs us to be able to share His orienting, Living Word in this disorienting world so that people will know the Way and so they will find their way home to Him. By this Word, you have been made a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. By this Word, the stormy sea is calmed, the sick healed, the dead are raised, the hungry fed, the leprous made clean, the sinful forgiven. How can we not share this Word, Jesus, who is our HOME, our WAY - and do it today with someone who has just lost their way? There's NO WAY but YAHWEH!

Easter 6

John 14:15-21: At the time that Peter wrote today's Epistle, Rome was in great need for Jesus Christ. Rome needed people who were truly committed to Jesus Christ as their Lord in their hearts, in their minds, and in their daily lifestyles. Our world needs such people today. Jesus has sent His Holy Spirit to teach our hearts and equip us to defend that which we love. Have you set apart your heart for Jesus Christ and Him alone because He first loved you? Ask the Holy Spirit to create a clean heart in you and then prepare that heart by setting it aside, consecrating it for Jesus Christ as your Lord. Spend time in prayer asking for God to prepare you to share the hope that you have in Christ. And then look out, because God will answer that prayer with people and opportunities. So be bold. Be ready. Be prepared. In this hope, you have the forgiveness of your sin, your future secured, and your love unconditionally realized: Because He lives, you live!

Easter 7

John 17:1-11: On this last Sunday of the Easter Season, we hear Jesus praying His High Priestly Prayer, and He's praying for you; He's praying for your church family. He wants you to be people of His Word and Name unified as one Body with Him as the Head. His Body should function as ONE with Him as the Head and every member of the Body having a unique but unified function together as one for the purpose of His Kingdom. Read John 17 once again today at home, and then pray for His will to be first done in your individual life and collectively as a unified church family. Pray that your life would be an answer to Jesus' prayer that His will may be done to carry out His purpose in the world that needs the Good News of salvation.

Pentecost

John 7:37-39: The Festival of Pentecost is a day full of celebration. In the Old Testament, it was a festival of first fruits, similar to our celebration of Thanksgiving. People dropped everything they were doing and traveled to Jerusalem to offer God a tithe; the first fruits offering of thanksgiving to God for His blessing to them. God chose this day as the birthday of His Church. There would be no Church without the working of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings faith through clear communication of God's Word. Faith comes through hearing the Word. The celebration of Pentecost beckons us to keep breathing, inhaling the Spirit of God into our very souls and exhaling the Word of God to the world. Pentecost challenges us to keep ourselves always open to the Spirit who seeks us out. The Spirit calls and enlightens us to make ourselves available to God, where He equips us for His mission and ministry. Share the birthday blessings with others.

Holy Trinity

Matthew 28:16-20: We marvel today at our Triune God's work in our lives. Without His creating, redeeming, and sanctifying work, we would still be in our sin and without hope. But, the confession of our Triune God is a confession of hope and love. Spend some time in meditation and prayer considering the Triune Name placed upon you in your Baptism and the promised blessings which flow from it that makes an eternal difference in your life. Pray about whom the confession of your faith would make this same eternal difference. When we make a confession of our God, we are simply, yet profoundly, bringing to life our remembrance of what God has done, continues to do and promises to keep doing in our lives. May God bless your remembrance and your sharing this week.

Proper 3

Matthew 6:24-34: Jesus teaches us to be "first things first" people. With the help of the Holy Spirit, prayer changes us. Prayer leads us away from our own solutions and plans and toward God and His will and righteousness. God says, "Trust Me. I am going to do amazing

things.” That’s the tough part of being faithful. But the world is watching. Will they see us put our lives and our plans in God’s hands? Our best witness today may be simply putting God first to introduce the world to our Heavenly Father who cares for us and knowing we trust Him with everything.

Proper 4

Matthew 7:15-29: Jesus taught about the importance of building our lives on a solid foundation. He said the person who obeys His Word is like “a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Are we building our lives according to code? The house built by the Master Builder has a distinctive mark. When all the storms and disasters come, and they will come, this house will still be standing. Only Jesus can stand by that promise as the Solid Rock and Sure Foundation. By the grace of God, our lives tell the story of one blessing after another, all built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ that will stand for eternity. Share the building code that comes with the authority of the Master Builder for life.

Proper 5

Matthew 9:9-13: Who doesn’t like a test drive? Our Lord would like us to test drive “Mercy.” The Pharisees had it in mind that Jesus came to celebrate the healthy, rather than to seek out the sick. With the calling of Matthew to follow Jesus, we are encouraged that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. We pray for Jesus to give us a heart that breaks for the lost, that yearns for the hurting, that aches for the weak, and that doesn’t seek to give others what they deserve, but instead gives them love and grace. That’s how a new friend, Matthew, was found. How many new friends can be found today by test driving “Mercy” rather giving the world what it deserves? Try mercy today! Have a wonderful week in the Lord answering His call to share mercy in His name.

Proper 6

Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-20): You are an answer to prayer! Jesus looked around and saw sheep in need of a shepherd and called for prayer for laborers to be sent out into a harvest that is plentiful. Jesus could do His mission work in so many other ways, with a legion of angels or a thundering voice from heaven, but He has chosen YOU. He is trusting that the Spirit will give you words to speak. You are His sent ones, an answer to the prayers of the Church, called to speak with the Word knowing the Spirit will accompany the Word. Where you are today, speak with joy, wisdom and innocence. It’s harvest time!

Proper 7

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33: God has told us to claim His promises and stand firmly upon them. In today’s Gospel we hear, “He who stands firm (or endures) to the end will be saved.” God’s promises equip us with endurance. Want to make the world a better place? Share a promise from God. The Holy Spirit creates the faith to trust this promise and take God at His Word. As we do, we endure, stand strong, and stand up to the evil, the fearsome challenges, the burdensome tasks. Thanks be to God for His promises. The world around us needs the promises God has given to us in His Word. May God help us also take Him at His Word so we can endure and the world can become a better place, one enduring promise at a time!

Proper 8

Matthew 10:34-42: You never know how a life will be touched by a small act of kindness – like the sharing of a cold cup of water - but God does! Jesus gives us a hint of the fact that the intentional kindness we share with one another in “little acts of love” is found in the parable of the sheep and the goats when He refers to Judgment Day: “When I was thirsty, you gave Me

something to drink. When did we do this for You, Lord?" When you did it for any of My people, no matter how unimportant the act or the person seemed to be, you did it for Me! Reach out to the world with the kindness of God's Word as you would do it for Jesus Himself!

Proper 9

Matthew 11:25-30: The Lord offers quite an exchange in today's Gospel: the overbearing burdens of this world that we carry we can exchange for the light yoke that ONLY Jesus offers to us. Only Jesus can offer the light yoke because of His tremendous strength and grace to carry our burdens through His cross. With this rest and relief of burdens, we are then free to reach out with the Gospel of God's grace and freeing salvation to others. There is no escape from the burdens of life, but there is One who desires to exchange yokes with you, and His burden is light. Rest for the soul is knowing that you never have to face your burdens alone. God is with you always to lift you up and to lift your burdens even higher onto His shoulders. In His rest and care, reach out with the news of this exchange to someone who needs a refreshing rest today.

Proper 10

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23: In our Old Testament and Gospel lessons for today, God is revealing His amazing grace for our lives in earthy language. When God speaks, wonderful things happen, but when we speak for ourselves, not so much. He gives us every reason to speak His Word to the world, knowing that we have a 100% guarantee that His Word will produce an effect and not return to Him empty. But, just like the hardened path, the shallow rocky soil and the thorny weedy soil, we fail to listen and produce the harvest the Lord intends. In worship, we rejoice in God's saving Word and we pray that we will be faithful to use this Word and spread this seed that bears the miracle of an abundant harvest with every Word we share with others. Pray for God's saving purpose to be made known through your daily encounters with people. When someone asks you, "What's the good word today?" Why not share one - a Word from God knowing that when it is spoken - things happen!

