

CHRIST THE KING
NOVEMBER 22, 2020

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER



PRELUDE *Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won* Setting: Jan Bender

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #490 *Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won*

- 1 **Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won!**
Death no longer can appall me;
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done!
From the grave will Christ recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.

- 2 **Jesus lives! To Him the throne**
High above all things is given.
I shall go where He is gone,
Live and reign with Him in heaven.
God is faithful; doubtings, hence!
This shall be my confidence.

- 3 **Jesus lives! For me He died,**
Hence will I, to Jesus living,
Pure in heart and act abide,
Praise to Him and glory giving.
All I need God will dispense;
This shall be my confidence.

- 4 **Jesus lives! I know full well**
Nothing me from Him shall sever.
Neither death nor pow'rs of hell
Part me now from Christ forever.
God will be my sure defense;
This shall be my confidence.

- 5 **Jesus lives! And now is death**
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath
When I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
Jesus is my confidence!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word and call upon Him in prayer and praise, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

1 To God on high be glory

And peace to all the earth;

Goodwill from God in heaven

Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!

We praise and bless You, Father;

Your holy name, we sing—

Our thanks for Your great glory,

Lord God, our heav'nly King.

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
"Amen!" our glad reply.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal God, merciful Father,

You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



FIRST LESSON Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. . . .

“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 95:1–7

O come, let us sing to the Lord,
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving,
let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.

For the Lord is a great God
and a great king above all gods.
The deep places of the earth are in His hand;
the strength of the hills is His also.

The sea is His, for He made it,
and His hand formed the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

For He is our God,
and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND LESSON 1 Corinthians 15:20–28

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 25th chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.
Dear friends in Christ:

Today is the last Sunday of the church year. And because this day presents themes much more important than simply the end of the calendar, it has been given other names too. Some call it the Sunday of the Fulfillment. Others, like us, call it Christ the King Sunday.

Calling it Christ the King reminds us that Jesus preached about the Kingdom of God. And it reminds us that Jesus reigns and rules, just like a king. His power and authority are great. He rules, in fact, over the whole world – having the power and authority of God.

At the same time, calling this day Christ the King also reminds us that Jesus was once mockingly called the King of the Jews. Jesus may be a king who rules and reigns, but he also endured the shame of the cross. Jesus is a king who suffers. And serves.

Today’s Gospel reading— chosen to culminate our year of selections from Matthew – shows Jesus in his kingly role of power and authority. Here Jesus tells of the time when he will make himself visible again to all people. In that day Jesus will come in his glory, with the angels, and he will sit on his glorious throne. The picture given by Jesus here is similar to those described by John in the great book of Revelation.

Jesus then tells us what he will do when he returns. He will gather all people before him and separate them into two groups. The one group will inherit the kingdom, meaning they will enter eternal life with

God. The other group will miss out on this great blessing, spending their eternity instead in what is best described as a place of fire and punishment.

Jesus separates the people based on God's judgment of their life. They were judged at the time of their death. Now, as Jesus is ushering in the new age, they are being sentenced.

And Jesus makes it clear to everyone why they received the sentence they did. Some helped "the least of these my brothers" when they were in need. Doing so was akin to helping Jesus himself. But others did not help. And that made them guilty of sin.

The teaching of Jesus in these verses is yet another warning for us to be prepared for his coming. In the parable before these verses, Jesus warned us to be prepared by using the gifts he has given. In the parable before that, Jesus warned us to be prepared by having enough faith and love. Here he warns us to be prepared by caring for the least ones.

If you have been with us these past two Sundays, you know that we've grouped these three passages from Matthew 25 together into a series. The theme for the first week was "a time to be wise." The theme for the second week was "a time to be bold." This week we combine those two ideas under the theme "the wise and bold heart of faith."

The boldness in today's teaching by Jesus is obvious. Those who are bold help others in need. They take their own time, energy and resources and give them to someone else, without any expectation of reward or return. They give food to the hungry. Drink to the thirsty. Welcome to the stranger. Clothing to the naked. Care to the sick. Compassion to those in prison. They are bold in their generosity.

There is wisdom in today's teaching too. But it is less obvious. Jesus notes that the bold action is taken toward "the least of these my brothers." Both parts of this description – the "least of these" and "my brothers" – refer to followers of Jesus. We know this because of Jesus' use of these words in earlier teachings. We see, therefore, that Jesus is referring to the wisdom of showing care to his disciples.

As we know, not everyone was showing them care. Some saw them to be heretics. Some saw them to be peddlers of a dangerous new message. Some saw them to be fools. They were often rejected. And sometimes persecuted.

Those who accepted and supported them, however, were acting wisely. For although these brothers of Jesus may have been least in the eyes of the world, their message was great. It would, in fact, change the world.

We see, therefore, that today's message from Jesus is not just a warning to do good works of compassion. It is also a warning to support the message of Jesus as shared by his followers. Be bold in doing good works. And be wise in supporting a good message. Such boldness and wisdom come from a heart of faith.

And speaking of faith, some people express concern about today's text because faith isn't specifically mentioned. Jesus, in fact, seems to point to our good deeds as that which merits our salvation. But when we see Jesus' words here in light of his other teachings, we understand that the good deeds are done as a result of faith. They are the fruit of faith. And the evidence of it.

The further evidence of faith, as we have seen, is the support shown to Jesus' followers. When someone recognizes the wisdom and goodness of Jesus' message, as conveyed by his followers, that is a sign of faith.

