New Apostolic Church

Divine Service Guide

2/3 September	Fear not!
6 September	**First Sunday** Undeserved: Acts of God
9/10 September	God is holy – God is love
13 September	**Second Sunday** Undeserved: Messages of God
16/17 September	Lord, I want to see!
20 September	**Third Sunday** Undeserved: Blessings of God
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A monthly guide for the ministers
September 2026

The first two Sunday services are part of a theme series on the fundamental principles of the gospel, which emphasises the saving effect of the sacraments and the proclamation of the gospel.

The sermon on the **first Sunday** of the month explores how salvation in Christ can be experienced today. It makes clear that water, Spirit, and blood—as witnesses of God—point to the three sacraments: Holy Baptism, Holy Sealing, and Holy Communion. Through them, human beings gain direct access to God's activity of salvation. Receiving all three sacraments makes it possible for believers to be united with the Lord at His return.

On the **second Sunday**, the sermon encourages us to apply the gospel to every area of life. The early Christians lived their faith openly and visibly, both in public and in private—and these two dimensions belong together. The death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ are not proclaimed and taught as a mere theory, but as a message that touches people, transforms them from within, and gives them hope.

The divine services on the third and fourth Sundays are part of a theme series about experiencing faith, in which we will find out more about how God's blessing and strengthening power are revealed in everyday life.

In the sermon on the **third Sunday**, the ministers are to make clear that blessing in Christ takes on new dimensions. What was bound to the covenant with Israel and to obedience of God's commandments in the Old Testament's concrete realities of life finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ: He ascended to heaven as the one who blesses. Today, we are not only blessed, but are also to be a blessing to others, namely by pointing others to the powerful blessing of Christ.

The sermon on the **fourth Sunday** focuses on our expectation of Christ's return. This is not a passive kind of waiting, but a renewal of our focus on God and trust in Him. The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith in the return of Christ and helps us to remain faithful to God in our daily lives.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41: 10

Fear not!

Message

God responds to human fear with His comforting presence.

Introduction

The words in Isaiah 41: 10 were written at a time of political upheaval: great powers had taken control of Israel. Long-held certainties had crumbled, and fear had gripped the people. God comforted the people with this promise: "Fear not, for I am with you."

Fear is as old as humanity

Fear has accompanied humanity ever since its relationship with God was broken. In paradise, there was neither shame nor fear. Then sin entered the world—and with it, fear (Genesis 3: 10). Since then, fear has been a universal experience: fear of illness, loneliness, financial hardship, and a rapidly changing world situation. God takes this reality seriously—and responds to it.

God's promises to counter fear

Our Bible text contains concrete promises from God that are still relevant today.

- "I am with you." God surrounds us on all sides, just as a mother carries her child in her womb (Psalm 139: 5, 13). He is by our side when no one else is there for us.
- "I am your God." He is not a distant God, but a living, personal God, beside whom modern idols such as selfishness, materialism, and self-optimisation pale in comparison.
- "I will strengthen you." God promises a strength that sustains—like the eagle that does not struggle against the wind, but allows itself to be carried by it, thereby discovering new horizons (Isaiah 40: 31). This power can be experienced in the sermon, in prayer, in Holy Communion, and in fellowship.
- "I will help you." This is a promise for all who doubt themselves. Jesus does not wait for people to pull themselves together and come to Him. He meets them in their conditions of guilt, helplessness, and even death. This is precisely what the cross reveals: God is there—at the lowest point of human

existence. Help will not only come after I have sorted myself out and improved—it is already here.

- "I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." This is a promise for all who feel they cannot hold on much longer. God says, "You mean so much to Me. You have a place at My side. I will not let you go."

Supported and guided: the congregation as the bride

The promise contained in our Bible text not only applies to the individual, but to the church as a whole: "Fear not, church of Jesus Christ!" Even if there are fewer people in the pews, and even though many things seem uncertain, God is still with His congregation. One day, He will lead His bridal congregation into His kingdom by His right hand. There, in perfect fellowship with the Lord, all fear will have been banished (1 John 4: 18).

Thoughts from the Chief Apostle

Context

Isaiah 41: 10 is part of something known as the prophet's Book of Comfort (chapters 40–55), which is addressed to a community that has been deeply shaken: it is politically threatened, culturally shaken, and inwardly exhausted. God responds to this distress with the promise: "Fear not!"

This theme runs through the entirety of Scripture—from the patriarchs to the prophets to the words of Jesus—and consistently marks the moment when God meets humankind in its need.