Proper 11

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43: Our Lord continues to teach us about His kingdom. We need this teaching because it is literally "right side up" from our world turned "upside down" by sin. In His Kingdom, the weeds and the wheat will grow together until He comes again for the final harvest. Knowing this fact to be true, we don't pray that God will remove all evil from this world (as we far too many times lament and often times pray for God to do), but instead, we earnestly pray to join His mission to overcome evil with His saving love, His grace and mercy, and His Word that never returns empty (remember last week's message?!). Pray for eyes to see the world as Christ does: as an opportunity for mission and to see every moment as one of grace that God has given us to be about His saving work. Let us pray that as God's people, we remain firmly built upon the Rock so we may serve as His witnesses shining forth in the wheat field among the weeds so they may see the Light.

Proper 12

Matthew 13:44-52: We look all around us and question the value of "things." How can it all be worth so much? In our daily experiences, we are accustomed to the value of "things" being driven higher and higher. And then we look at the things of God - His Word, worship, music, water, bread, wine - and they all look pretty ordinary. But in God's Kingdom, these are the pearls of greatest value because they reveal His love and presence with us. We need wisdom from the kingdom. If someone doesn't tell us what something is truly worth, we would never know. That is why it is so important that we tell the world about the true treasures found in

the things of God. How will they ever know if we don't tell them? Let someone in on the pearls and treasures that you know in the wisdom of God.

Proper 13

Matthew 14:13-21: Martin Luther penned these wonderful words: "I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all, but whatever I've placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Many times when we consider evangelism, we think about going out and placing pamphlets and other items in the hands of the people. But maybe we have it all wrong. Maybe the best evangelism is putting as many people in God's hands as possible. Who can you place in God's hands today? The disciples realized that in God's hands, food was multiplied. This is true of people in God's Kingdom as well. Take time - in prayer, in conversation, and maybe even in bringing someone to worship next Sunday - but take the time to put the valuable resource of people in God's hands - knowing that in His hands they will never be lost again.

Proper 14

Matthew 14:22-33: What do you do in the midst of a storm? The right answer is: Take cover! But sometimes cover isn't enough. The disciples found themselves in a life threatening storm. Jesus said to them, "Take heart, It is I." As He was for the disciples, Jesus is for us. Jesus is our Protection and Refuge whenever we encounter life-threatening danger. He is Lord of wind and wave and of life and death. The world we live in tends to run for their own cover: drugs, alcohol, self-sufficiency. We have a Word to share with the world, and it is a gentle Word of Gospel: Take heart; trust in Jesus. There is so much that threatens our security, but only one Lord and Savior in whom we can place our total confidence. Real storms or even seeing them on the news give us an opportunity to share the One in whom we "take heart" and the One who is truly Lord of all. Share your confidence in him.

Proper 15

Matthew 15:21-28: Jesus teaches the nature of great faith: humble persistence. The Canaanite woman in our text would not let go of Jesus no matter what. Far too often when we do not receive the answer that we want from God, we seek other means to get what we wish rather than trusting completely in God's will for our lives. Great faith trusts that if God doesn't want me to have it, I don't want it. May we pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to work this faith in each of us so that this total reliance upon God will be seen in our witness in word and action to the world around us.

Proper 16

Matthew 16:13-20: Who do you say Jesus is? The answer makes all the difference in how you face your day to day living. If you say He is your Christ, your one Lord and Master, without whom you can do absolutely nothing, then missing worship and Bible Study is not an option, serving Him wherever possible is your heart's desire, stewardship of His blessings is your way of life, being more like Him is your daily prayer, and getting the Word out about Him, well, that's as important as breathing. Your confession above not only proclaims salvation, but defeats hell and makes everything in between possible. So, who again do you say Jesus is? Your answer in the Spirit will change your life and how you live it.

Proper 17

Matthew 16:21-28: "Get behind Me, Satan." I'm sure glad Jesus said that to Peter and not to me! Have you ever been a hindrance to the Gospel? Have your thoughts, words or deeds ever led someone away from Christ, rather than to Him? We all must repent of the times that our sinful lives have done the very thing that Peter did in today's Gospel lesson. We have mismatched the Person of Christ and the work of Christ. The work of the Cross is sacrifice. It's

less of me and more of Christ. (John 3:30) Self is the enemy of developing as disciples. Thanks be to God, Jesus puts our sin behind Him so we can follow Him as disciples. The cross we are to bear puts to death the things of this world so we can live the new life Christ has in mind for us to live for eternity. May God bless us with the labor of love in sharing the Gospel that puts us behind Jesus where we cannot hinder the Good News but share it boldly.

Proper 18

Matthew 18:1-20: How would you describe your “church” community? The very name, “church,” tells people that we are a “fellowship of the forgiven” and the Body of Christ (Matthew 16:18). The Church serves to build a community that helps each other with our imperfections, our unhealthy patterns, and the way we sin against each other and ourselves. We are indeed very unfortunate if we have no one to help us with our sinfulness and imperfections, with our deficits in character, with the pieces of our personalities which are not so healthy. We ALL have these imperfections, these flaws, these deficits, and that includes everyone we come into contact with in the world today. There is no exception. So, we have something to reach out to with them - HOPE. We are fortunate because we have church, we have a community, and a fellowship where brothers and sisters in the faith will speak honestly with you about your weaknesses in order to help you mature and grow into wholeness. The church is your family who loves you with honesty about both your strengths and your weaknesses. Christ’s blood on the Cross gives us the privilege and the responsibility to take the first step to confront sin in one another so sin doesn’t rule the day, grace does. What a joy to be a part of the fellowship of the forgiven and to know the grace that wins the day so peace can comfort the soul.

Proper 19

Matthew 18:21-35: Where’s your cross? Some point to the cross they are wearing as a necklace or on their ears. Some may pull out of their purse the “Cross in my pocket” that they have been carrying around for years. Today, some may even point to a tattoo or belly-button cross. Strangely enough, many people will draw your attention to a burden they are bearing as their “cross.” Today is the Feast of the Holy Cross, which is a symbol of victory over sin, death and the power of the devil. The Cross of Christ Crucified is upon you in remembrance of your Baptism on your forehead and hearts marking you as one who belongs to Him. It is in your life as you face the burdens of this world; not as the burdened, but as the overcomers of the world, triumphant in Christ. People will want to be their best around you because your best is Christ living in you. There is no room for foul language, tasteless jokes, gossip, or tolerating sinful behavior around you because Christ lives in you and everyone knows it. Celebrate the Cross in your life. Bear it passionately, on your forehead, in your heart, and through your life, because the Cross of Christ makes a difference in you as one belonging to Jesus and to all those around you who will want to be at their best. This celebration will become contagious and will be of great joy until our Lord returns.

Proper 20

Matthew 20:1-16: As our Lord tells the parable of the vineyard and the Master’s generosity to the worker who only worked for one hour, we become uncomfortable with the conclusion of the earthly story with a heavenly message: the last shall be first. We tend to lump people into either the “deserving” or the “undeserving” pile. But God doesn’t see things that way. He sees us ALL as “undeserving” in His Kingdom of grace. But He is generous beyond measure. We must not begrudge His generosity but rejoice in it - and reach out abundantly with it. Thanks be to God that He does not and has not and will never give us what we deserve but generously pours out His grace that is greater than our sin to give us eternal life. And we have this message to generously give to the world beyond measure. May the Holy Spirit bless us

with the same generosity in our witness to one another so that our fellowship bears witness to His amazing grace time after time after time!

Proper 21

Matthew 21:23-27: God's Word brings together two concepts that you don't see very often: stars and humility. Christians are to shine like the stars in this crooked and twisted world, and to do it with the humility of Christ. Now there is a tall order. How is it done? One needy soul at a time. Christ is working through you for that "tall" purpose. He is working out salvation: the liberation of pain, struggle, challenge, emotional hurt, guilt, and shame through the forgiveness of sin, the loving of one another, the putting of others first, and He is doing it through you to others. You are that bright shining star giving glory to God in the humility of day to day living for Christ. Your life has significance, right where you are. You are the answer to someone's prayer with your Christ-like heart, words, and actions in the vineyard where you radiate with God's glory.

