

Pentecost 21

October 18, 2026

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 24 (Year A)

Though King Cyrus of Persia did not know the God of Israel, God still used him to bring His people back into a covenant relationship. God can and will use foreign rulers to accomplish his will in the world. It does not matter that the person knows nothing of the Lord. All power and authority belong to the one who creates light and darkness, and he will care for his chosen ones by any means necessary.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7**The Prophecy of Cyrus' Reign**

Isaiah prophesies the word of the Lord concerning an unlikely hero on behalf of Israel. God will call the Persian king Cyrus to the throne many years later, and through him Israel would be delivered from their enemies. All of this would happen unbeknownst to King Cyrus the Great, who was an unbelieving Gentile.

Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13)**Sing to the Lord a New Song**

This psalm of praise recounts the wonderful deeds of the Lord. There was nothing but joy to be found in the psalmist's heart as he exalted the goodness and creativity of God, who is worthy to be praised.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**Thanksgiving for the People**

Paul and his traveling companions, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy, gave thanks for the Thessalonians because of their faithful works in the name of Christ. Paul reminded them of their chosenness and praised their efforts to love their neighbors and proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:15-22**The Pharisees Test Jesus**

Immediately after Jesus taught his followers about answering the call of God, some Pharisees approached him with a question about paying taxes to Caesar. "Is it lawful?" they challenged. Jesus defeated their trap by pointing them to the image on their own currency, saying, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Green

During the Season of Pentecost:

- Use either the Kyrie or the Hymn of Praise.
- The lessons for today edify Martin Luther's teaching on the "two kingdoms" of Christ. One kingdom is spiritual and the other kingdom is earthly. Jesus taught that believers are to be in the world but not of the world. We live here on earth, but we are citizens of heaven. God uses political figures for his own purposes — such as the story of King Cyrus — and while on earth, we are to submit to earthly rulers who have authority over us (Fourth Commandment). All the while, we live in the spiritual kingdom of God here and now.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	328	---	549	634	16	16
Jesus, Priceless Treasure	458	---	743	775	39	39
If You Will (But) Trust in God to Guide You	453	---	750	769	222	222
Blessed Assurance	---	699	---	638	190	190
Take My Life, That I May Be	406	---	783	685	233	233
Now Thank We All Our God	534	---	895	839	50	50
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	543	---	790	858	11	11
Sent Forth By God's Blessing	221	---	643	547	58	58
Strengthen Us for Service, Lord	218	---	---	497	---	---
Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing	196	---	---	544	---	---

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOVS= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The Reclaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles
 Sing, Sing, Sing
 (CCLI# 5114065)
 Here I Am, Send Me
 (CCLI# 7074926)
 Knowing You
 (CCLI# 1045238)
 I Exalt Thee
 (CCLI# 17803)
 Great Are You Lord
 (CCLI# 6460220)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.