



THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 06, 2026



Pre-service Music

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: Whoever Welcomes One Such Child in My Name

text/tune John Perovich

Confession and Absolution

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Confession and Absolution

P The Lord is near the brokenhearted; He delivers those who are discouraged. Therefore, let us go to our God and confess our sins knowing that,

C **our God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

C **Gracious and merciful God, we confess that while we have been made new creations through the waters of our baptism, we still live ensnared by sin, and are unable to free ourselves. We have not always lived our lives in accordance with the identity that you have given us in Jesus. We have not always done the things that you have called us to do. We have not always loved you above all else and with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. We have not always loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us all our sins. Renew our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that our lives would show the identity you have given us in baptism, and the new creations that you have made us to be. Amen.**

P God's saints lack nothing. God's people are delivered from all their afflictions. In mercy, Almighty God has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I, therefore, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit

C Amen.

Peace of the Lord

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

Service of the Word

Gathering Hymn: LSB 707 Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still!
Oh, that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will!

Order my footsteps by Thy Word
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

Assist my soul, too apt to stray,
A stricter watch to keep;
And should I e'er forget Thy way,
Restore Thy wand'ring sheep.

Make me to walk in Thy commands—
'Tis a delightful road—
Nor let my head or heart or hands
Offend against my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
Text: Public domain

Salutation and Collect of the Day

L The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

L Let us pray.
O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Children's Message

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 33:7–9

A The Old Testament reading is from the thirty-third chapter of the book of Ezekiel.

⁷ So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

A This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Psalms

Psalm 32:1-7

- L** Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
C **Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**
L While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.
C **For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**
L Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah
C **Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.**
L You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;
C **you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.**
L Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
C **as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Epistle

Romans 13:1-10

- A** The Epistle reading is from the thirteenth chapter of the book of Romans.

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; ⁴ for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. ⁶ For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

- A** This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual

- L** Fear the LORD, you his saints,
C **for those who fear him lack nothing!**
L Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
C **but the LORD delivers them out of them all.**

Gospel Acclamation

- C** **Halle, halle, halle_lujah!**
Halle, halle, halle_lujah!
Halle, halle, halle_lujah!
Hallelujah! Halle_lujah!

Text: arr. Mark Sedio
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Verse

- P** Alleluia. Blessed are the poor in spirit,
C **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Alleluia.**

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

G **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹ At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ² He called a child, whom he put among them, ³ and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. ⁶ “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸ “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire. ¹⁰ “Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. ¹² What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. ¹⁵ “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: LSB 686 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
Fills my heart with joy and love,
Teach me ever to adore Thee;
May I still Thy goodness prove.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace now like a fetter
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Oh, that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in the blood-washed linen,
How I'll sing Thy wondrous grace!
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry;
Take my ransom'd soul away;
Send Thine angels soon to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–90, alt.
Text: Public domain

Apostles' Creed

- L** We make confession of our faith together in the words of the creed.
- C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Reaffirmation of Stephen Ministry

- P** Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, with gratitude and joy we give thanks this day for you, our Stephen ministers, who are faithfully serving here at St. John's. We praise the Lord that He has permitted you to serve His Church and this community faithfully and that He has sustained and supported you and blessed your service among us. We give thanks to God for you, and affirm you in this important ministry.
- P** Hear the word of the Lord from the first chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians.
I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:3-8 ESV).
- P** As Stephen Ministers, you have gone through extensive training and preparation through the Stephen Series, an international program of lay caring ministry. You have studied and practiced skills in many areas, such as listening and dealing with feelings, crisis intervention, assertiveness and prayer. You have been assigned to minister to those in our congregation and neighborhoods who are experiencing such life crises as illness or hospitalization, retirement, divorce, loss of a loved one, or any of a number of difficulties people face in daily living. We thank you and give thanks to our God for you, and for your love and service.

- P** As you has been equipped for life, encouraged in discipleship, and engage in service, we ask you now to reaffirm your commitment to serving our Lord and those in our congregation and neighborhood who need to be comforted; to strive to be responsive to the needs of others; to be a friend to those who are burdened under the stress of daily life; to be a patient listener in a hurried world; to heal divisions wherever you find them and strive to make people whole; to use your skills and talents to help those people whom you serve and to pray for them; to help this congregation grow as a caring community through your own caring ministry.; to share your personal experiences of faith with those around you so that they too may celebrate the presence of Christ in our world today.
- P** Will you recommit to living as God's faithful people and serving as Stephen Ministers and leaders in this congregation and our neighborhoods? If so then say, "Yes. With the help of God."
- R** *Yes, with the help of God.*
- P** Will you continue to nurture the skills you have learned and use them in service to others, to support, encourage, build up and comfort people in all their needs? If so then say, "Yes. With the help of God."
- R** *Yes, with the help of God.*
- P** Will you, the members of St. John's, continue to open your hearts to the ministry of these people and to pray for them, that they may be effective servants of Christ. Will you continue to accept their ministry when you need help, to allow them to work with you as you face struggles in your life, that you might receive support and help from them. If so then say, "Yes. With the help of God."
- C** **Yes, with the help of God.**
- P** Are you prepared and willing to continue to serve as Stephen Ministers through St. John's Lutheran Church? If so then say, "Yes. With the help of God."
- R** *Yes, with the help of God.*
- P** You have reaffirmed your promise to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus and his people as Stephen Ministers, I commend you to the care and guidance of the Holy Spirit as you in turn care for others. Use the skills you have learned, releasing the gifts and talents the Spirit of God has given you so that you might be a blessing to the people you meet and care for. Continue to study, reflect upon the situations you encounter, and pray for the people whose lives you are privileged to share. Act boldly and without fear, for Christ is with you. Now "may the God of peace sanctify you wholly, that your spirit, soul, and body will be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- C** **Amen.**
- P** Because of your service as Stephen Ministers at St. Johns, we give thanks to God for the use of your gifts in this ministry and affirm you in your service. As you care for us and with us, please know that you have our full support. We affirm you in your roles as Stephen Ministers and Leaders and we bless you in your serving in the name of the Father, and + of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**
- P** Let us pray. Gracious Father, Through Your holy apostle You direct each person to use the gifts they have received and to serve others with the strength that You provide. We give thanks to You for the faithful service of these Your people who join you in your work by serving as Stephen Ministers. Bless them in their service. Work through them to give Your comfort and care to people in need. Allow them to be messengers of hope who proclaim the good news of Jesus' victory over the darkness. Bless them with wisdom and patience and with love and faithfulness to Your Word, that with all gladness they may be affirmed in their caring and may continue to serve, comfort, counsel, and guide Your people on the way to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