Proper 22

Matthew 21:33-46: Jesus tells this parable about the long-suffering grace of God. Just like the Pharisees, people don't understand God and His character. They understood grace as a license for sin and greed and murderous acts. They understood grace as a deed of ownership, which allowed them to reject the landlord and kill his son. Jesus would take the punishment for sin upon Himself with His life and death on the Cross. Those who would reject Jesus would be lost. The Law and Gospel is very clear for us to share with the world. God longs to save the world by grace in Jesus.

Proper 23

Matthew 22:1-14: Have you ever been to a wedding rehearsal? The wedding is looked forward to with such great anticipation, but the rehearsal? Not so much. Jesus teaches a parable concerning His Kingdom that says that we should be living life prepared for the marriage feast every single day. He invites us to experience a foretaste of His eternal banquet here on earth. Therefore, what is life but a rehearsal for the never-ending feast of heaven? Why not invite someone to view life from a whole new perspective: an eternal one! By sharing the truth of God's Word, you can help people cast aside the temporal cares that are here today and gone tomorrow to see the true joys that God has in mind by living here and now as a rehearsal for the eternal.

Proper 24

Matthew 22:15-22: As we worship today, we are reminded that we have very little trouble rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but we have some real trouble rendering unto God the things that are God's. God doesn't have the IRS working for Him to garnish our wages or throw us into jail for non-compliance. Everything we have, everything we are, and everything we hope to be for the rest of eternity is first and foremost a gift from God. The Lord never requires anything from us that He does not first give. We belong to Him. We live and move and have our very being in Him. We bear His image. Does the world around YOU have a clue that God alone is worthy of all your praise and that you will render unto HIM first before the world? Far too many times, we blend in with the ways of the world and our rendering looks just like the world's rendering, rather than ones who belong to God and those who bear His seal. Reach out to the world simply by being who YOU ARE first and foremost!

Proper 25

Matthew 22:34-46: Love! The greatest love story ever shared was God sending His Son to fulfill every requirement of the Law of God on our behalf and the shedding of His blood on the

Cross for our redemption. We now have the opportunity to reveal the will of God through love in action as we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. The cross is a symbol of redeeming love fulfilled for God and for mankind. As we bear witness, share the love of Jesus which is always a perfect love through the Cross.

Proper 26

Matthew 23:1-12: The Pharisees had the seat of Moses and the authority to teach, but their words and actions did not match. The world is watching, if the words of Jesus have any authority in our daily lives. If our actions do not match the words we share on Sunday or in our Bible Study, then they can do more harm than good. Our Christian faith needs to carry on into our back yard while we are mowing, and while we are watching sports, and in our conversations at the mall. Our Lord promises to exalt those who humbly serve Him for His sake at all times. This may be our most powerful witness: serving Him at all times and in all places. Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless our witness while the world is constantly watching as we serve Christ.

Proper 27

Matthew 25:1-13: Are you prepared? You might respond, "It depends on what I'm preparing for." Since God promises to dwell among us to make His home among us in His new heaven and new earth, isn't all of life a preparation for our homecoming? Unfortunately, we find ourselves preparing for everything but that, thinking that we will prepare for "that" when "that time" comes. God's Word tells us that the time to prepare is always "NOW!" We are to encourage one another all the more as the Day approaches even nearer. We have a WORD to share with the world that literally unpacks our bags and wants us to stay a while rather than helps us prepare for the blessings of our homecoming. The world makes us "unprepared" by draining us of the oil we need to be prepared by taking from us the one thing needful: Jesus Christ! Boldly share Christ with the world, for when they have Him and Him alone, they are prepared for the Day when He returns for His bride, His Church.

Proper 28

Matthew 25:14-30: Jesus again teaches us about His Kingdom with a parable but as He does - He reveals two diametrically different understandings about the Master, the Creator and Giver of all things: one where the receiver of the talents sees the Master as a generous giver and invests the talents with joy in the "business" of the Master; the other where the receiver of the talent sees the Master as hard and stingy and therefore hides the talent in fear of the Master. As a steward of all that God has given you, how do you see the Giver? If you see Him as hard, stingy, unfair in comparison to what others have and question His giving to you, you will never steward with the joy that God intended. But, if you believe that God gave you exactly the talent and the blessings and has in mind the purpose for His Kingdom that He has intended through you, you will go about your daily tasks with joy and contentment and you will rejoice to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" May God fill your heart and life with this trust and joy going about the stewardship of your Master's business.

Proper 29

Matthew 25:31-46: The parable of the sheep and the goats does not put an emphasis on works, but instead, it puts them in their proper perspective. Here is the greatest perk for serving the Lord. With every task and every deed and with every person, we have the opportunity to meet Christ in that person and through that deed. So, how do we wait for Judgment Day? With certainty in His pronouncement of our sins forgiven, with certainty of receiving inheritance that our compassionate Judge has prepared us for eternity, and with certainty that every day, every task, every vocation has significance to God and to us, because unbelieving souls are saved through the power of the Holy Spirit and believing souls meet Christ as they wait.

Year B

Advent 1

Mark 13:24-37: Watch! Wait! Pray! These are all wonderful words of Advent. The watchman's prayer is also the call to witness to stand faithfully and fervently, watching and waiting for the hands of God the Potter to work at the clay of His people. Isaiah understood the simple truth that in the hands of the Potter, nothing is impossible for the clay. Boldly share the watchman's prayer: Potter God, mold me and shape me according to Your will, for in You there is life and purpose and a future for eternity.

Advent 2

Mark 1:1-8: An elderly man had been fitted with a hearing aid and returned to his doctor's office a week later for a checkup. "How do you like your new hearing aid?" the doctor asked. "Just fine," the man replied. "How does your family like it?" inquired the doctor. "Oh, I haven't told them yet," the man answered, "but I have changed my will three times already." How's your hearing? If we are hearing God's Word, well...it may not be just our will that we change, but our entire lives. God's voice was proclaimed loud and clear through the voice of Isaiah, Peter, and John the Baptist, who all speak the Law and Gospel calling for us to repent of our sin, to be forgiven, and to walk the way of God. By the grace of God, your hearing has changed your life! Ask someone, "How's your hearing?" and tell them what a difference hearing the Word of God has made for you!

Advent 3

John 1:6-8, 19-28: As the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist was sent to bear witness about the Light. John pointed ahead to the Savior of the world – Jesus. Today, we also are given the privilege and joy of pointing others to Christ. We do this so that others might believe through Him and literally - see the Light - Jesus!

Advent 4

Luke 1:26-38: It can be easy for us to fall into the temptation of thinking that God couldn't possibly use us to share His Good News with others. God responds to our doubts of "I'm not a good enough speaker." or "I can't really make a difference." or "What if I say the wrong thing?" with – "For nothing will be impossible with God!" Our God – with whom nothing is impossible – promises to bless our faithful witness to Him!

Christmas 1

Luke 2:22-40: When we receive good news, it can be hard for us to keep quiet about it. Whether it's a promotion, an engagement announcement, or acing a big test – we just have to tell the news! How did Anna respond to the news of the Messiah? She gave thanks to God and spoke of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. May the Good News of Jesus Christ lead us to give thanks to God and to boldly speak of Him to the people God puts in our lives. They may be just as eager and awaiting the news as Anna was.

Christmas 2

Luke 2:40-52: When Mary and Joseph finally found their lost child, they found Jesus at the Temple. "I must be about My Father's business," Jesus said. We too must be about our

Heavenly Father's business. It is good that we are found in God's house today, for here is where we are strengthened, enabled by the Spirit and equipped to be His witnesses out in the world through the Word and Sacrament.

Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12: The star of the Epiphany story is actually the star itself! God used the star to lead the Magi to the Savior of the world that they might worship Him. As God's faithful witness, you may be the "star" that God uses to lead someone in your life to worship the Lord and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ! Shine bright!

