

We have accepted some, turned down a few for various reasons (or excuses) and completely ignored others. In a similar manner, the kingdom of God is entered only by way of an invitation (the invitation delivered by the hand of God.) It is possible to turn down or ignore the invitation given by God to come to the wedding feast of His Son in His kingdom. (Why anyone would turn down or ignore the invitation is beyond me, but look at the world.) There is also the problem of what we are to wear. In the case of the Wedding Feast of the Son, we put on Christ. We are taken by Jesus and clothed with His righteousness, we are given His faithfulness as our faith. In that way we are found to be acceptable in the sight of God.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Ⓔ Heavenly Father, we ask that you fill us with Your Holy Spirit, so that we have a full understanding of Your Word and will. Fill us with the power to walk faithfully in obedience and love to You. Enlighten our minds, that we are safe from evil and foolish acts, instead acting as the vessels of the good works You would accomplish through our presence in the world. Transform our hearts so we find our joy in worship of You, communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the fellowship of these Your people.

Exert Your sovereign authority over all the Earth. Bring all rulers into obedience to Your unchanging Word. End all tyranny and oppression. Banish the love of war, the lust for power, the desire for acts of terrorism and the worship of false gods. We especially pray for this our country. Bring to all our people the esteem of honor, truth, purity, true religion and works of faith. Endow our leaders with sound judgment, good counsel, and sure knowledge, that we are preserved from all our enemies both within and without, and live to serve You and all others with patience and accord.

Grant to all who are in sickness or sorrow, tribulation or danger, who have suffered disappointment or injustice an increase in faith and love. Keep them in Your mighty hand, and deliver them, from all of their affliction and woes.

We pray also for Your Holy Church, O Father divine. Furnish us with such grace that we are ready to sacrifice with passion for the cause of the Gospel and put such faithfulness to Your Word, that we will never waver in our Holy calling. Give repentance to all people. Lay on them such faith, assurance and love that they are able to remain faithful to You at all times and in all places.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**
All these things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Who invited and brought us to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in His kingdom.

© **Amen.**

PROPER TWENTY-THREE

Chant Tone



Introit I will praise the Lord as long as I live;* I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;* my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of sal — vation;* He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,	as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful — headdress,* and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen. I will praise the Lord as long as I live;* I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. <i>(Antiphon, Psalm 146:2; Isaiah 61:10)</i>
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Collect of the Day

Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

For He will command His angels con | cerning you*
to guard you in | all your ways.
Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and all that is within me, bless His | holy name!

(Psalm 91:11, 103:1)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Eternal, everlasting God and Father of Jesus Christ, we come before you with praise and thanksgiving. Through all the years of our life You have provided all our physical needs and kept us in the Christian faith. For our physical and spiritual preservation we give You thanks. We are fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are all Your works. Accept, O Lord, our heartfelt thanks. As descendants of the first human pair, Whom You created in Your image of righteousness and holiness, we thank You that You have kept alive Your grace for the people of the world, and through Your Son made it possible for us to receive His blessing in Your sight. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

ISAIAH MADE THE PROPHECY OF THE FEAST, AND THROUGH MATTHEW, JESUS EXPLAINED WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FEAST. Those who were invited refused to come, even when God sent John to proclaim the coming of the One for Whom the people were waiting. They turned and walked away. When God sent the Apostles, the people ignored the warnings. The feast has been given to others. The feast, the wedding banquet has been offered to we who are members of the New Testament Church (the bride of Christ.) We came in at the invitation to be received by our Lord, not for what we have done, but in His name and with the credit of what has been done for us by the Bridegroom.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Feast of Salvation

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 146:2;) Isaiah 61:10

Most of Isaiah is comprehensible only in the context of the life of Jesus. The nation of Israel had been reduced to 2 tribes and could barely claim the area around Jerusalem as their own. The praise of the antiphon belongs to Jesus. As does Psalm 146, most likely written by David.

COLLECT

(Just for the sake of clarity, the Collect is prescribed within the Propers that change every Sunday. The "Prayer Of The Church" was written by the author so isn't mentioned here.) Today we thank God that He invited us to the banquet of salvation and deals with in His mercy.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 25:6-9

This section is known as the Apocalypse of Isaiah, because it speaks of "that day." "That day," and "the Day of the Lord," are synonymous statements of the end times—the times fulfilled in Jesus. The drama in these Words even shines though the translation to English. The promise made here is that all people are brought to the place where God rules (the church.) They feast on the rich food of the Body and Blood of Christ. Your faith, takes away your disgrace, makes you able to trust in God and gives you salvation.

GRADUAL—Psalm 91:11, Psalm 103:1

Psalm 91 and 103 were written by David. David intended that we would know the mercy and pity of God. (The use of the Gradual, which is named for the fact that we progress from the Old Testament to the Epistle, mostly follows an ancient pattern which changes with the festival. When we are into the non-festival half of the year, the Gradual changes every five to seven weeks.)

EPISTLE LESSON—Philippians 4:4-13

Either we overcome, worry, or worry, overcomes us. Paul offered a workable formula that overcomes worry and anxiety which is most often sin. The components of the formula are: pray, give thanks, and think about the things of God. This equals God's peace that passes all understanding. Paul stated all these things as a Gospel blessing that we "put into practice," having been clothed with the wedding garments (from the Gospel Lesson.) We are given the strength to do all things by Jesus.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 22:1-14

The wedding feast God has prepared is the full and free forgiveness, life and salvation through the vicarious satisfaction of His Son. Throughout our lives we have received all types of invitations to various celebrations.