Summary

- Fear is not a weakness, but a fundamental human experience shared by all.
- God does not respond to fear with demands, but with concrete promises.
- Divine service, prayer, and fellowship are channels through which we can experience God's presence.
- One day, all fear will disappear completely when Jesus Christ takes His bride to Himself.

And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

1 John 5: 8

Undeserved: Acts of God

Message

We receive salvation in Christ visibly by receiving the sacraments.

Introduction

Human beings must believe and acknowledge the idea that the Son of God was sent to humankind as Redeemer. To this end, Jesus promised His Apostles the power of the Holy Spirit, and sent them out as witnesses (Acts 1: 8). They fulfilled this mission and bore witness to what they themselves had seen and heard (1 John 1: 1–3).

God's testimony concerning His Son

After the death of the eyewitnesses and those who had directly heard their testimony, confidence in Jesus as the true Christ began to waver in many churches. The author of the first epistle of John counters this development by maintaining that a strong faith is not rooted in human opinions or subjective feelings, but in the testimony of God Himself (1 John 5: 9). This draws on a well-established principle in Judaism, according to which a claim or accusation must be confirmed by the agreement of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19: 15). When today's Bible text says: "There are three that bear witness …," it emphasises that God Himself bears witness to His Son in various ways. The water points to the baptism of Jesus, during which God acknowledged Him as His Son (Mark 1: 11). The blood recalls His death on the cross, whereby His saving work for humankind was accomplished (John 19: 30, 34). The Spirit of truth bears witness that Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world.

God's ongoing activity of salvation in the sacraments

Water, blood, and Spirit therefore point to God's activity of salvation in Jesus Christ. And it is precisely in the three sacraments that His activity of salvation is present. The sacraments are dispensed by Apostles or ministers commissioned by them to both the living and the dead. Holy Baptism offers new life in Christ. Holy Sealing completes the rebirth out of water and the Spirit and establishes the prerequisite for attaining the status of firstling. In Holy Communion, the believer receives the body and blood of Christ and thereby the strength to remain in the life-giving fellowship with Him.

The effect of the sacraments in the daily life of believers

When we ask God to connect us with the apostolate, be it in our personal prayers or in the opening prayer of the divine service, we should remember our rebirth out of water and the Spirit and our childhood in God. This gives us the assurance that God is our Father and that He helps us in all circumstances (Romans 8: 15–16). Grateful for this certainty, let us seek to follow Christ's example in our daily lives and do what pleases our heavenly Father. This is certainly not easy. However, through our regular participation in Holy Communion we receive the strength we need to resist evil. In this way, we grow into the nature of Christ and await His return.

Like the early Christians, we can and wish to bear witness to others, through our words and deeds, to the salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Him and trust in the saving power of the sacraments make their way through this time with divine strength and can rejoice in the promise of eternal life (1 John 5: 11–12).

Context

The first epistle of John was written at a time when uncertainty existed in the churches concerning the significance of the person of Jesus Christ. Some questioned whether God had indeed become incarnate in Jesus and whether His suffering and death were indeed pre-requisites for salvation.

Further details on the three sacraments can be found in CNAC 8 or CNAC-QA 472–480.

Summary

- The divine Sonship of Jesus Christ is acknowledged by God the Father.
- The Spirit, the water, and the blood point to the saving effect of the sacraments administered in the church of Christ.
- The sacraments are necessary for obtaining salvation in its fulness.

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.
Deuteronomy 4: 24

God is holy – God is love

Message
God is holy. He is love. We decide for Him.

Introduction
In his farewell address, Moses exhorts the Israelites as they are about to enter the Promised Land, reminding them of God's self-revelation in the fire when the Ten Commandments were proclaimed (Deuteronomy 4: 11–12; Exodus 19: 18). At the same time, he warns them against idolatry.

God's self-revelation
God's appearance in the consuming fire reveals that He is the Holy One, the one who reveals Himself, the one who purifies, and the one who judges. He is beyond all human control, and greater than anything we can conceive. Impurity cannot endure in His presence. It is with passionate love that He turns to His people and expects them to remain faithful to Him. God is not a mere observer. Rather, He approaches human beings and reaches out to them, calling upon them to make a decision that also shapes their thoughts and actions.

God wants to win our hearts
As a jealous God, He seeks to win our loyalty because He does not want to lose us. His jealousy is nothing other than the expression of His steadfast and all-encompassing love, which cannot tolerate any other gods beside Himself.