Baptism of Our Lord

Mark 1:4-11: As we hear of our Lord's Baptism, we are reminded of our own Baptism. Our Baptism tells the story that others need to hear. In Baptism, we are joined to Christ's death and His resurrection. Because Christ lives, we live. Let your Baptism be the story that gives witness to God's amazing grace.

Epiphany 2

John 1:43-51: Philip's evangelism to Nathaniel consisted of three words – "Come and see!" It doesn't take a lengthy sermon or speech to witness for Christ. A friendly invitation to "come and see" may be just what someone you know is looking to hear and see. May God use your invitation to bring someone into His house or form a relationship with a believer so that they can hear the Good News of salvation through Christ!

Epiphany 3

Mark 1:14-20: Jesus gives us the same invitation that He gave to Simon and Andrew: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." We are equipped, not with fishing poles, but with God's Word. Through our "fishing" - our sharing of God's Word, the Holy Spirit lures others into the lavish grace that only God provides.

Epiphany 4

Mark 1:21-28: What sets our message apart as Christians? We speak of the One who has authority – Jesus Christ! Even today, God's Word has authority! As you bear witness, take comfort that through the authority of God's Word and His Holy Spirit, others are still brought into fellowship with Christ!

Epiphany 5

Mark 1:29-39: The disciples said to Jesus, "Everyone is looking for You!" There are still people – even people you know – who are looking for Jesus. Pray that God would grant you the opportunity to help someone find Jesus by the faithful sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Epiphany 6

Mark 1:40-45: Even though he was instructed otherwise, the recently healed leper couldn't help but go out and share the incredible news of what Jesus had done for him. What has Jesus done for you in your life? Just as the leper was healed of his disease, you have been healed of the disease of sin. Don't hold that message in; instead, go and tell others what Jesus has done for you with great joy!

Epiphany 7

Mark 2:1-12: Advertisements bombard us with messages saying, "You've never seen anything like this before." Many times, that claim is not backed up by the product. However,

when we speak of the goodness and mercy of God, we can truly tell others: “You’ve never seen anything like this before.” Why? Because there is nothing else in this world that can compare with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. You have God’s Word to prove it!

Epiphany 8

Mark 2(13-17) 18-22: Jesus’ earthly ministry reminds us that God’s love and care is for all people – even those who we would consider “outcasts.” As Christians, we are to bring God’s mercy and grace to all people, not just those we consider worthy. May God enable you to step out of your comfort zone and reach those who truly need to hear the Gospel message.

Transfiguration

Mark 9:2-9: As we have gathered in God’s presence here in worship, we can say along with Peter, “It is good that we are here!” Rather than setting up camp here, our Lord sends us out into the world with a message to share. We are sent to show others Jesus just as we have seen and heard Him in His Good News.

Lent 1

Mark 1:9-15: The devil constantly tempts us to keep the news of salvation through Christ to ourselves. The devil loves to make us think that we are inadequate messengers, or too busy, or unable to make a difference in someone else’s life. The Good News is that Christ was tempted in every way just like us, but He remained without sin. By His own resistance to the devil, our Lord strengthens us in the midst of our own temptations and failures and equips us to be bold witnesses to Christ’s victory over sin, death and the devil.

Lent 2

Mark 8:27-38: There are many different thoughts people have today about who Jesus is. Some say He was just a good man, some say He is a prophet, and some say He is a good example for us to follow. Like Peter, we confess exactly who Jesus is: He is the Christ, the Son of God. May the Holy Spirit equip us to be bold witnesses to the Rock and Foundation of our lives, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Lent 3

John 2:13-22 (23-25): When we are passionate about something, it is apparent to all those around us. Jesus was passionate about His Father’s house. After He cleansed the temple, His disciples remembered what was written, “Zeal for Your house will consume me.” May the Holy Spirit instill us with a zeal for Christ so that we may boldly speak His Good News and share His mercy and love with a world in desperate need of it.

Lent 4

John 3:14-21: When we think about telling others about Jesus, sometimes we get overwhelmed. “Where do I start?” we ask ourselves. A good starting point is John 3:16, sometimes known as “The Gospel in a Nutshell.” Here, the entirety of the Gospel can be found in one short and memorable verse. God loves you – what a wonderful message to share!

Lent 5

Mark 10:(32-34) 35-45: Greatness is measured differently in God’s kingdom compared to the kingdom of the world. Greatness in God’s kingdom is found in service to Him and to others. “For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.” May our humble service lead others to the great riches found in God’s amazing grace.

Palm Sunday

John 12:12-19: Hosanna, save us now! Our cry for help is the same as those on the first Palm Sunday. Our Lord has not only heard our cries, but has answered them with His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. As ones who have already been saved by Christ's life and death, we have the opportunity to share that very same saving rescue with others in our daily lives.

Easter

Mark 16:1-8: The Good News of the resurrection of Jesus was, at first, hard for His followers to accept. But by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, their hearts were soon on fire for Jesus, and they eagerly shared this Good News. May the truth of the resurrection of Jesus set our hearts ablaze to share this Good News whenever we have the opportunity.

Easter 2

John 20:19-31: The risen Lord appeared to His disciples when they were hiding behind locked doors, in fear for their own lives. The message he shared was to comfort them, saying: "Peace be with you! Receive the Holy Spirit!" God's peace and the Spirit's power put a fire into their witnessing. May this same peace and power inspire us and enable us to let our Gospel lights shine brightly.

Easter 3

Luke 24:36-49: Jesus gives a mission statement to all His followers: "Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations." Thanks be to God, we are not left on our own in this great task. Luke tells us that we have been clothed with power from on high. The Holy Spirit guides and directs our witness and He takes our message of repentance and forgiveness and brings about faith in those who hear.

Easter 4

John 10:11-18: Jesus taught His disciples and, by extension, we as His people, that He is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. What can stop the witness of those who no longer fear death? Every enemy has been vanquished by the Good Shepherd. What Good News this is for our comfort and all of the sheep not yet in the fold. So, boldly share the Good News that there is a very Good Shepherd in the Risen Jesus Christ who came for the sake of all of the sheep.

Easter 5

John 15:1-8: Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches. Apart from the Vine, we can do nothing to please God. In fact, apart from the vine, we can do nothing at all! But, staying attached to the True Vine makes us productive branches who bear much fruit, including the fruit of sharing the Good News of Jesus with hearts that are afire for Him.

Easter 6

John 15:9-17: Jesus chose His disciples to go and bear much fruit through their love and their witnessing. The fire of the Spirit empowered them and still empowers us to share the greatest true story ever told!

Easter 7

John 17:11b-19: Jesus prayed for His disciples. He also intercedes for you and me. Our text is a portion of the High Priestly prayer of Jesus, asking that His Father in heaven would preserve and protect His disciples in a hostile world. The words following this text include the same prayer for us believers today. What an encouragement this is for us to "keep the faith" and at the same time to share it with all of those around us.

Pentecost

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15: Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will testify about Jesus. He also said that they would be strengthened to testify about Him as well. What a privilege they had and we also have, with the Spirit's help, to testify about our loving and forgiving Jesus.

Holy Trinity

John 3:1-17: Jesus stated so clearly that anyone who does not believe in the name of God's one and only Son Jesus will be eternally condemned. This truth makes our work of outreach and mission critical. Without faith in Jesus, there is no salvation. This truth gives us a sense of urgency to get the message out. Who can you share this truth with today? Our Triune God loves the world so much, He doesn't want a single soul to be left out and perish.

Proper 3

Mark 2:(13-17) 18-22: We seek out the care of a physician when we're sick and dealing with an illness. Spiritually speaking, we *are* sick. We all have one spiritual sickness in common: sin. The comforting thing is that the Gospel message of Jesus Christ is for sinners just like us! We who have been given the Gospel cure have the joy of passing on that same precious cure to those who have not heard of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician.

