

## 17th Sunday after Pentecost, October 1, 2017

16th Sunday after Trinity, Proper 21(26)

**LUTHERAN**

# **LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY**

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the  
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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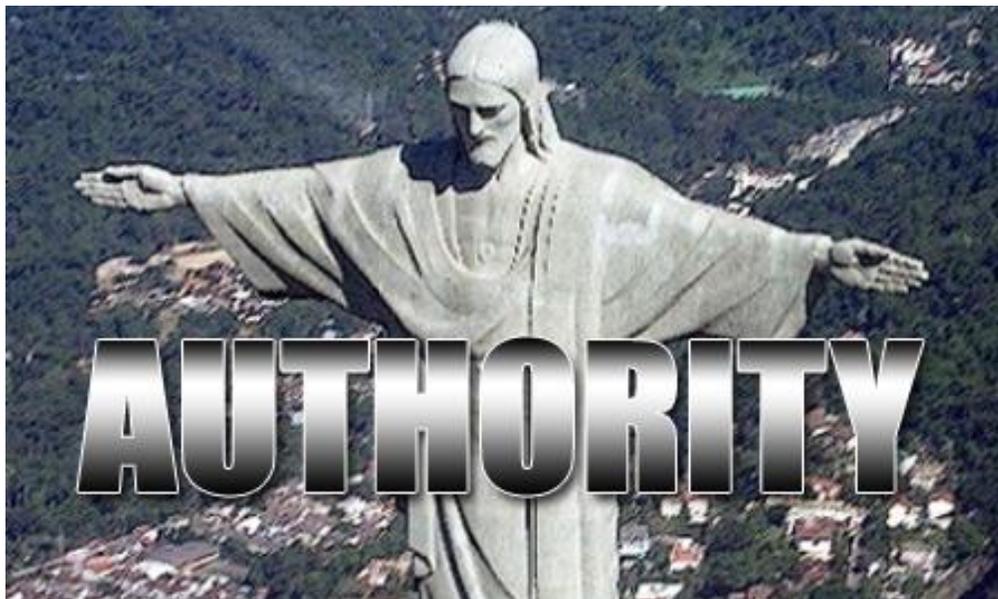
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**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,  
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

September 28, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

*Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa.*



<http://biblefinds.com/jesus-establishes-his-authority/fri-2012-07-06-2220/4.html>

### **Hymn of the Day**

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 655 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 261**

*“Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word”*

“In 1541 the Turkish army was threatening to take Vienna. The German rulers called for special prayers for safety from these Islamic forces. Martin Luther ([PHH 336](#)) responded to this request by writing the original German text ("Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort") for a prayer service in Wittenberg. Convinced that the church was threatened not only by the Turkish army of Sultan Suleiman but also by the Roman Catholic Pope, Luther began his text as follows (English translation):

Lord, keep us in thy Word and work,  
 Restrain the murderous Pope and Turk,  
 Who fain would tear from off thy throne  
 Christ Jesus, thy beloved Son.

After these threats to the church subsided, the text was altered: it eliminated the reference to the Pope and Turk and referred generally to all enemies of the Word. The text was published in Low German in the *Magdeburg Gesangbuch* (1542) and in High German in Joseph Klug's *Geistliche Lieder* (1543). The English translation by Catherine Winkworth ([PHH 194](#)) was published in her *Chorale Book for England* (1863).

The text is a fervent prayer in song cast into a Trinitarian mold. As we sing, we pray that God the Father will keep his kingdom from the powers of evil (st. 1), that God the Son will rule the church (st. 2), and that God the Spirit will bring peace and unity on earth and will support us in our "final [earthly] strife," the doorway to eternal life (st.3)...--*Psalter Hymnal Handbook*"

[https://hymnary.org/text/lord\\_keep\\_us\\_steadfast\\_in\\_your\\_word](https://hymnary.org/text/lord_keep_us_steadfast_in_your_word)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8ViZi7M5p4> “Martin Luther: Hymns, Ballads, Chants, Truth” Concordia Publishing House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLMBiLri8JQ> Lutheran Service Book #655 with improvised introduction. [Jeff Windoloski](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teI3ayeBxX0> [Kathy Langenberg](#) 10 months ago

“This is such an excellent recording of the hymn written by Martin Luther in which the three verses petition the three persons of our Triune God. Koine has produced seven CDs of hymns, and the talent and professionalism displayed are amazing. I am so thankful that I accidentally discovered Koine on the 'net several years ago.”