This love of God becomes concrete in the image of the good shepherd illustrated by Jesus Christ (John 10: 11–15). The good shepherd does not abandon the lost sheep to its fate but goes in search of it (Luke 15: 3–7). God is never indifferent towards anyone. On the contrary, He goes out of His way to reach out to people and desires to bring them into fellowship with Himself.

Our decision
God appeals to human beings with love, inviting them to make a clear and decisive choice. At our baptism, our sealing, and our confirmation, we made a vow to renounce evil and surrender ourselves to God—that is, to entrust our lives to His guidance. However, this

commitment must continually be tested and proven in our daily lives. The idols of our time, which seek to jeopardise this relationship, also arise alongside God's claim on us. That is why it is important for us to consciously respond to God's love and continually realign ourselves with Him.

God is our strength

God comes to meet us in His consuming fire and in His jealousy, which not only serves as a warning, but also as a means of salvation. On the one hand, these images reveal God's sacred demands and the gravity with which He regards sin, but they also show His mercy, which frees us from the grip of evil. God's holiness protects us from superficiality, and His love invites us to enter into a living relationship with Him. We will find Him if we seek Him with all our heart and with all our soul (Deuteronomy 4: 29).

Context

Our Bible text is taken from Moses' farewell address to the Israelites shortly before their entry into the Promised Land. This verse justifies the strict prohibition of images and warns against idolatry.

Summary

- God is beyond all human control.
- God cares for humanity with passionate love.
- God is our refuge and our help. Let us surrender ourselves to Him completely.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5: 42

Undeserved: Messages of God

Message

The gospel has a place in every area of life.

Introduction

The first Apostles did not live out their faith in one fixed place or according to a single pattern. Their witness unfolded in a dual approach: in the Jewish temple and, at the same time, from house to house. This is how the gospel spread into every aspect of people's lives. These two aspects went hand in hand.

The outer courts of the temple in Jerusalem—whose inner sanctuary was accessible only to priests—comprised a public space. It could become a gathering place for people from diverse backgrounds, a place to cultivate relationships and fellowship.

The temple

For us today, the temple symbolises places and situations where the Christian faith is manifested in society. First and foremost, we think of the congregation that gathers in a church for worship. Furthermore, a "temple" can be found wherever people come together to share ideas or work together. It is there that we show what moves and motivates us, not through grand words, but by acting according to the standards of the gospel.

The houses

The houses in which the early Christian communities gathered point to close fellowship, intimacy, and solidarity. We too have such spaces of closeness: the congregation, the family circle, and our friendships. It is in these "houses" that the gospel can be authentically shared and spread.

Teaching and preaching

Our Bible text speaks of teaching and preaching. Teaching refers to instruction or explanation intended to facilitate an understanding of the subject, while preaching refers to the proclamation of the message of salvation. Both elements together attest to, and explain, the importance of the person of Jesus. Christian teaching and preaching are rooted in Jesus Christ—in His words and deeds. This is still the

core of the gospel even today. At the heart of the Christian faith lies the certainty that Christ died for our sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He ascended into heaven. From there, as professed in our creed, He will return.

The death of Jesus is an expression of God's love for humankind. We believe in a God who does not turn away from humankind, but who constantly reaches out to us. In Jesus' resurrection, we recognise the power of God, which is stronger than death: a power that opens the way to the future and which will be revealed at the return of Jesus. The gospel is not a theory, but a message of life that touches people, transforms them, and gives them hope and a new perspective.

The mission

The lives of the early Christians were shaped by the deep conviction that God's presence is experienced in Jesus Christ. They had their own way of passing on this certainty. We too can find our own ways of sharing the gospel in ways that are meaningful and relevant today. This can take place through conversations, pastoral care, acts of kindness, or social engagement. What matters is that we keep both dimensions in mind: a visible presence within society and personal contact with others. In this way, the gospel will not only have its place in our own lives, but can also take root in the lives of those around us.

Context

Our Bible text captures what characterised the early church after Easter: despite the Sanhedrin's prohibitions and threats (Acts 5: 27–40), the Apostles continued to teach daily in the temple (a public space) and in homes (the private sphere), proclaiming the gospel of Jesus as the Christ. Their message was an unequivocal profession of faith: Jesus, who was crucified, is the Christ whom God raised from the dead (Acts 2: 36; 1 Corinthians 15: 3–5). This conviction was both a source of strength and the driving force behind their witness.