Proper 4

Mark 2:23-28 (3:1-6): Jesus' message to the Pharisees about the Sabbath turns their understanding upside down. The Sabbath was made for us! God ordained and established the Sabbath for the restoration and renewal of His people. As the Lord restores and renews us through our time gathered in His house, we are then equipped to bring this message to a world that is desperately in need of the restoration Christ provides.

Proper 5

Mark 3:20-35: The song goes, "And assembled as one, in the name of the Son, lifting hearts, lifting hands, celebrating as friends and proclaiming the Lord all our praises afford – we are brothers and sisters in Christ." We have an eternal relationship with God and one another through Jesus Christ. May God use our witness to bring others into eternal relationships with God.

Proper 6

Mark 4:26-34: Every year farmers get to see a great miracle of God in the growth of their crop. The farmers may plant the seed, but God does the rest. The same is true for us as God's witnesses in the world. We are called upon to share the Word of God and to scatter the seed. We can leave the miracle of growth to the Holy Spirit, who gives us the promise that His Word will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish the purpose for which it was sent (Is. 55:11).

Proper 7

Mark 4:35-44: We have the great blessings of forgiveness of sin, life and salvation from Jesus. He who controls all creation continues to care and protect us as only He can, just like He did for the disciples. Speaking about our faith and hope in Jesus provides the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work saving faith in the hearts of those who do not yet believe. As Christians, let's be more intentional about our witnessing!

Proper 8

Mark 5:21-43: Never underestimate the power of God's Word! With one Word, Jesus

amazingly heals Jairus' daughter. God's Word is what gives our witness power. The very same Word that heals and restored Jairus' daughter can spiritually heal and restore those to whom we speak God's powerful Word.

Proper 9

Mark 6:1-13: Jesus sent the twelve disciples to go two by two with the authority to cast out demons, heal the sick and preach to the people that they should repent. We are blessed to be disciples who follow our Lord's Great Commission to go wherever we can and speak boldly of the Good News of Jesus.

Proper 10

Mark 6:14-29: John the Baptist helped to prepare the way for the Lord by calling sinners to repentance. He did that work with great power and success and was faithful to God and his mission unto death. We are also called to be faithful witnesses about Jesus unto death (Revelation 2:10), so that many sinners will be saved and also receive the crown of life.

Proper 11

Mark 6:30-44: Jesus miraculously fed the hungry crowd of thousands by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish. This miracle fed the people for a few hours but Jesus, the Bread of Life, desires to satisfy spiritual hunger forever. We who have been blessed to feed on the Bread of Life are encouraged to invite hungry sinners to believe in Jesus, who is and always will be the true Bread of Life.

Proper 12

Mark 6:45-56: The disciples were struggling with all their might to sail forward and fight against the strong winds, but were having very little success. After Jesus finished praying, He walked to them on the water. They cried out in terror when they saw Him, but our loving Jesus calmed their fears as well as the wind. Jesus is still calming troubled hearts and has invited us to join Him in sharing the Good News of salvation. May we witness to the life-changing power of Jesus with joy and enthusiasm!

Proper 13

John 6:22-35: John's account of the aftermath of the miraculous feeding of the multitudes indicates that the people continued to search for Jesus because they wanted more food for their hungry bodies. Jesus urged them to seek the Bread of Life so they will never hunger or thirst again. As Jesus used His disciples to point people to the true Bread of Life, so He also uses us to point starving souls to Jesus, the only Bread of Life.

Proper 14

John 6:35-51: Jesus declared that He came down to earth to do His Father's will. The Father wants everyone to look to the Son and believe in Him so that they shall have everlasting life and be raised up at the last day. We are called to witness boldly to this sure hope of the resurrection of the body unto life everlasting. May we continue to speak to others about this living hope with joy!

Proper 15

John 6:51-69: Jesus told the grumbling Jews that their fathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on the true Bread of Life will live forever. May we proclaim boldly that Jesus is the one and only Bread of Life who wants to satisfy the spiritual hunger of people.

Proper 16

Mark 7: 1-13: Too many people, like the Pharisees, worship God in vain because they follow human rules and regulations before God's Word. Only those who believe in and worship Jesus as the Son of God and the one who can save them from sin, death and the power of the devil will be saved. How can we who have been saved by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit keep silent while others are pursuing false, man-made beliefs or religions? At times, even our lengthiest conversations can seem to get nowhere. The same objections and questions continue to be raised. One way to determine the root of the issue is to simply ask: "Is there anything you're afraid you'd have to change or give up if you were to become a Christian?" See how God uses this question to give you an opportunity to respond to the real issue that keeps them from believing in Jesus - and then offer to pray about it.

Proper 17

Mark 7:14-23: So many of the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Jesus' day were preoccupied with rituals and ceremonies instead of worshiping the only true God from their heart. Our hearts overflow with the truth of God's saving grace as we believers share the Good News of Jesus with people who are still living in spiritual darkness.

Proper 18

Mark 7: 24-37: In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus healed a man who was deaf and could not speak in an understandable manner. Those who witnessed this miracle were amazed and couldn't stop talking about what Jesus had done. Jesus is still working miracles in our lives. We have the Good News of what Jesus means to us to share with those who do not yet believe in Him. May God work in us through His Word so that it may be said of us that we just will not stop talking about the blessings found in the relationship with Christ.

Proper 19

Mark 9:14-29: In today's Gospel reading, Jesus demonstrated His divine power over Satan and his wicked angels. Satan is still very active in our world, but we can believe in and share the Good News that Jesus has overcome the devil and will protect His people from Satan's evil attacks. The One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Proper 20

Mark 9:30-37: When Jesus calls us to be His own, He calls us to a life of service which, on the surface, may seem too challenging and difficult. The Good News is that He daily equips us to be His servants and witnesses. What a privilege we have to speak of Jesus to people who have little or no direction in their lives.

Proper 21

Mark 9:38-50: Becoming a disciple of Jesus by our own choosing is impossible for us! We cannot choose Him. He chooses us and equips us to be His people in action. Through us, He is still calling sinners to repentance and a life with purpose and meaning. We are blessed to be His ambassadors and to help in this process of calling people to Jesus. May we do it with joy and fervent love for God in our witness.

Proper 22

Mark 10: 2-16: Children are precious in the eyes of Jesus and so are sinners who are lost in their sin. What an encouragement for us to be actively working in sharing the Good News with children and others who need to hear some Good News! Who needs to hear the Good News from you? Bless them with your beautiful feet today by sharing the Gospel wherever you go.

Proper 23

Mark 10:17-22: There are so many things in this earthly life that can lead us away from Jesus as our Lord and Savior. One of the biggest things that can lead us astray is earthly wealth. The problem is that earthly wealth can never satisfy a hungry soul. We who have experienced the real meaning of life in Jesus have something much more valuable than earthly wealth to share with people who have hungry souls-the love of Jesus Christ.

Proper 24

Mark 10:23-31: When the disciples asked Jesus who can be saved, He answered by telling them that with man alone this is impossible but all things are possible with God! We may not understand why God chose us to be His own, but we rejoice that He did. We who have tasted the goodness of God have a powerful story to share with those who are still searching for meaning in their lives.

Proper 25

Mark 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus is healed and immediately follows Jesus. So also, we who have been cured of the blindness of sin follow Jesus. It is our prayer that others may join us in following our Savior, Jesus Christ, who not only heals temporally but eternally through His life, death, and resurrection.

Proper 26

Mark 12:28-37: Jesus gives us what we call "The Golden Rule" – love your neighbor as yourself! May this rule guide our witness as we seek to share the very same love, forgiveness, and grace that has been given to us by Jesus Christ.

Proper 27

Mark 12:38-44: The widow's offering, though it was considered by many to be next to nothing, was precious in the sight of God because it was given sacrificially with confidence that God would provide for her needs. All that we do and give because we are the children of God, though it may seem insignificant to people of this world, is precious to God. Our witness to the Good News of Jesus is also precious to God!

