

AUGUST 17, 2025
TENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Lord Jesus, You Shall
Be My Song



Our faith is strengthened by a cloud of witnesses.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 12:49-56	Following Jesus causes division
Monday	Jeremiah 23:23-29	God's word is like fire
Tuesday	Hebrews 11:29–12:2	Faith in God
Wednesday	Joshua 2:1-24	Rahab's story
Thursday	Judges 16:23-31	The death and triumph of Samson
Friday	Luke 10:25-37	Good Samaritan
Saturday	Psalms 82	Justice for the weak
Sunday	Luke 13:10-17	Jesus heals on the Sabbath

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Redeeming God, you know our broken lives and suffering; give us faith in Christ so that we may endure the pain and rejoice in the comfort of your eternal care. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, it is your will that we be fed and cared for; thank you for this food as a gift of your steadfast love and faithfulness. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's eternal comfort give you joy.

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you or someone you know been unfairly treated?
- How does your faith help you to face conflict in daily life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Hebrews 11:29–12:2.

The Daily Bible Readings for this week have a common thread: God's judgment will prevail. God's ways are not the ways of earthly powers that abuse the poor and weak and that bring pain and suffering to the righteous. The good news is that God's ways will conquer all evil and that we have "a cloud of witnesses" (12:1) to remind us of what is true and just, good and faithful. The cloud of witnesses may be parents, grandparents, or other mentors. It may be voices from the past like Rahab, Samson or a long list of biblical characters. More recent witnesses include Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Corrie Ten Boom, Martin Luther King, Jr., Oscar Romero, Desmond Tutu, and a host of others who witnessed to Christ's love and opposition to hatred. We need the voice of Jesus and all the witnesses of peace, mercy, and justice to stand up to the forces that promote suffering of any kind. In Jesus, we are called to endure suffering with confidence in God and know the joy that is ours for all eternity.

Discuss: Who do you consider as a faith role model and part of your cloud of witnesses?

Pray: **Almighty and merciful God, help us to endure the pain and suffering from all that opposes your reign and to rejoice in the promise of your eternal love through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you be a witness of Jesus' love for someone who is hurting?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Hebrews 12:1 encourages us to "lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely." Find a small stone and hold it while you think or talk about things that keep us from living and acting the way Jesus wants us to (e.g. being rude or nasty to each other, lying about something we did or did not do, taking something that doesn't belong to us, and not helping others).

Pray: **Dear Jesus, please forgive us for those times when we don't follow you. Help us to fight against sin and to keep our eyes on you. Amen.**

Then throw the rock away to symbolize God's removal of our sins through Christ.