Summary

- The church can be seen as a symbol of the public sphere, where Christians express what matters to them.
- The houses stand for places of personal encounter, where trust is built and the gospel is shared.
- The core of the gospel is Jesus Christ, His death, His resurrection, and His return.

Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Luke 18: 40–41

Lord, I want to see!

Message

Our way of seeing is transformed by Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Our Bible text tells of a blind beggar sitting by the road begging as Jesus passes by. Some rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But Jesus stopped and asked the blind man a question: "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Spiritual blindness

The Bible also uses blindness as an image for a person's inner state. Spiritual blindness can mean that we no longer realise how loved and valued we are in God's eyes. It can also mean that we fail to perceive our own weaknesses and needs. It may also be directed outwards—towards our neighbour whose need we may overlook, or towards God, whose greatness and love may have become obscured by disappointment and accusations.

Healing is possible

The narrative describes how the blind man regained his sight. It involved several steps. The first step was his persistent cry for help. He refused to be discouraged by the resistance of those around him and cried out all the more. And as he did so, he addressed Jesus as "Son of David", thereby acknowledging that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 10: 47). In our own distress—even when it seems to defy all reason—we can always come to the Lord in prayer, undaunted, and filled with trust in God.

Jesus' second step was to pause. He stood still for a moment in the midst of all the commotion around Him. He took notice and showed interest. God likewise paused in His activity in the beginning. On the seventh day, He rested from His work. This image of wholesome silence runs through the entire Bible, culminating in the promise of entering into God's rest (Hebrews 4). Anyone who wants to see clearly again will need such moments of pause: consciously setting aside work, reading Scripture, and spending quiet time in prayer with God.

The third step was an open conversation. Jesus asked a question, and the blind man poured out his heart Our prayers are likewise meant to be open dialogues with God, in which we pour out our hearts and bring our deepest needs before Him.

Seeing perfectly

This story can also be applied in relation to the bridal congregation and the return of Christ. The Church is like the blind man by the side of the road: poor, crying out, and urged to be silent in a secular society. But the Church does not remain silent—it continues to cry out, "Lord, have mercy on us!" And Jesus stops. Even now, in Holy Communion, He pauses and stops in His Church and asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The response from the bridal congregation is clear: we want to see You as You truly are. When the Lord returns, He will fulfil this request. Then every veil will fall. No longer will we merely see a dim reflection as if in a mirror, but face to face, as Paul describes it (1 Corinthians 13: 12). This will result in indescribable joy and praise.

Thoughts from the Chief Apostle

Context

Luke 18: 40–41 is part of the narrative of the healing of a blind man near Jericho. This event is recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Matthew 20: 29–34; Mark 10: 46–52). The encounter takes place on the final stretch of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem—just before the Passion.

In the Bible, blindness is not only a physical condition but can also be understood as a metaphor for a lack of knowledge of God and indifference towards one's neighbour. The recovery of sight to the blind is one of the messianic signs that Jesus announced in Nazareth (Luke 4: 18).

Summary

- Blindness refers to a condition in which people can no longer see themselves, their neighbour, or God clearly.
- Healing begins with the persistent cry to Jesus as King and Lord.
- Silence before God sharpens our vision and is essential for seeing things in a new light.
- In prayer, we may pour out our hearts to God.
- When the Lord returns, we will see Him face to face.

And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 28: 2

Undeserved: Blessings of God

Message

God's blessings for humanity and creation can be experienced in all their fullness in Christ.

Introduction

The first part of Deuteronomy 28 outlines a broad panorama of divine blessings for God's chosen people. Blessings and curses are related to their life on earth: if the Israelites obey, they will be blessed; otherwise, they will be cursed. The crucial factor is to hear the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6: 4)—a form of listening that, in the biblical understanding, is linked to obedience. Hearing means more than merely listening. It involves trust and a willingness to align one's life with God's word. In the Old Testament understanding, a blessing encompasses protection, peace, success, and a future.

A new understanding of blessing

Jesus Christ opens up a new, spiritual understanding of blessing—one that points to eternal life. He reveals God's true nature: unchanging love and faithfulness towards His creation and towards all human beings. A radically different view on blessing and curse emerges from the sacrifice of Jesus' sinless life on the cross. Jesus, both truly human and truly God, took upon Himself the curse that had weighed upon sinners and the creation. The curse has been nailed to the cross (Colossians 2: 14)—the blessing remains. Death as a consequence of sin has been defeated. Life triumphs in the resurrection.