Proper 28

Mark 13:1-13: Jesus encouraged His disciples to pay attention to the signs of the times because they are indicators of the end of time in this world and the beginning of our eternity with God in the new heaven and new earth that He is preparing for us. Each day we come closer to the end of this world. This fact should provide encouragement for us to be prepared for our Lord's return and be ready to share the hope that is within us and to do it with gentleness and respect (1Peter3:15).

Proper 29

Mark 13:24-37: The end of another church year reminds us to be watchful and prepared for Christ the King's second coming to judge both the living and the dead. It will be a day of rejoicing for believers but a day of doom for unbelievers. May we use every opportunity we are given to share the saving faith in Jesus Christ the King with others who are still living in unbelief, so that they may also share life everlasting with all the King's children in heaven.

Year C

Advent 1

Luke 19:28-40: "Blessed is the King that comes in the name of the Lord!" The Pharisees tried to silence those shouts of great joy. Jesus responds to the Pharisees, saying, "If these were silent, the very stones would cry out." May we never let the rebukes of this world lead us into silence, but rather may the Holy Spirit equip us and give us the opportunity to cry out with the Good News that Jesus Christ comes to save us.

Advent 2

Luke 3:1-14 (15-20): John the Baptist was given a message to prepare the way for the coming Christ. This message shared the truth of repentance and forgiveness with all people. Here in worship, we have repented of our sins of thought, word, and deed and received full and free forgiveness through Christ. This forgiveness equips us to share peace and pardon with those in our lives who have not yet received Jesus Christ. Through our witness sharing the life, death and resurrection of Christ, may others rejoice in the opportunity to repent of their sin and receive forgiveness through Jesus.

Advent 3

Luke 7:18-28 (29-35): Sometimes, when we look at the humble way in which Jesus entered our world, we are filled with doubts. We ask along with John's messengers, "Are You the One to come or shall we look for another?" Jesus' answer to John's messengers serves as a mission statement for our outreach: "Go and tell what you have seen and heard." May we boldly share what we have seen and heard about our coming Savior, Jesus Christ.

Advent 4

Luke 1:39-45 (46-56): At the news of the prophecy's fulfillment, Mary burst out singing a song of joy. Today we have seen the prophecy of the Savior come to fulfillment through Jesus. May we also burst forth with great joy and enthusiasm in sharing the saving message of Jesus that this world so desperately needs to hear.

Christmas 1

Luke 2:22-40: Simeon had it right - Christmas has arrived, so that we can celebrate for the rest of our eternal lives, not so that it can be over as soon as we open the gifts, eat the ham, put away the decorations and then put it all behind us for another year. Simeon lifted up the gift that he had waited for all his life and recognized that in it, we had the Gift that would lead us to eternal rejoicing, Christ Jesus our Savior. Don't give in to the "after Christmas letdown." You have the salvation and peace that God promised and promises in His Son. May your celebration continue and may your sharing of the Good News in God's Word be just as bold and vibrant as it was on Christmas Eve and may your peace be ever found in Jesus, who is with you always.

Christmas 2

Luke 2:40-52: At the age of twelve, Jesus obediently went to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary to celebrate the Passover. But, Jesus was also aware of the truth that He was the only-begotten Son of God and needed to be in constant contact with His Father. He needed to be able to have a connection with His Father to carry out the mission He was sent to earth to accomplish. Christmas reminds us that Jesus is God's greatest gift to the world. What a privilege we have to share God's gift of a Savior with others. May we always be ready and willing to share this Good News whenever the opportunity arises.

Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12: On Christmas we sang, "Joy to the World," but has our joy faded since Christmas? Matthew tells us that the wise men "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." The Epiphany message that Jesus Christ is born for us and the whole world is a message that brings great joy home to every heart. May God use us to share this joy with others so that they would have the same joy in Christ!

Baptism of Our Lord

Luke 3:15-22: Jesus came to fully carry out the will of His Father. This included being baptized to fulfill all righteousness and take our place under the holy Law of God. He lived in perfect obedience to that Law in our place so that we might be the redeemed children of God who now have some *really* Good News to share with others who need to hear some. Don't deprive your friends, co-workers, neighbors, or anyone else the blessing of hearing from God when He says to them "You are Mine!"

Epiphany 2

John 2:1-11: Jesus' first miracle was done to meet a need: the wedding feast had run out of wine. How has Jesus met a need of yours? We all have a story to tell about how Jesus has and continues to meet our needs. Your own unique story can share Christ with someone and give witness to others about how Jesus meets their needs through His life, death, and resurrection.

Epiphany 3

Luke 4:16-30: Jesus called sinners to repentance and faith in Him as God's only Savior. However, those who heard Him at Nazareth rejected His offer of hope and salvation. Likewise, not all people with whom we share our faith will accept the message of salvation in Jesus, but that should not stop us from continuing to share. Sharing the Good News is our work and changing hearts is the Holy Spirit's work.

Epiphany 4

Luke 4:31-44: Jesus repeatedly demonstrated His divine nature through miracles of healing, casting out evil spirits and proclaiming the Good News of salvation. What a beautiful, powerful and caring Savior we have, and what a powerful message we have to share. As people of God, may we share this message with joy and boldness.

Epiphany 5

Luke 5:1-11: Jesus used the miracle of catching a huge number of fish to encourage His disciples to become "fishers of men." As they spent more time with Jesus, the disciples became more effective "fishers of men." By reading, studying and reflecting upon the powerful Word of God, we grow in our effectiveness as God's witnesses. Spending time with Jesus is just as important for us as it was for His first disciples.

Epiphany 6

Luke 6:17-26: Jesus preached and ministered to a great multitude of people in Luke 6, and He continues to do so today through His Word. We, as His disciples, have been given the awesome task and responsibility to share His Word. As we do, we can take joy and comfort in the power of His Word to create and strengthen faith in us and others.

Epiphany 7

Luke 6:27-38: Loving our enemies is one of the most difficult things for sinful people like us to do. Our sinful nature would rather hate, get even with, or hold grudges against our

enemies. Yet, by the Holy Spirit's help, the love that we share with our enemies may be the example and witness that leads someone else to see the love that God has for them in Christ Jesus.

Epiphany 8

Luke 6:39-49: Can a blind man lead a blind man? Certainly not! Through the work of the Holy Spirit, our eyes have been opened to the truth found in Jesus Christ. May God use us to lead others to Christ and together with us, bear the fruit of faith!

Transfiguration

Luke 9:28-36: Jesus was fully and truly human like you and me and each of the disciples. In many of their day to day situations, all that the disciples could see was that Jesus was human like them; they couldn't begin to comprehend that He was at the same time the perfect and holy Son of God. As His outward appearance changed (transfigured) before them, they were given a glimpse of the full glory of who Jesus is as both 100% God and 100% Man. We have not seen the transfigured Jesus with our human eyes, but we have seen Him with our eyes of faith, and that vision of a beautiful, powerful Savior helps us to share clearly and boldly the hope we have in Jesus.

Lent 1

Luke 4:1-13: Satan is alive and well in the world around us. Is this reason to fear? No! It's reason to trust with all our hearts that God is indeed our Refuge and Fortress. He alone is our Safe Haven. The world in which we live needs to hear the Good News that Satan is defeated in Christ and that he is crushed with the truth of God's Word and the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit. Instead of despair, share the Good News with your whole heart and then may your heart overflow to those around you with the saving message of the Good News of Christ.

Lent 2

Luke 13:31-35: Jesus wept over the people of Jerusalem because of their unbelief and the fact that they had turned away from God. Do we have tears like Jesus when we see those who are living around us that do not have saving faith in Jesus? May God's Holy Spirit give us a renewed passion for the lost!

Lent 3

Luke 13:1-9: Jesus used the illustration of an unfruitful fig tree to point out clearly how important the fruits of the faith are to us Christians. One of the sweetest fruits of faith is telling others about the Good News of amnesty from sin through the saving work of Jesus.