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 17:1-7 or Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 (Next Week: Isaiah 5:1-7; RCL, Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 or Isaiah 5:1-7)**

*"Today's readings focus on responsibility for our action.*

*A patient lay in bed in the hospital, unable to walk, and accidentally knocked over a cup of water which spilled to the floor beside the patient's bed. The patient was afraid someone might slip on the water, so he asked a nurse's aid to mop it up. The patient did not know it, but the hospital policy was that small spills were the responsibility of the nurse's aids while large spills were to be mopped up by the hospital's housekeeping group.*

*The nurse's aid decided the spill was a large one and she called the housekeeping department. A housekeeper arrived and declared the spill a small one. An argument followed about who would have to clean it up.*

*"It's not my responsibility," said the nurse's aid, "because it's a large puddle." The housekeeper did not agree. "Well, it's not mine," she said. "The puddle is too small."*

*The exasperated patient listened to this for a while, then took a pitcher of water from his night table and poured the whole thing on the floor. "Is that a big enough puddle now for you two to decide about?" he asked. It was, and that was the end of the argument..." (continued after the reading)*

## **The Soul Who Sins Shall Die**

18 The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“What do you<sup>[a]</sup> mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel,

‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge’? [S Job 21:19; Isa 3:15; Jer 31:29](#)

<sup>3</sup> As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die...

<sup>24</sup> But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

<sup>25</sup> “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? <sup>26</sup> When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>27</sup> Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. <sup>28</sup> Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>29</sup> Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

<sup>30</sup>“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

- a. [Ezekiel 18:2](#) The Hebrew for *you* is plural
- b. [Ezekiel 18:8](#) That is, profit that comes from charging interest to the poor; also verses [13](#), [17](#) (compare [Leviticus 25:36](#))
- c. [Ezekiel 18:17](#) Septuagint; Hebrew *from the poor*
- d. [Ezekiel 18:30](#) Or *lest iniquity be your stumbling block*

View this reading in the NIV translation. The formatting is different and gives an alternative perspective to verses 5-24:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+18&version=NIV>

“...This is a condition that has plagued our race since the fall into sin. Today in the Book of Ezekiel we read a proverb that people were familiar with in Bible times. "The father eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." That means that the reason people were sinful and didn't follow God's ways in Old Testament times wasn't their fault, at least they claimed. They said that they weren't to blame for not following the ways of the Lord, their God and obeying all his commandments. It was their parents' fault.

God was angry with this and vowed to his people that he would not stand for the "blame game" they were playing. So He said, "Enough of this. You will no longer say it is not your fault, that you cannot give up your evil and follow me. Stop coming up with reasons why you continually refuse to follow me. From now on you will know, the soul who sins is the one who will die."

When we examine the law of God to determine how we should live as His people, we find some things that are hard for us to live by. When we read the Bible we are confronted with the facts, that we aren't living the way we should be. We have two choices before us. One leads to death and the other leads to life...

Take responsibility for your sin. If life isn't going your way, don't blame that on somebody else. See yourself as a miserable sinner, and ask yourself why you would deserve God to give you a better life? Then you will begin to understand the grace of God.

When someone points out that you are in the wrong, don't come up with all kinds of reasons to justify your actions. Admit your unrighteous nature and ask their forgiveness. Don't let pride keep you from being reconciled to God and your brother or sister...

Take responsibility for yourself. If you want a life with God, but find being a faithful Christian is hard, don't blame anyone but yourself. Not your parents, not your job, not your current situation. Recognize that you have a heart of stone, and ask God to break it...

Life with God is better, far better, than having everything we could ever desire while living without Him. Take the responsibility now. Confess your sins and cling to his mercy tighter than anything. God will not fail you..."

<http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=200> "The materials on this site are for use by Christian pastors and laymen and will be of particular value to Confessional Lutheran pastors and congregations, as this is the theology of the authors. Regarding copyright and fair use, these materials are © copyright their original authors. Unless stated otherwise on the individual sermons, the material may be freely used, so long as any portion of original material used is credited to its author, or the author gives permission to use without credit. Note that, while original work is copyright individual authors, Biblical concepts are © The Holy Trinity and can thus be copied freely, as God has not only allowed, but commanded such plagiarism. Copyright © 1998-2011 James F. Wright. All rights reserved."

