

Church of the Divine Love
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
NOVEMBER 19, 2023 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#561-Stand up, stand up, for Jesus**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18**

Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12

Second Lesson: **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Gradual Hymn **#675 – Take up your cross**

Gospel: **Matthew 25:14-30**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#488 – Be thou my vision**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 367

Hymn during Consecration printed on insert

The Lord's Prayer page 364

The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer page 337

The Communion of the People

Communion Hymn #599 – **Lift every voice and sing**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #460 – **Alleluia! sing to Jesus!**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday November 19,2023

Zephaniah 1:7,12-18; Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11),12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

In today's Gospel, Matthew 25: 14-30, Jesus tells a series of parable about the kingdom of heaven. These parables are designed to teach us about the nature of God's kingdom and how we can live in a way that is pleasing to Him. One of the most well-known of these parables is the parable of talents.

We usually think of a talent as some special ability or giftedness, at the time Jesus told the story, everyone understood that a talent was a fortune, and five talents was an enormous amount of money, a hundred years' worth of wages. Why is this important to know? The traditional interpretation of the parable of the talents has focused on using our abilities while we wait for Christ's return. Use your talents well, or you might lose them. God gave you special gifts, and you don't want to be caught on judgment day having to explain why you failed to make the most of your talents. Because the master in

our story gave to each “according to his ability,” people have made “ability” the central theme of this parable.

But if we realize that Jesus wasn’t necessarily talking about our abilities as much as the greatest treasure we can imagine, it puts a little different spin on the story. Now, instead of using our abilities as best we can, the question becomes, what are we willing to risk to get the greatest return on our investment in the kingdom of God? And before we can even ask that question, we need to know what great treasure has our master entrusted to us? If we use the parable of the ten bridesmaids as our pattern, we could consider that the great treasure entrusted to us is the faith God gives each of us. Some invest in their own spiritual development, and they see their faith grow. Others may try to hide their faith, and their faith shrivels away. But then we run into the problem of the one-talent servant who is cast into outer darkness, and we are left wondering if perhaps his faith was not real faith, or if it was not deep enough. And that idea doesn’t match up with the promise that “if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

But what if the talents don’t represent faith, any more than they represent our God-given abilities? What if this great, immense treasure is something else entirely? What do we as Christians can claim as our most precious treasure, worth more than we can possibly imagine? The Good News of Christ’s death and resurrection is the most powerful and amazing story we know! Instead of teaching us to multiply our faith, or develop our abilities – good and worthy as those things are! – perhaps this parable is here to remind us that our greatest treasure, as Christians, is the gospel itself. Investing in the gospel involves letting it change us, first of all. It means allowing its transforming power to work in us until our lives are fully centered on Christ. Then it means spreading that good news, so others can come to know and love Jesus as we do. Living into our faith, showing the world what a difference following Jesus makes in the way we live our lives, telling people about the ways God has transformed us – That is how the gospel multiplies and grows. Not by being buried in the ground, but by being shared. And sharing the gospel is a risky business.

Those first two servants understood the need to risk everything. They invested radically in order to double their investment. The third hid his in the ground, in order to return it risk-free to his master. And before we tell ourselves, I would never do something like that, we should keep in mind that the third servant was simply doing what was considered prudent at the time. “Rabbinic law stipulated that burying was the best safeguard against theft and that when one buries entrusted money one is free from liability for it.” Two servants invest radically, and double their money. The third followed a perfectly acceptable course of action, with minimal risk. He did what would have been considered good enough. But it wasn’t. Because if we are talking about the gospel, about following Jesus and being obedient to his teaching, we have to act on that teaching for it to do any good. This parable teaches that the master will return, the promised kingdom is coming, and when it comes all the false values of this age will become

obsolete. The gospel of mercy, peace, and forgiveness is all that will matter in the age to come. What will stand at the end is the gospel and nothing else.

If we think about our relationship with God in these terms, we must ask ourselves, what is our image of God, and how does that image dictate the way we act? Try it for a moment. What does God look like to you when you close your eyes? What do his hair and his face look like? His clothing? His posture? Is he smiling, or looking stern? Those images we hold in our minds dictate the way we behave. If we see God as a stern ruler who punishes those who disobey him, we will act in fear, just as the third servant did. But if we see God as a generous and loving caregiver who wants only the best for us, we will act in confidence that he will forgive us when we do wrong. We can depend on God's abundance being made available to us. To be trustworthy servants, we must be willing to trust the One who trusts us. And that trust is the key to understanding what this parable is really about. It isn't about using the abilities we've been given, even though that is a worthy thing to do. It isn't about believing that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save us from our sins, even though that belief is necessary for our salvation. But faith is more than simply believing something to be true. James 2:19 says even the demons believe in God, and they shudder. Faith is more than that.

Faith is trusting what you believe, which means becoming vulnerable, putting yourself at risk. The master trusted his servants. Two of them trusted him back. The third one, not so much. Faith is more than just believing something to be true; faith means trusting in that truth to the point of greatest risk. That's what Jesus did. That's what he asks of us. The parable of the talents is a powerful reminder that God has given each of us unique gifts and abilities. We are called to use these gifts to make a difference in the world and to advance His kingdom. Just as the man in the parable entrusted his wealth to his servants, God has entrusted us with His resources. We are His stewards, and He expects us to manage His gifts wisely. There are many ways to invest our talents. We can use them to serve others, to share our knowledge and skills, or to create something beautiful. The important thing is that we use our gifts in a way that is pleasing to God. If we are faithful with the few things that God has given us, He will entrust us with even more. But if we are lazy and fail to use our gifts, they will be taken away from us.

The parable of the talents is a call to action. It is a reminder that we are responsible for the gifts that God has given us. We must not waste our talents or bury them in the ground. Instead, we must use them to make a difference in the world and to advance His kingdom. Let us pray that God will give us the wisdom and courage to use our gifts to their fullest potential. **Amen!**

There are envelopes containing stewardship letters and pledge cards. If you did not receive one last week, please take one. Return by December 3rd.

25 PENTECOST 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MONDAY 8:30 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY- THAKSGIVING DAY THRIFT SHOP CLOSED

8:30 AM AA MEETING

SAURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

10:15AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

11:15 AM VESTRY MEETING

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Jess Berbeck
Coffee Hour	Giordanos	Nolans

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Jess
Bob Curley	Michael & Family	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Judy
Christopher	Warren	Kristen
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Mo	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Ciara	Dennis L.
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	
Jean Estinvil Quatorze	Jean Wildy Nicolas	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disasters.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.
Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the
spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you,
from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that

with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may
worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn
but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that
all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions
and glory, now and for ever. Amen