Lent 4

Luke 15:1-3; 11-32: The father in the Parable of the Lost Son longed with all his heart for the safe return of his son. His brother wished him dead! May our passion for the lost be like that of the father! Celebrate the repentance of sin and the loving embrace of God's grace.

Lent 5

Luke 20:9-20: Jesus alone is the way to forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. God forbids that we should be like the rebellious tenants. We ask that God grants that with believing hearts, we may share our saving faith with people who are living in spiritual darkness.

Palm Sunday

John 12:12-19: No matter whether you celebrate Jesus riding into Jerusalem or His Passion, the message is clear: Jesus came to Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world!

Because of that, we have hope for ourselves and plenty of additional hope to share with fellow sinners. That truth gives us reason to wave a palm branch in bold faith and in thanksgiving to God that there is one true King who conquers sin, death, the grave and the devil, and only one true King worthy of all our praise, thanksgiving and daily witness.

Easter

Luke 24:1-12: When Mary Magdalene saw her risen Lord, she went with great excitement to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what Jesus had told her. We have seen our risen Lord by faith and tasted that He is good in Word and Sacrament. That sure faith inspires us to share with others the hope we have for eternity. Because Jesus lives, we live. And because Jesus lives, the person we tell can share that same life with us for eternity. What you've seen and tasted today compels you to share the Good News for life!

Easter 2

John 20:19-31: On Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to His disciples when Thomas was absent. In joy, the disciples told Thomas: "We have seen the Lord!" Their witness was true, even though Thomas doubted at first. Just because someone does not believe our witness to Jesus as our Lord and Savior should not discourage us from sharing our faith. Sharing is both our challenge and our privilege. Changing hearts is God's work. And thanks be to God, we have a patient and compassionate Savior who welcomes and encourages us in our doubts to "poke and prod" and says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!"

Easter 3

John 21:1-14 (15-19): Easter changes everything. Dead to alive; persecution to mission; enemies to priests; denial to proclamation - these are the changes made by the Word of the Risen Christ. In one of the most amazing fishing stories ever told, we hear the life-changing difference that can be made with 153 fish in a net and one resurrected Savior. When you find someone who doesn't know or who has forgotten this truth, tell them today's Good News.

Easter 4

John 10:22-30: Most of us have seen the commercial by Verizon Wireless. It's the old one where the guy walks around to various places where a phone normally would not work and he asks the question, "Can you hear me now?" And getting the affirmation that he has been heard - loud and clear - he responds, "Good!" The risen Good Shepherd gives us renewed clarity today. The Day is coming when everyone will hear His voice. By then, it will be too late to respond to that Voice in repentant faith. So, our daily mission is to give clarity to one voice and to one voice alone - the Risen Christ. When the storms of life are raging, when the doctor says, "cancer," when people are facing the crossroads of life, can they hear Jesus, their Good Shepherd and follow Him? Only when the answer is YES for the entire world can we feel content. Until then, keep asking, "Can you hear the Good Shepherd?"

Easter 5

John 13:31-35: They'll know we are Christians by our love. But what do they presume when all we can talk about is how someone in church has hurt us, or the hymns we didn't like, or the length of the worship service? What we receive from the Word and Sacrament, God's gifts of grace and love, no one can give except the One who loves us. We have so much to share with the world that no one else can give. And it will never run out. So keep handing out the unconditional love and they'll know we're followers of Jesus Christ who first loved us!

Easter 6

John 16:23-33: The world is a hostile place for Christians, but Jesus tells us to have courage because He has overcome the world. Because of our faith, we have peace even in the face of trial. This peace and joy adds power to our witnessing. Today's peace in the face of trial may be the most encouraging Word someone may ever hear from you or see in you.

Easter 7

John 17:20-26: In God's Word today, we get the opportunity to overhear Jesus praying to His heavenly Father. In this intimate time of prayer, we hear Jesus praying for us, and we learn that we are an answer to His prayer as we live in the unity of the Church as His people. In our sharing of the Good News with the world, what a blessing to let the world know that they are an answer to prayer in the receiving of the Good News that you are sharing. Tell them that you prayed for an opportunity to share Christ's love and they are the answer to that prayer. That phrase, "You're an answer to prayer," reveals a great deal about your relationship with your heavenly Father and your constant search for God's answer to your prayers.

Pentecost

John 14:23-31: Jesus told His disciples in advance that after His resurrection and ascension He would send the Holy Spirit to teach them and help them remember all that He had said to them. We have that same Spirit who changed timid disciples into bold witnesses. By the Spirit's power, we are sanctified and empowered. Through the Spirit's power, we are also called to share the story of Jesus.

Holy Trinity

John 8:48-59: In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus made the claim that He and the Father are One, and that the Father is the One who glorifies Him. This drew criticism from His enemies, but brings joy and confidence to those of us who honor Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are bold to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus, our Lord and our God.

Proper 3

Luke 6:(20-26) 27-42: This world tells us that when we do something good we should get something in return. As missionaries for Christ, that is not the case. We are to give witness in word and deed, expecting nothing in return. The reward is great in heaven for us and for those who come to faith through the proclamation of God's Word!

Proper 4

Luke 7:1-10: "But say the word, and let my servant be healed." Talk about some powerful words! We, like the Centurion, know the power and authority of God's Word. As we bear witness to God's powerful and authoritative Word, may others come to faith in the One who heals both physically and spiritually: Jesus Christ.

Proper 5

Luke 7:11-17: Jesus demonstrated His divine power over death by raising the widow's son from the dead. All who witnessed this miracle were in awe and spread this news throughout Judea and the surrounding country. Like those first witnesses, we have the privilege of sharing the Good News about a Savior who also rescues us from sin and death. That's something to really be excited about!

Proper 6

Luke 7:36-8:3: The story Jesus told Simon the Pharisee also equips each and every one of us to tell the Good News. We have been forgiven many times over; therefore, we have so

much Good News to share. We are rich in the love of God to overflow to the world. Fathers have been given the responsibility in God's Word to be the spiritual head of their household to share the Good News as well. Fathers, as well as all Christians, the one gift you can share all year long is the gift of forgiveness and the love of God. Share it daily with your spouse, your children, with your co-workers and with all those whom God gives you the privilege of interacting with.

Proper 7

Luke 8:26-39: When Jesus freed a demon-possessed man, that man in response wanted to follow Jesus to the ends of the earth. Instead, Jesus says to him: "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." Telling others about how much God has done for us is our most effective witness. May we gladly share this great news about how much God has done for us!

Proper 8

Luke 9:51-62: The disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy those who did not welcome Jesus. Jesus rebuked them because He has such great love for all people, even those who reject Him. Because of God's undeserved love, we have been saved from our sinful condition; as a result, we can be like one beggar telling another beggar where to find food.

Proper 9

Luke 10:1-20: In Jesus' day, the harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few. He told His followers to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out more workers. What can we do to assist in providing for more workers? We can go out ourselves and make the most of every opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with people who are still in spiritual darkness. We can support the outreach efforts by providing financial support for evangelism. We can encourage students to seek out professional church work at our Synodical universities. The possibilities are numerous - and the harvest is plentiful. Pray. Pray. Pray. Pray that the Lord will send out more workers, beginning with you, with a host of others, because the harvest is ripe. Thanks be to God.

Proper 10

Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us that in loving our neighbors, we care not just for their physical needs, but also for their spiritual needs. What a joy it will be in eternity to have a "neighbor" come up to us and thank us for sharing the Good News of salvation found in Jesus alone.

Proper 11

Luke 10:38-42: We, like Mary, grow as our Lord's witnesses by "sitting at His feet" to be strengthened in our own faith. As we grow in our faith, we become more and more confident in sharing the hope that is within us. Because we have been nourished through the Word of God, we can become like one beggar telling another beggar where to find food. Come and see; go and tell!