The fullness of blessing in the ascension, Christ's return, and the future

Jesus, who had blessed people in so many ways through His words and deeds—in sermons, miracles, and when He blessed the children—left this earth while actively blessing: "It came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24: 51). The angels announced to the Apostles who remained behind: "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11). Christ ascended to heaven as one who blesses, and He

will return as one who blesses. This blessing will be revealed when the dead in Christ and the living who have allowed themselves to be prepared for Christ will be caught up together as the bridal congregation, and enter eternal fellowship with God.

In the kingdom of peace, Christ, together with His own, will reach out to all people who have ever lived and bless them. He will open the way for them to believe in the gospel. Finally, the new creation will come, filled with God's glory. "The fullness of blessing consists of sharing in God's glory forever" (CNAC 4.6.3).

Blessed in order to be a blessing

We share in God's blessings by opening ourselves up to the blessings administered in the Church. In divine services, God's blessings are bestowed in abundance: God's word is preached, the sacraments are celebrated, and at the conclusion of the divine service the Trinitarian blessing is dispensed upon the congregation. Furthermore, it is a great blessing that we can connect with God in prayer at any time.

As people who are blessed by God, let us also point others to the opportunities for blessings offered by the Church. The following applies to every believer: God wants to bless you—and you are to be a blessing! Through Jesus Christ, we as a congregation already share in God's blessing today and are called to pass it on.

Context

Our Bible text is part of Moses' final covenantal discourse, in which he sets out the difference between blessing and curse.

In light of the New Testament, it becomes clear that God's blessing finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

Blessing does not rest on human achievement, but on God's grace. Obedience as the response of faith remains essential. Faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2: 8–9), not the work of human beings.

True blessing does not lie in success or material prosperity, but in fellowship with God, which is made possible through Christ (Ephesians 1: 3).

Summary

- In Jesus Christ, a new era of blessing begins.
- Christ ascended to heaven as the one who blesses, and He will return as the one who blesses.
- Believers are called to be a blessing by pointing others towards the blessings offered in the Church.
- The fullness of blessing consists of sharing in God's glory forever.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Colossians 3: 15

Undeserved: Peace of God

Message

May the peace of God rule in our hearts.

Introduction

The promise of peace by the Old Testament prophets, by Jesus Christ, and by His Apostles can be found throughout the Bible. The peace described in the Old and New Testaments is not merely the absence of war, but the harmonious relationship between human beings and God, and among human beings themselves. Where this harmony prevails, peace is established both inwardly and outwardly. We await the perfect fulfilment of this harmony in the new creation.

The Bible text comes from a section of Colossians that contrasts the old self with the new self (Colossians 3: 9–10). Paul reminds the church that a new life has begun with Christ. Through His death and resurrection, Christ reconciled God and humanity (Colossians 1: 19–20).

The peace of God

This peace is a gift of God. Jesus Himself speaks of giving His peace to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14: 27).

Our Bible text highlights an important truth: peace should not only be understood as something personal, but also as something communal. This peace is given to all who are called to be part of the body of Christ, that is, His church. We all need Christ, the head of His church. He strengthens all who live in unity with Him. The peace of Christ forms an essential foundation for Christian life.

The rule of peace

God wants to give us peace (Jeremiah 29: 11). This peace is a hallmark of perfect fellowship with God. We are, however, challenged by evil which seeks to rob us of our peace, weaken our faith, and cause division.

May the peace of Christ reign within us, guiding us and shaping our thoughts, speech, and deeds—particularly when decisions need to be made or when conflicts arise. As members of the body of Christ, believers are called to unity (1 Corinthians 12: 12; CNAC 6.2.3.1). We are therefore called to do what promotes peace: to live in accordance with the gospel, to forgive, and not to repay evil with evil.

Be thankful

Our Bible text concludes with a clear exhortation: "Be thankful." Those who recognise what God has given us through Christ will naturally live in gratitude.

Let us be thankful for the peace of God, which strengthens unity and shapes our lives together. Where this peace prevails, it becomes evident that Christ is the head of His church.

Context

The Bible text comes from a section of the letter to the Colossians which exhorts believers to put off the "old man" and put on the "new man" (Colossians 3: 9–15). In this context, Paul invokes the peace of Christ, which is to characterise the life of the church and its members.

The United Nations has declared 21 September as the International Day of Peace. Since 2004, the World Council of Churches has been calling for a commitment to peace.