**Psalm 25:1-10; RCL, Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 or Psalm 25:1-9 (Psalm 80:7-19; RCL, Psalm 19 or Psalm 80:7-15)**

*"The first lesson makes it clear that God will neither require children to pay for the sins of their parents nor allow them to rest satisfied in their parents' goodness; rather, God will judge each person according to his or her own deeds: righteous or wicked..."*

*The psalm is intimate and intensely personal, voiced in the first person singular and addressing God in the second person singular. And woven through this appointed portion of the psalm are four key themes: the psalmist's total surrender to God and variations on three imperatives addressed to God: don't let me be put to shame; show, teach, and lead me in your paths; and remember yourself and your character and forget me and mine..."*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1036](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1036) **Henry Langknecht** Associate Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

## Teach Me Your Paths

**[a] Of David.**

25 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

<sup>6</sup> Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

<sup>7</sup> Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

<sup>8</sup> Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

<sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

<sup>10</sup> All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

*(Psalm continues through verse 22)*

- a. [Psalm 25:1](#) This psalm is an acrostic poem, each verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet

“...Each text for the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost asks these questions. Psalm 25 puts them in the form of a prayer: “Lead me in your truth and teach me.”

In the first lesson (Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32) Israel argues with God, accusing God of unfairness. No, says Ezekiel; the problem is that Israel needs to “get a new heart and a new spirit!” Israel must become teachable. The second lesson (Philippians 2:1-13) is the famous hymn to Christ. It invites us to *have this mind among yourselves*. To learn from Christ. Not because we are good enough, or because having the mind of Christ is an achievement, but because Jesus has “humbled himself and became like a servant.”

It is God’s work and not our ability that changes us. In the Gospel, (Matthew 21:23-32) the chief priests and elders interrogate Jesus; showing themselves to be anything *but* teachable. Jesus tells them that “the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.” Why? Because these sinners were teachable: they believed John’s testimony. But as for the chief priests and elders, those know-it-alls did not change their minds when they heard John’s testimony about Jesus.

In all of these texts, God teaches us humility, trust and joy in the presence of God. Learning nice little moral lessons, or memorizing factoids about God is not the point. Instead God invites us to be changed by divine mercy and love. The work of Psalm 25 is to express receptivity, or even to make us receptive. The Psalm can be used as a refrain to support the other texts, as a theme for prayer, or the focus of an entire sermon...

We now turn to verses 1-9, the portion of the Psalm appointed for Pentecost 16. The Psalm begins in an attitude of worship: “To you, Oh Lord, I lift up my soul.” Lifting up the hands is an ancient posture of prayer, expressing our dependence on God. This simple gesture opens a person to receive God’s blessing. So too, the worshipper ‘lifts up’ her soul to receive God’s love. God’s love takes many forms and in Psalm 25:1-9 these include instruction and wisdom.

Repeatedly the Psalmist asks to be taught God’s ways. “Make me to know your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths” (verse 4). “Lead me in your truth, and teach me” (verse 5). “God instructs sinners in the way...and teaches the humble” (verses 5-6). To know *about* God is a starting point, but the Psalmist wants something more. The Psalmist wants to be *with* God, to walk in God’s path...

This is a relationship with God, a two-way communication in which the Psalmist both receives God's teaching and dares to instruct God. The Psalmist tells God what to remember: steadfast love and mercy (verse 6). And the Psalmist tells God what to forget: "the sins of my youth" (verse 7)...  
[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2173](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2173) [Nancy Koester](#)  
 Adjunct Professor, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn

**Philippians 2:1-4, (5-13), 14-18; RCL, Philippians 2:1-13 (Philippians 3:4b-14; RCL, the same reading)**

*"...The letter may easily be divided into two parts, an encouragement, chaps. 1 and 2, and an admonition, chaps. 3 and 4. After the opening greeting there follows a cordial thanksgiving for the excellent spiritual status of the Philippians, together with an assurance of fervent intercession for them, whereupon Paul gives them information concerning his present condition and his probable future. in connection with this he brings an exhortation to unity, meekness, and denial of self, pointing to Christ as a glorious example of these virtues He also announces to them the sending of Timothy and the return of their beloved Epaphroditus..."*  
*(continued after the reading)*

### **Christ's Example of Humility**

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,<sup>[c]</sup> being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

### ***Lights in the World***

<sup>12</sup> *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted

generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

- a. [Philippians 2:5](#) Or *which was also in Christ Jesus*
- b. [Philippians 2:6](#) Or *a thing to be held on to for advantage*
- c. [Philippians 2:7](#) Or *slave* (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface)

**“The Need of Loving Humility. Phil. 2, 1-4.**

The apostle had urged the Philippian Christians to stand firm in the common battle and to contend for the great blessings of mercy. To this he adds a new thought: If, now, there be any admonition in Christ, if any urging of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any sympathy and mercies, fulfill my joy that you share the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord. If, on the one hand, all these things count for anything, if they have any effect, then, on the other hand, the results should show...