Proper 12

Luke 11:1-13: How often have you stood before a full table or before a gathering of people and everyone looks at each other but no one wants to be the one to pray? Prayer is not a natural inclination of those who are sinful by nature and sinful in thought, word and deed. We need to be taught how to pray because prayer is so often seen as only an emergency measure, or a desperate attempt to get a higher power to act on our behalf when we're in trouble. One of the best ways we can share the Good News is by demonstrating a prayer life that reflects an

honest communication with God; the ability to, in times of celebration and in times of need, to speak with God as a child speaks to their dear father. That's what Jesus taught His disciples and that's what we can share when we openly pray throughout the day letting the whole world know that before we do anything, we talk to God first in prayer.

Proper 13

Luke 12:13-21: Jesus told the Parable of the Rich Fool to remind us that real life in Christ is about much more than material possessions. Many people around us are rich in things of this world, but poor in spiritual things. Isn't it great that we who have been made rich in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit have great spiritual news to share with those who are struggling in spiritual darkness? Share the riches of God's grace freely.

Proper 14

Luke 12:22-34: Jesus tells us that where our treasure is, there our hearts will also be. Jesus is our "Priceless Treasure" who helps us to seek the most important things in life, like a saving faith in Jesus. Our witness to the Good News of salvation in Jesus is one of the richest possessions we can share. May we share our faith and hope with joy and excitement. Who can you make rich today by sharing Christ with them? God's grace has made you overflowing in riches to share with others today with the Good News of salvation.

Proper 15

Luke 12:49-53 (54-56): It's not easy to be an effective witness concerning the faith we have in Jesus in this world that is so ready and willing to compromise the truth. In addition, we have a natural, sinful tendency to be timid in sharing our faith. We may also fear being rejected by a friend or a neighbor who is not currently a Christian, or who may disagree on the stand that Scripture clearly takes. In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus clearly states that He did not come to bring peace but division - on purpose! This does not mean that Jesus is not the great Prince of Peace, but it does mean that when a person is confronted by Jesus, they have to take a stand for either the truth of God or the falsehood of the world. There is no gray area. By the grace of God and with the gentleness of the Spirit, let's do what we can to help others take the stand on the truth that is the difference between life and death!

Proper 16

Luke 13:22-30: The door to eternal life is narrow. It is not true that all religions lead to the same place. Only one religion (or faith) leads to salvation and that is the Christian religion. There is no name under heaven other than the name of Jesus that is the door to eternal life. May the Holy Spirit help us to be bolder and more winsome in sharing this treasure we have in Jesus!

Proper 17

Luke 14:1-14: The Scriptures tell us that the Pharisees were watching Jesus very closely. They were watching Him to find mistakes, for any reason to criticize, to see if He could pass their test. Jesus was watching them very closely, and even though they were acting like enemies, Jesus was looking upon them with love. As we look upon the world, we need Jesus' eyes to be able to see the world with His love and compassion. That's the labor of love the Lord has given to us as we share the Good News each and every day. Jesus enables us to see the world differently: with grace. As He equips us with the Good News to share, may the Spirit also equip our eyes and hearts with the ability to recognize those who need the Good News the way Jesus does.

Proper 18

Luke 14:25-35: In His teaching, Jesus said that salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? Jesus taught that we, as His followers, are like salt on Earth to season and preserve good things. Witnessing to Jesus is the best way that we can be like salt to this world.

Proper 19

Luke 15:1-10: Jesus loves sinners like us. What a great thing that is to know and experience. He dearly wants to use us and our witnessing to help other lost souls find their joy and rest in Jesus. There is great rejoicing in heaven over even one sinner who repents. What a privilege we have to share our faith, so others may also repent. May we do it regularly and faithfully.

Proper 20

Luke 16:1-15: When it comes to using our finances, most times we don't think of it in an evangelism sense. The Lord uses a parable to teach His disciples about being shrewd in the age in which we live. What if the world knew that your finances were dedicated to the sharing of the Gospel? How shrewd would that be? Jesus talks more about money in His parables than any other medium because He knows that money can get between us and Him. Knowing this, the Good News should be applied to our money. We are to be devoted to God rather than to money. Our priority is to be right with God. We cannot serve two masters. Our "shrewdness" can be best applied to the world as they see us live the good News in how we apply it to the use of our money. Isn't it wonderful that we can proclaim the Good News and use our money at the same time?! Thanks be to God for all the riches He has given to us.

Proper 21

Luke 16:19-31: When the rich man died, he found himself tormented in Hades. He cries out to Abraham to go and warn his five brothers so that they do not find themselves in the same torment. We, as baptized believers in Christ, have the sure and certain hope of heaven, and because of that promise, we want as many others as possible to join us in the blessedness of our eternal home!

Proper 22

Luke 17:1-10: Every Sunday we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." As we heed these words and forgive as we have been forgiven, we are giving a tremendous witness to the love of God found in Jesus Christ. May our forgiving lead others to the ultimate forgiveness given through the cross.

Proper 23

Luke 17:11-19: Leprosy was a dreadful disease in Bible times. Lepers were outcasts who were isolated from other people. Jesus healed the ten lepers who asked Him for pity. All ten were healed from their physical leprosy, but only one gave evidence that he was also healed from the leprosy of sin. We are like cleansed lepers who can help others find true healing for both body and soul in Christ alone.

Proper 24

Luke 18:1-8: Persistence in prayer is something that Jesus taught many times. The widow in our reading for today received justice from an ungodly judge because of her persistence. Persistence with faith brings the Lord's blessing. Persistence in sharing the Good News of Jesus with unbelievers also bears fruit that will last into eternity. Won't it be great to have someone in eternity come up and thank us for our persistence in witnessing to Jesus and never giving up on them?!

Proper 25

Luke 18:9-17: Children teach adults many helpful things. They are trusting and willing to openly share the Good News of Jesus. May we become more like Christian children who love and trust in Jesus and openly share our hope with people who are living each day without the sure hope of salvation.

Proper 26

Luke 19:1-10: Jesus gives His mission statement in today's Gospel saying, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Today, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are sent out to share the Good News of salvation for all people. Jesus still seeks to save the lost, and He does it through our sharing of His Gospel in words and actions. We may be the only Bible some people read today. Be the open Good News of Jesus for others for the sake of the lost!

Proper 27

Luke 20:27-40: The Sadducee spirit is still alive and well in our world today. This spirit is found in the doubts that there is life after death. They believe that there's no more, and they certainly aren't ready to believe in condemnation. Some are just so caught up in the every day that they can't admit that they haven't really considered life after death. They are just too connected to TV, movies, cell phones, Facebook, the internet, and so many other things to give much thought to what more there may be. Or, they could be too worried about the bills or a family member or retirement to get excited about a "There's still more" message. That's the Sadducee spirit swirling around, and we have the truth to confront it. There is death, because it pays the wages of sin. But Jesus' life, death and resurrection confronted the wages of sin, paid it in full, and gives the promise of eternal life and the truth that there's still more, thanks be to God. Be bold! Share both Law and Gospel. Confront the Sadducee spirit. It is truly sad to think that so many people think that this world, which is here today and gone tomorrow, is all there is when the God of Life promises so much more in Christ.

Proper 28

Luke 21:5-28 (29-36): With all the things that the Lord predicted in the "last days" in our Gospel text, it's hard not to be downcast with chins to our chests. But our Lord tells us to "straighten up": in other words, look up and be confident, because things are looking up despite the earthquakes, pestilence, false teachers and all other things that could keep us down. Redemption is drawing near and is present with us always in the living Word, Jesus Christ, and the salvation found in His life, death and resurrection. We are encouraged to speak up as we look up because we have the Good News to share.

Proper 29

Luke 23:27-43: The end of another church year reminds us to be watchful and prepared for our Lord's second coming to judge the living and the dead. It will be a Day of rejoicing for believers but a Day of doom for unbelievers. May we use every opportunity we are given to share our saving faith with others who are still in unbelief, so that they may also share in the Paradise that only Christ the true King gives with His life, death and resurrection. He continues to be ridiculed because He is a King who saves through a Cross. But only this King will give Paradise on the Last Day, just as He promises. Now, that's a King worth putting your trust in for eternity!