Summary

When the peace of God rules in our hearts, we will

- understand that Christ's peace is a gift that is not only to be understood on a personal level, but is valid for the entire church
- do what promotes peace
- recognise what God has given us in Christ and respond with gratitude

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40: 31

Undeserved: Strength of God

Message

God can strengthen the weak.

Introduction

Weariness has become one of the defining experiences of modern life. At times, people of every age feel tired—physically exhausted, mentally burdened, emotionally depleted, or spiritually drained. In such moments, it is easy to ask: Does God still see me? Does He care about what I am carrying?

The people of Israel asked the same questions in their season of hardship, believing that God was absent. Israel said, "My way is hidden from the Lord" (Isaiah 40: 27). Many still feel this way today. We may pray and see no immediate answer. We may wonder whether our efforts matter, or whether God even notices our tears, fatigue, or faithfulness. In response to their discouragement, the prophet answered clearly: God does not overlook His people. The One who created the heavens is neither distracted nor indifferent. There is no place where He is not present, no situation beyond His reach, and no life too complicated for His care.

What it means to wait on the Lord

The promise of Isaiah 40: 31 is given to those who wait on the Lord. In Scripture, waiting is not understood as passive resignation, but as active trust. It is a conscious focus on God, and the firm trust that He will act. It is the posture of faith that looks to God with confidence, even before circumstances change. To wait on the Lord means: to rest in His wisdom, to trust His character, to remain realistic and patient in His silence, and to expect and hope in His working, even when unseen.

Waiting is difficult because it requires trust and surrender. However, waiting on God is never wasted time, is never in vain.

Renewed strength for today

Isaiah does not say that God merely gives a temporary boost of energy. He says that God renews our strength. Our weakness is exchanged for His sufficiency, our exhaustion for His sustaining grace.

Isaiah uses three images of renewed life which can also give us strength and comfort:

- "They shall mount up with wings like eagles." Knowing who God is lifts us above our circumstances, giving us clarity and perspective.
- "They shall run and not be weary." In seasons of unusual demand, times of intensive service, challenge, or responsibility, God grants us endurance beyond natural capacity.
- "They shall walk and not faint." Most of life is lived in daily obedience, ordinary routines, and repeated faithfulness, which often require the greatest perseverance. God continually strengthens us here as well.

Context

Isaiah 40 marks a turning point in the book of Isaiah. After a number of chapters of warning and judgement, it begins with divine consolation: "Comfort, yes comfort My people" (Isaiah 40: 1). God declares that He will not abandon the people of His covenant. The chapter magnifies the majesty of God. He is the Creator who measures the waters in His hand, numbers the stars, and yet tenderly carries the lambs. The chapter closes by confronting Israel's fear that God has forgotten them. The Lord is everlasting, unwearied, and infinite in understanding. His people need not despair.

Summary

- Weariness is common in life, but God has not forgotten us.
- To wait on the Lord means to trust Him patiently.
- God renews strength for every season—lifting us above trials, sustaining us in demanding times, and helping us remain faithful in daily life.

And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." 1 Kings 19: 7

God is kind and cares for us

Message

God's care strengthens us and calls upon us to keep going.

Introduction

On Mount Carmel, the Lord came to Elijah's aid: fire fell from the sky, the priests of Baal were defeated, and rain finally began to fall once more on the parched land. But then Elijah had to flee from Queen Jezebel. Discouraged, he wanted to die, which—according to the understanding of the time—meant the end of his relationship with God. It was believed that the dead were separated from God (Psalm 6: 5).

God sent an angel to him twice to strengthen and urge him to keep going—all the way to Mount Horeb, where he met the Lord.

When faith falters

We, too, may sometimes feel spiritually exhausted as a result of failures, disappointments, or prayers that seem to go unanswered. In such situations of spiritual distress, we may be tempted to break away from God. Let us not fall into this trap, but turn to God and tell Him everything that troubles us: He will answer us and strengthen our faith.

Strength in word and sacrament

The angel appeared to Elijah twice. In the same way, God turns to us in every divine service, without ever growing weary of doing so. He reminds us of all that He has done out of love: He sent His Son, Christ died for us, and through the rebirth out of water and Spirit, He made us His children. He speaks to us of eternal life because faith only has meaning if it is oriented towards the resurrection. He also encourages us to count His blessings and remember all the prayers He has already answered.

In the celebration of Holy Communion, Jesus Christ grants us fellowship with Himself and reminds us that we are not alone—the Church has faithful followers both here on earth and in the beyond. If we

strive to grasp the profound meaning of God's word and Holy Communion, our faith will be strengthened.

