

## About the Readings on 5.12.24

### Seventh Sunday of Easter

On this seventh Sunday of Easter, we join with Matthias to become witnesses of the resurrection. It is Sunday, when we experience the presence of Christ within the baptized community. Some assemblies that do not meet for worship on Ascension Thursday replace the readings of Easter 7 with those of Ascension Day.

#### Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

The ascension is followed by the establishment of the church in Jerusalem, which requires leadership. Luke describes the casting of lots, but Peter's prayer indicates the theological understanding that God is choosing the church's leaders. Christian churches continue this hope in their language about the call to ministry and in the rite of ordination.

#### Psalm 1

To respond to the first reading, we sing the instructional **Psalm 1**. Judas is like the chaff, while we join with Matthias to be like the fruitful trees. The frontispiece of the Psalms section in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (p. 339) depicts the church in praise as this fruitful tree. Christians see themselves as nourished by the pool of baptism, the "streams of water" of which the psalmist speaks.

#### 1 John 5:9-13

This Sunday concludes the semicontinuous reading of 1 John. If believers already have eternal life, it is other than life after death: it is the joyful communal sharing in Christ's truth now.

#### John 17:6-19

What has been called the High Priestly Prayer of John 17 is divided between the three years of the lectionary on the Sunday after the Ascension. The church honors Christ's glory, which is manifest both in the crucifixion and in the present community (v. 10). Proclaiming John 17 after Easter rather than during Holy Week exemplifies not only the technique of the lectionary, which layers up biblical meanings for the church's worship life, but also the facts of the composition of the gospels: not a verbatim from Jesus' life, this chapter was crafted decades after the resurrection to hold before the believers the name of Christ and so to strengthen the community, who like Christ are both in the world and not of the world. By baptism, we have all been sanctified.