

Home Worship November 8th 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Announcements You are invited to gather bread and juice for communion during worship. Indoor worship is on hold due to the pandemic. It's easy to let down our guard but covid is moving so please remember to be as safe as possible. I found a nice reflection for our sermon today so I hope you enjoy it.

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 O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Amos 5:18-24

In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.

¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light;

¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

²³Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Psalm 70

¹Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me.

²Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded; let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

³Let those who say to me “Aha!” and gloat over me turn back because of their shame.

⁴Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation say forever, “Great is the LORD!”

⁵But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God. You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, do not tarry.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:1-13 Glory to you O Lord

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise,

‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’⁹ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’¹⁰ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.¹¹ Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’¹² But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’¹³ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

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

Sermon

What is the good news of our lessons this week as we all ponder the results and impending results of the elections in our nation?

The first declaration of good news for those of us worshipping today is that “Christ has risen!” We are Easter people every day in this world. During the week of waiting for election results it is easy to be distracted away from God’s power and dwell on the power of our nation.

This brings me to the second declaration of good news: God is bigger than earthly institutions! In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has defeated death itself. Take these familiar words from Psalm 46: The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalm 46:6-7) Democracy, elections, and government: all are extraordinarily important, worthy of our attention and our engagement. They are the ways we order our life together as we seek justice for our neighbors and work toward the kingdom of God. We must not neglect these systems. Yet “they are but broken lights” of God’s righteousness. We work within them, even as we also await with hope a new vision for God’s just and merciful rule.

Our gospel for this day is one of those parables that contradict our hopes, our expectations, even our values. Jesus is teaching this story saying “The kingdom of heaven is like”..... it’s like these young women who were all waiting for the bridegroom. They all belonged to the same community, the same group of friends. They all fall asleep waiting for the bridegroom to come. Within the community, it is impossible to tell who has enough oil in their lamps or which has been more faithful. This is not for us to see or to judge. The church has always been a mixed community. Judgment of the foolish or wise would miss the point of the parable. The wise were prepared however the so-called foolish young women also knew the bridegroom, calling out to him "Lord, Lord, open to us!" The cry "Lord, Lord," takes us back to the earlier chapters of Matthew's Gospel. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). The lamps (or torches) recall other words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Let your light

shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (5:16).

Judgment is purely reserved for God who alone knows or recognizes each individual. Grace is in the cross that lets shine forth a light, a light so distinctive that people do not praise our good works but rather praise God who is acting and giving life in the midst of suffering, life in the midst of death, opening the door to those who have engaged the way of the cross, who have engaged the way of death. The world cannot understand this way. It does not recognize the Lord though it continually cries out, "Lord, Lord!"

I was sent a devotional reflection and prayer by David Scherer a learning associate of Luther Seminary in Minneapolis. After I read the parable of the bridesmaids and I was looking for the gospel, the grace and the hope I read this and I will read you David Scherer's words to close.

Dear Jesus,

I thought I was ready for you. Clearly I am not.

I come with anger. You come with joy.

I want comfort. You come with the sword.

I want answers, you come with questions.

I want chariots, you come on donkeys.

I thought I was ready for you to appear.

I thought my lamp was trimmed and burning bright enough.

And yet, here you are, appearing to me again and again without recognition:

In lonely jail cells. In loud courtrooms. In tense chat rooms. In annoying phone calls.

In the people that I love and the people that I struggle to love.

I thought that I had read enough about your game of "hide and seek" in the ones who are called the "least of these."

I thought I had sung enough about your ability to lift up the low places.

And yet, I am reminded now, once again, I am not ready for you.

Make me ready Jesus.

Train my eye to see your distressing disguises.

Train my ears to hear your muzzled whisper.

Train my heart to welcome your broken body.

And as my lamp burns dimmer and dimmer, keep me awake.

And make me ready Jesus.

God is bigger than our institutions and Christ has risen! Good news for every day.

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.***

Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail.

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

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. **We pray for those in care facilities: Sibyl, Barb, Lois, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne and Linda.** Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Heal those who are ill especially **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.**

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

Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. **We pray for those in military service: Logan, JJ, Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis).**

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

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. 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 Blessed are you, O God maker of all things. Please bless all who remember your church and the ministries that continue even when we must be separated from one another. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: ourselves, our time and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding your world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

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

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.