

Home Worship November 15th 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Announcements You are invited to gather bread and juice for communion during worship. Today we focus on the abundance that we will celebrate at Thanksgiving, an abundance of God's love. Next week is Christ the King Sunday, the ending of the Church year. Bishop Clements and the staff will present worship on Face book and the website.

A side note. An estimated 70-100 might watch this video in a week. Sometimes I get one comment but often no comments. I would like to hear from some of you. What do you think? Did I confuse you or make you think more deeply? Let me know.

We begin with Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved. Amen. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy One, we confess that we are not awake for you. We are not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings. We do not see your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.

Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through † Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the LORD as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the LORD.

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm."

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

¹Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.

²Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God.

³You turn us back to the dust and say, "Turn back, O children of earth."

⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night;

⁵you sweep them away like a dream, they fade away suddenly like the grass:

⁶in the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered.

⁷For we are consumed by your anger; we are afraid because of your wrath.

⁸Our iniquities you have set before you and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

[⁹When you are angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

¹⁰The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.

¹¹Who regards the power of your wrath? Who rightly fears your indignation?]

¹²So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come

like a thief in the night. ³When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30

Glory to you O Lord

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have

nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

The word of the Lord..... **Praise to you O Christ**

Sermon

As we near the end of the liturgical church year, our lessons lean on the coming of Christ again. Some of our readings speak of God’s judgment on God’s people.

This month as I was scrolling through some religious programs on television and I felt as though I had whiplash. One preacher cast us me into hell and another told me that I would have all my dreams come true and be rich financially if I answered the altar call to give myself to Jesus. I am sure all of these contradictions and fear have supported many people to leave the church.

A clergy friend of mine received a letter recently asking “why don’t preachers preach hell, fire and brimstone anymore?” Maybe you think that too.

So the question this preacher, me, would have liked to ask is “who is God for you? Is your God a God who is mean, wrathful and angry when you misbehave and do not follow the laws in scripture? Or is your God a loving, giving and forgiving God who pours out grace on you whether you misbehave or not? This is a big teaching difference in churches.

Leaders have interpreted scripture in different ways for thousands of years. The times we live in are no different. It can be confusing when we desire to faithful and follow the will of God while understanding that we also have free will. I make these points because I understand many of you listen to many preachers other than me on television and elsewhere and so I urge you to listen for love not hate or conditional acceptance from God in those sermons.

Matthew brings us a version of Jesus parable telling us that a master has three servants. All were given different numbers of talents. A talent here is not something you are gifted with like art or music. A talent is a measure of money. One talent may be as much as 10 to 15 years of wages. Imagine doubling your next 10-15 years of wages so quickly. That is a great abundance of money to be responsible for. The first two servants doubled the master’s money! The third servant however, afraid of his master, buried the money and make no monetary gain. The master was angry and threw the third slave out where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

First of all we need to remember that that this is not a story about economic gain. It is not a story that says if you obey the master you will be financially rich. All the money was the masters and all of it including the profits gained were returned to the master.

So, what did slave number three do that was so bad? He tried to keep the masters money safe. He returned the money. However, he did not invest in the abundance that was given to him. The one talent slave assumes the worst of his master and he gets it.

Who do we assume God is? A God of abundance, who trusts us to use the abundance

given to us to do good in our world for ourselves and others? Or a God who constantly judges and condemns us because we do not use the abundance God gives us in this world? Who is God for you? Do you need hell, fire and brimstone preached in order to know that God is the master?

The two servants that doubled the abundance entrusted to them were told “enter into the joy of your master.” We all want to “enter into the joy of the master.”

As the season of the church year ends and the season of thanksgiving is upon us, I pray that we can all, even in these most challenging of times, know and see the abundance God has given to us, our time, our talents and our possessions. These are all signs of God’s love, giving and forgiving gifts of grace to us.

Who is God for you? What are you assuming about God? Do you really understand that all we have is not ours? That the abundance we have continues to grow as we recognize God’s love and presence in our world.

“Enter into the joy of your master,” knowing that Christ has come and Christ will come again. “Enter into the joy of your master,” knowing that we must never bury any of the gifts entrusted to us. Abundance is an extraordinary gift to be shared. The master and the slaves tell us that it’s not how much we have, but how we use it, and how we make good use of it.

Blessings to you as Thanksgiving approaches. Count your abundant blessings and “Enter into the joy of your master.” Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Longing for Christ’s reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God’s power on the church, the world, and all in need. ***A brief silence.*** Lord of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature . Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins. Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others. **We pray for those in care facilities: Sibyl, Barb, Lois, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne and Linda.** Heal those who are ill especially **Tammy Karrow, Richard Hose, Kent Anders, Karla Gipe, Lyle Printz and Lyle Reap, Brad Shippert, Ron and JoDee Bardell and Pastor**

Terrie . We pray for the families suffering with the coronavirus we pray for an end to the virus with safe vaccinations and treatments. We pray for those in military service: Logan, JJ, Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Offering

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. Amen.

Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray as Jesus taught the disciples...

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.

Invitation to Communion

There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

Holy Communion Together

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the witness of the saints you show us the hope of your calling and strengthen us to run the race set before us, that we might delight in your mercy and rejoice with them in glory.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Take your bread/wafer	The body of Christ given for you
Take you juice/wine	The blood of Christ given for you

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

Prayer after Communion

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I would like to hear from some of you. What do you think? Did I confuse you or make you think more deeply? Let me know.

Stay in touch if you or someone you know needs help and or prayer.