To this the apostle adds: Nothing through strife or vainglory, but in humility regarding one another more excellent than yourselves, looking not everyone to his own interests, but every one also to those of others

**The Application of the Admonition to True Works of Sanctification. Phil. 2, 12-18.**

The apostle here draws a conclusion and makes a practical application:... Paul gives them the testimony of having been obedient both when he was present with them and when he was absent. And with the full knowledge of this, with a willingness to pursue the course marked out before them also in the future, he urges them to feel the responsibility of their salvation before God. The salvation, complete and ready for all, they should strive after, make it their business to obtain that. It is true, of course, that salvation is not earned by obedience, it is complete and perfect in Christ. But it may so easily be lost through disobedience, and therefore striving after it with fear and trembling, with the consciousness of inherent weakness and of the dreadful power of temptation, is essential in sanctification... “ <http://www.kretzmannproject.org/>

An interesting variety of commentary on verse 14 can be found at [http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians\\_214-16](http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_214-16). The Blue Bible study guide is another extensive study of these verses; [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik\\_david/studyguide\\_phl/phl\\_2.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/studyguide_phl/phl_2.cfm)

**“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 20th Chapter”**

**“Glory to You, O Lord”**

**Matthew 21:23-27; RCL, Matthew 21:23-32 (Matthew 21:33-46; RCL, the same reading)**

*"...All sorts of folks ask Jesus questions in Matthew's Gospel, and both their questions and Jesus' answers are striking. There are many different kinds of questions asked of Jesus. Both the Baptizer and Pilate ask questions about Jesus' identity; John asks if he is in fact the one they have been waiting for (11:2-3), and Pilate asks if he is the king of the Jews (27:11). The Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, chief priests and elders asked questions to try to trap Jesus; why the disciples break "the traditions of the elders" (15:1-2), for signs or proofs (12:38; 16:1), about divorce (19:2), taxes (22:15-17), resurrection (22:23-28), and the role of the commandments (22:24-26), by whose authority do you do the things you do (21:23).*

*The disciples asked him questions; who is the greatest among us (18:1), what good deed do we have to do to receive eternal life (19:16), for a sign concerning Jesus' coming at the end of the age (24:3). And for every other question someone else following Jesus asked, Peter would ask another; "How often must I forgive?" (18:21), "We left everything for you, what do we get?"(19:27).*

*These questions are all revealing. With the exception of John and perhaps (ironically) Pilate, the questions are all self-serving. Those who ask Jesus questions want to trap him, or impress him, or get something from him. And to every pointed question Jesus offers an equally pointed answer, which reveals truth about the Kingdom, the King, and the Kingdom's subjects...*

*[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1047](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1047) **Karl Jacobson**  
Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.*

## **The Authority of Jesus Challenged**

<sup>23</sup> And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup> Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>26</sup> But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

## **The Parable of the Two Sons**

<sup>28</sup> "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup> And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

“This is the Gospel of the Lord”      “Praise to You, O Christ”



This is the first (and only) appearance of Ted's mom.

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Try a podcast with Profs. Rolf Jacobson, Karoline Lewis, David Lose, and Matt Skinner for a conversation around preaching the lectionary texts for Pentecost 15.\*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/brainwave.aspx?podcast\\_id=210](https://www.workingpreacher.org/brainwave.aspx?podcast_id=210)

\*In 1999, Pastor Wright called today the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Profs. Jacobson, Lewis, Lose and Skinner refer to it in 2011 as the 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Nancy Koester in 2014 wrote about it as the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. We are calling it today, the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Can you figure it out? Maybe this will help (or not).

“...The # Sunday after Pentecost” is more descriptive than “Proper #” or “Lectionary #.” It makes sense to the lay reader. But, it is also misleading.

Because Pentecost falls on a different Sunday each year – some years it falls in May, some years in June, depending on the dating of Easter – the number of Sundays between Pentecost and Christ the King is different each year. The season of Pentecost can have a variable number of Sundays. For example:

This year the season of Pentecost will have 27 Sundays. November 16 will be the “27th Sunday after Pentecost,” and the final Sunday before Christ the King (which is the last Sunday in the Church Year).

Next year, because of a later Pentecost date, the season of Pentecost will have only 24 Sundays. November 15, 2009 will be “The 24th Sunday after Pentecost,” and also the final Sunday before Christ the King...

It’s not the # Sunday after Pentecost that is significant, but the Sunday’s relationship to Christ the King that is significant...

It would seem to me more accurate to refer to these Sundays as “The # Sunday before Christ the King,” or some other phrase that reflects the movement toward the end of the church year and its hopeful themes of renewal in Christ’s Kingdom.

[Lectionary #, Proper #, or Sunday after Pentecost?](#) Posted on [July 25, 2008](#) by [Chris Duckworth](#)