

*Lydia of Thyatira is a woman mentioned in the New Testament who is regarded as the first documented convert to Christianity in Europe.*

## **COLLECT: (Remain Standing)**

Eternal God, who gives good gifts to all people, and who grants the spirit of generosity: Give us, we pray you, hearts that are always open to hear your word, that, following the example of your servant Lydia, we may show hospitality to all who are in any need or trouble, through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **First Reading: Proverbs 4:1-27 (Please be seated)**

Reader: A reading from the book of Proverbs.

Listen, children, to a father's instruction,  
and be attentive, that you may gain insight;  
for I give you good precepts:  
do not forsake my teaching.  
When I was a son with my father,  
tender, and my mother's favourite,  
he taught me, and said to me,  
'Let your heart hold fast my words;  
keep my commandments, and live.  
Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away  
from the words of my mouth.  
Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;  
love her, and she will guard you.  
The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,  
and whatever else you get, get insight.  
Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;  
she will honour you if you embrace her.  
She will place on your head a fair garland;  
she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.'

Hear, my child, and accept my words,  
that the years of your life may be many.  
I have taught you the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.  
When you walk, your step will not be hampered;  
and if you run, you will not stumble.  
Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;  
guard her, for she is your life.  
Do not enter the path of the wicked,

and do not walk in the way of evildoers.  
Avoid it; do not go on it;  
turn away from it and pass on.  
For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong;  
they are robbed of sleep unless they have  
made someone stumble.  
For they eat the bread of wickedness  
and drink the wine of violence.  
But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,  
which shines brighter and brighter until full day.  
The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;  
they do not know what they stumble over.  
My child, be attentive to my words;  
incline your ear to my sayings.  
Do not let them escape from your sight;  
keep them within your heart.  
For they are life to those who find them,  
and healing to all their flesh.  
Keep your heart with all vigilance,  
for from it flow the springs of life.  
Put away from you crooked speech,  
and put devious talk far from you.  
Let your eyes look directly forwards,  
and your gaze be straight before you.  
Keep straight the path of your feet,  
and all your ways will be sure.  
Do not swerve to the right or to the left;  
turn your foot away from evil.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

# Psalm

Reader: Let us pray together the words of **Psalm 5.**

1 Give ear to my words, O Lord; \*  
consider my meditation.

2 Harken to my cry for help, my King and my  
God, \*  
for I make my prayer to you.

3 In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; \*  
early in the morning I make my appeal and  
watch for you.

4 For you are not a God who takes pleasure in  
wickedness, \*  
and evil cannot dwell with you.

5 Braggarts cannot stand in your sight; \*  
you hate all those who work wickedness.

6 You destroy those who speak lies; \*  
the bloodthirsty and deceitful, O Lord, you  
abhor.

7 But as for me, through the greatness of your  
mercy I will  
go into your house; \*  
I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe  
of you.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness,  
because of those who lie in wait for me; \*  
make your way straight before me.

9 For there is no truth in their mouth; \*  
there is destruction in their heart;

10 Their throat is an open grave; \*  
they flatter with their tongue.

11 Declare them guilty, O God; \*  
let them fall, because of their schemes.

12 Because of their many transgressions cast  
them out, \*  
for they have rebelled against you.

13 But all who take refuge in you will be glad; \*  
they will sing out their joy for ever.

14 You will shelter them, \*  
so that those who love your Name may exult in  
you.

15 For you, O Lord, will bless the righteous; \*  
you will defend them with your favor as with a  
shield.

## **1 John 4:7-21** *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the first book of John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Matthew 11:7-15** *(Please stand as you are able)*

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. Let anyone with ears listen!

Deacon or Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Christ**