Getting up and continuing on our way

After strengthening our faith, God urges us to get up and keep going. Our salvation does not depend on the circumstances we face, but on the decisions we make.

Let us move forward with confidence and do God's will. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we strive to become more and more like Christ. We cannot change the world, but we can do good wherever God has placed us. A strong faith is also a source of deep joy: joy that comes from Christ's victory and the certainty of being with Him soon and forever.

Thoughts from the Chief Apostle

Context

Our Bible text is taken from the account of Elijah (1 Kings 17–19). Elijah was active during the reign of King Ahab, who promoted the worship of Baal in Israel.

Mount Horeb is the Old Testament site where God revealed Himself (Exodus 19). There, God does not reveal Himself in the storm, but in a "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19: 12)—an image that symbolises His tender care for His exhausted servant.

Summary

- Spiritual exhaustion can affect anyone. In such situations God reaches out to us with His love and care.
- God strengthens our faith in word and sacrament.
- Strengthened in our faith, we keep going and strive to do good and become more like Christ.
- A strong faith is a source of deep joy.

What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honour. Psalm 8: 4–5

Who am I?

Message

We are loved by God just as we are. Our identity is rooted in our relationship with God.

Introduction

Already in the creation narrative, we can perceive God's vision of humanity: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1: 26). Since the beginning, human beings have held a prominent place in the creation.

In today's society, young people in particular find themselves questioning their role and their worth. Who am I? Why am I here? What determines my worth?

Psalm 8 teaches us that our worth does not reside in our achievements, appearance, or success, but in the fact that God sees us and thinks of us. Despite the vastness of the universe, God knows each one of us (Psalm 139: 14–16). From God's perspective, each one of us therefore has the same dignity and value. Our very being, our identity, stems from our relationship with God.

I have chosen you

Our relationship with God is based on His election. "I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name" (Isaiah 43: 1). This shows that God is clearly committed to His children. He calls us by name. Each one of us is unique, and God speaks to us personally. Through the rebirth out of water and Spirit, we are God's "children and heirs" (Romans 8: 17).

My responsibility

The dignity bestowed upon us by God also entails a responsibility towards our neighbour. Every person deserves to be respected! No one has the right to belittle others or treat them with disrespect, for whatever reason. This also includes using social media responsibly. Trying to boost our own self-worth by disparaging others would in no way live up to our responsibility. Let us not give into the temptation of

denying our identity. Our guiding principle is: I define myself by my relationship with the triune God, not by putting others down.

Let us make sure that our relationships with others are inspired by the example of Jesus. Concerning this, Apostle Paul writes that in our relationships with one another we should have the same mindset as Jesus Christ (Philippians 2: 5).

My future

Through the rebirth, our lives have been given a new foundation and direction. We have been called to belong to the firstfruits and have the privilege of being part of the bridal congregation, which will be the first to enter into direct fellowship with the triune God and His people when Jesus Christ returns.

Let us not judge one another solely on the basis of outward appearances! We share a deep bond with Jesus Christ, who is both our standard and model. Our personhood and individuality should be expressed through love, trust, and discipleship. This gives us confidence. "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15: 10).

Context

Psalm 8: 4–5 is part of a hymn of praise celebrating the glory of God. In the face of the vastness of the universe, human beings seem small and insignificant. And yet, God watches over us. Herein lies the very essence of human dignity: God thinks of us and draws near to us. This is what gives human beings their worth, not their achievements.

Suggested optional reading for the divine service: Isaiah 43: 1–3a, 5–7

Summary

- Our relationship with God defines our identity.
- As children and heirs, we have a responsibility toward our fellow human beings.
- As firstfruits, we await the return of Jesus.

Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11: 1 (excerpt)

Praying and opening our hearts to God

Message

In prayer, we may come just as we are.

Introduction

When children pray, they are often faced with a simple yet profound question: How do I begin my prayer? What are the right words? Whether we wish to express gratitude, a request, or simply share our sense of wonder, speaking to God can seem a little strange at first. Jesus' disciples knew this feeling too. They watched Jesus praying and asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." This request emphasises an important aspect: prayer is not a skill we possess naturally. It is a journey on which Jesus accompanies us. God hears every sincere word, whether it is clearly articulated or little more than a sigh.