P Go in peace and joy. The Almighty and most merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and bless and strengthen you for faithful service in His name.

C Amen.

Prayer of the Church

L Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P Loving and Gracious God, you have gathered us together to be your people in this world. You give us your Holy Spirit, your word, and the sacraments. Work through Your means of grace to transform our lives, so that they would always show your love and forgiveness and grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

L Blessed Lord, You have promised that where two or three are gathered in Your name, You are in the midst of them. We thank and praise you that you always hear the prayers of Your people, and grant our supplications in accordance with your good and gracious will. Give us joy and zeal for living as your disciples who join you in your work in this place. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, because You have made us our brother's keeper, fill us with care for the members of our earthly families and for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Forgive our sins and strengthen us to live so that we owe no one anything except to love each other. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

L Gracious God we pray for our partners in ministry in this community, for Gathering Lambs, Luther Towers, and Interfaith Housing Alliance for the Poor, bless them and the good work they do in our community. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Righteous God, You give leaders to every nation and people. Grant us good and wise public servants who lead in ways that love, serve, and care for all people. Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police, firefighters, first responders, EMTs, and Emergency Room workers. Allow justice, mercy, peace, and compassion to grow and increase in us, among us, and through us. And heal our world from the evils of injustice, prejudice, inequality, and hatred. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

L Merciful Lord, look with compassion upon those who are struggling with illness, grief, loneliness or any malady [*especially those we love whom we name before you now out loud or in our hearts* _____]. Reassure them of Your love, which is like that of the shepherd who seeks and saves the one lost sheep. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O Lord, grant that we would receive Christ's body and blood with childlike faith. Let us humbly, joyfully, and confidently trust that Your forgiveness is poured out for us in this Sacrament. Work through your means of grace to strengthen our faith and to increase our love and service to You, to one another, and to our neighbors. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

L Almighty God, because You desire that none of Your little ones should perish and because sin is constantly crouching at our door, we beg You to call us back to Yourself when we are tempted to stray. Deliver us from temptation, and keep us in the faith. Make us humble like little children, seeing how Your Son humbled Himself for us and for our salvation. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P All these things and everything else for which we should ask, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Offering

C Offer, offer, offering, we give our gifts to say,
"Thank you Lord for loving us and blessing us each day."
Time to share our gifts and say,
"Thank you Lord for each new day."

Offertory Prayer

L Giving God, You provide us with all we need to support our bodies and lives. Your abundance and provision will never fail or leave us lacking. Allow Your generosity to inspire our generosity. Accept the offerings that we give in the various ways that we give them throughout the week. Increase and grow our trust in You through the giving of our offerings. Be glorified in the giving of them as we give them in thanksgiving and with gratitude for all Your blessings and gifts to us. Use them to further the work that You are doing in this place and all around our world. In Jesus' name we pray,

C Amen.

Offertory

C What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?
I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

C Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Words of Our Lord

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Proclamation of Christ

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

The Lord's Prayer

- P** God, remember us in your love and teach us to pray:
C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Pax Domini

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C **Amen.**

Agnus Dei

- C** **Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Distribution Hymn: LSB 709 The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The King of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul He leadeth
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me
And on His shoulder gently laid
And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
Thine unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever!

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821–77
Text: Public domain

Distribution Hymn: LSB 902 Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now

Lord Jesus Christ, be present now;
Our hearts in true devotion bow.
Your Spirit send with light divine,
And let Your truth within us shine.

Unseal our lips to sing Your praise
In endless hymns through all our days.
Increase our faith and light our minds;
And set us free from doubt that blinds.

Then shall we join the hosts that cry,
“O holy, holy Lord Most High!”
And in the light of that blest place
We then shall see You face to face.

All glory to the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise throughout eternity!

Text: Lutherisch Hand-Büchlein, 1648, Altenburg; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

The Dismissal

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ☩ in peace.
C Amen.

Thank the Lord

- C** Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev’ryone what He has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear His name.
He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.

Post-Communion Collect

- L** Let us pray.
Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Benedicamus

L The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

L Bless we the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L As we depart from this place, we celebrate the ways God has blessed us in this service.

We have received forgiveness of all our sins and remembered the identity given to us in our baptism.

C Our God has equipped us for life lived in His kingdom.

L We have heard the good news of the gospel and the word of God read and proclaimed.

C Our God has encouraged us in discipleship and following Jesus.

L We have received the gifts of God given in Holy Communion.

C As our God has served us, so we go from this place to be engaged in service to God, to one another and to our neighbors.

L As we depart from this place, we go as people who have been equipped for life, encouraged in discipleship, and who engage in service.

C We go as people who have been invited by God to join God in the work that He is doing in this place.

P As you go, receive the blessing of our God:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C Amen.

Sending Hymn: LSB 793 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet your tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favor
To His people in distress;
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Fatherlike He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hand He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet His mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore Him;
You behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
All who dwell in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847
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