Jesus teaches us to pray

The disciples' request therefore shows that prayer is something we can learn, and Jesus Himself is the teacher. Prayer is not about getting the words right or following a technique—it grows from a relationship with the Father. When children hear that even Jesus' closest friends had to learn how to pray, it strengthens their confidence. They realise it is okay to be imperfect, hesitant, or curious. Jesus' own prayer—His stillness, His trust, His openness—provides guidance in this regard.

God listens to the heart and delights in every conversation

What Jesus teaches about prayer is already foreshadowed in Psalm 19: 14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." God is not looking for beautiful words. He listens to what moves the heart, to what is genuine, and to that which is spoken honestly. God looks at the heart, not at the way we express ourselves. This is particularly reassuring for children who think their words need to sound especially "good" or "right". God delights in open conversation, sincere thoughts, and simple words. When spoken in trust, a child's prayer is precious to Him.

In prayer we can be ourselves

Prayer is not a recitation of poetry, but a conversation with God—an expression of a living relationship. Jesus shows us the steps along the way, and our prayer life can grow gradually over time. Whether it is short or long, silent or spoken aloud, filled with joy or fear, with few or many words, those who pray sincerely are close to God.

Let us encourage our children to find their own way of speaking with God so that they may understand that they can simply be themselves before Him.

Helpful tips

The opening question about how children can pray invites them to discover together that there is no right or wrong way to pray. Every prayer can be adapted to suit whatever the moment calls for. You can make a note of the children's answers and explore them further in the discussion.

The following Bible passages will help the children discover how Jesus Himself prayed: in a place where He was alone (Mark 1: 35; Luke 5: 16), in childlike trust to His Father (Mark 14: 36), honestly when confronted with distress (Matthew 26: 39), interceding for others (John 17: 9), and in fellowship during the Last Supper (Matthew 26: 26). Each passage can be read aloud briefly and explored using a simple question: "How did Jesus pray in this situation? And what might He have felt?"

Ask the children to write (or draw) their deepest thoughts—a wish, a request, a thank-you—on a piece of paper shaped like a heart. Then collect the hearts, put them in a bowl, and place it in front of the altar. This is how the children can experience in a practical way: we can bring everything before God—and we do so together.

Summary

- Prayer is something we learn, and Jesus Himself is our guide on this journey.
- God rejoices in every sincere prayer, whether it is simple, hesitant, or expressed in a child's own words.
- Our children need to understand: in prayer, they can speak to God in their own words and just be themselves.

Reading for the Bible study service

Psalm 122: 1–8

I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go into the house of the Lord."
Our feet have been standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!

Jerusalem is built
As a city that is compact together,
Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the Lord,
To the Testimony of Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the Lord.
For thrones are set there for judgement,
The thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces."
For the sake of my brethren and companions,
I will now say, "Peace be within you."

Reading for the youth service

Isaiah 43: 1–3a, 5–7

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour ...

"Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

September

1 Tue.
2 Wed. Isaiah 41: 10
3 Thur.
4 Fri.
5 Sat.
6 Sun. 1 John 5: 8
7 Mon.
8 Tue.
9 Wed. Deuteronomy 4: 24
10 Thur.
11 Fri.
12 Sat.
13 Sun. Acts 5: 42
14 Mon.
15 Tue.
16 Wed. Luke 18: 40–41
17 Thur.
18 Fri.
19 Sat.
20 Sun. Deuteronomy 28: 2
21 Mon. International Day of Peace
22 Tue.
23 Wed. Colossians 3: 15
24 Thur.
25 Fri.
26 Sat.
27 Sun. Isaiah 40: 31
28 Mon.
29 Tue. Michaelmas
30 Wed. 1 Kings 19: 7

Youth service: Psalm 8: 4–5
Children's service: Luke 11: 1 (excerpt)

October

1 Thur.
2 Fri.
3 Sat.
4 Sun. Genesis 2: 15 Thanksgiving Day
5 Mon.
6 Tue.
7 Wed. 1 John 4: 14
8 Thur.
9 Fri.
10 Sat.
11 Sun. Revelation 4: 11
12 Mon.
13 Tue.
14 Wed. Isaiah 40: 11
15 Thur.
16 Fri.
17 Sat.
18 Sun. Psalm 40: 5
19 Mon.
20 Tue.
21 Wed. Matthew 7: 13
22 Thur.
23 Fri.
24 Sat.
25 Sun. John 3: 16
26 Mon.
27 Tue.
28 Wed. Romans 8: 25
29 Thur.
30 Fri.
31 Sat.

Youth service: Psalm 32: 8

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