Today at St. Paul's, we are asking our members to act in faith by making stewardship commitments to the church. We have designated this day "Commitment Sunday" and are encouraging people to make a pledge of their time, talent and financial giving for the coming year. Stewardship, as we have been reminding ourselves, is the managing of our resources for the furthering of God's purposes. In our stewardship, we seek to be wise and bold – acting from a heart of faith.

As we think about giving for the Lord's work through the church, Jesus' message about caring for the least of these his brothers seems particularly apt. Think about this.

When we give to the church, we give toward the care of the least of these. We make extra efforts to care for children. And we make extra efforts to include those who may have special needs. Here the least of these are taught to pray, serve, confess and forgive right along with everyone else. Here the little ones are celebrated and appreciated.

When we give to the church, we give to those who are hungry and thirsting. We give through such things as a food bank, financial help and programs for housing the homeless. Even more, we give to those who are hungry and thirsting for righteousness – those who long to be made right with God and for things to be made right in the world. The message of the church speaks powerfully to both of those needs.

When we give to the church, we give to those who are strangers to us – those we may not know very well, those who may not appear in our work, neighborhood, political or social circles. At the church we welcome everyone, and we learn to welcome them as brothers and sisters in the family of God. We learn to move from being strangers to friends.

When we give to the church, we give to those who are naked and exposed – those who need the covering of warm clothes or the assurance that comes from a warm smile. We give emotional and spiritual shelter from this dangerous and often-cruel world. We provide a pastor to pray. We provide songs of hope to touch the heart. We help people endure the assaults of this world, and we support one another when times are tough.

When we give to the church, we provide care for the sick. We provide a friendly visit from the pastor and prayers from the people. Even more, we provide a cure for the sickness of sin. The church is indeed a hospital for sinners – a place where we can rehabilitate, a place where we can heal, a place where we can learn to do better.

And, when we give to the church, we provide for those who are in prison. We provide for the ministry of visitation. We provide for those who are isolated from society. We work with those whom others may consider dangerous.

As you think of the budgeting of your time, talents and financial treasures for this coming year, make plans to give wisely and boldly for the work of the church. Give for the needs of the poor. And give for the need of Gospel proclamation.

In the Gospel, we learn that God gives his all for us. We see this especially in his giving of the Son to die for our sins. And we see this, too, in his giving of the Holy Spirit to fill us with life and hope.

Today's Gospel reading certainly serves as a strong warning for us to prepare our hearts and show this in our lives. But it also contains messages of good news.

Jesus said that the "righteous" will enter into eternal life. We know that those who place their faith in him are declared righteous, because of Jesus, who saves.

Jesus said that these are “blessed by my Father.” We know that those who live by faith are truly blessed, inheriting the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

Jesus said that these who are saved are “sheep.” We know that those whom he calls and gathers into his flock live under his safe protection and care.

And Jesus said that these are the ones who have “seen” him. We know that those who have done wise and bold deeds of faith have somehow interacted with Jesus himself – the one who is Immanuel, God with us.

Today’s text is meant to warn us, prepare us and encourage us. Our king, Jesus, is coming soon. Let us turn our hearts to him in repentance. Let us welcome him with expressions of faith. And let us honor him with wise and bold works of love.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY #532 The Head That Once Was Crowned with Thorns

- 1 The Head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor’s brow.**
- 2 The highest place that heav’n affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of kings and Lord of lords,
And heav’n’s eternal Light;**
- 3 The Joy of all who dwell above,
The Joy of all below
To whom He manifests His love
And grants His name to know.**
- 4 To them the cross, with all its shame,
With all its grace, is giv’n;
Their name an everlasting name,
Their joy the joy of heav’n.**
- 5 They suffer with their Lord below,
They reign with Him above,
Their profit and their joy to know
The myst’ry of His love.**
- 6 The cross He bore is life and health,
Though shame and death to Him:
His people’s hope, His people’s wealth,
Their everlasting theme.**

APOSTLES’ CREED

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.

OFFERING The Head that Once Was Crowned with Thorns Setting: Stephen Weber

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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

Brief silence

For the faithful proclamation of Christ, our King, and for the strengthening of God's people in this true faith and their baptismal life in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For Christ's holy, catholic and apostolic Church; for all who faithfully confess the saving name of Christ; and for the protection of the Lord to extend over us against the devil, the world and our own sinful selves, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For God's people in this place, for the mission and work God has given us to do, and for the unity of the Spirit and a spirit of cooperation and harmony in our life together, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all the schools of our church body, for the seminaries where our pastors are being trained and for the campuses where our young are being prepared for their occupations, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have wandered from the flock of God, for the faithful shepherds who gather them in through the voice of God's Word, for our forgiveness, and for our willingness to forgive others in Christ's name, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For Donald, our president; Ralph, our governor; and all in authority over us, that they may not abuse the trust and power placed in their hands but use it honorably and for the good of all people, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all artists and artisans; for science and invention; for those who serve us in the medical arts; for tradespeople and laborers; and for those who serve and protect us as police, firefighters and military personnel, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the hungry and homeless, for the unemployed and underemployed, for those who work in disaster relief, and for the social-service agencies of our church, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For a giving spirit, that we may not neglect the poor nor fail to provide resources to the Church to fulfill the Lord's bidding and spread the Gospel to every place, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those afflicted by illness of body or mind and for those who care for them, [especially _____], that with God's strength they may kept through patience and delivered to everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the grieving, that they may have hope, [especially _____], and for those near the end of their earthly lives, that they may be sustained in faith to everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.

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

The Lord look upon us with favor and ✠ give us peace.

SENDING HYMN #525 Crown Him with Many Crowns

- 1 Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing**

Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless king
Through all eternity.

- 2 Crown Him the virgin's Son,
The God incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won
Which now His brow adorn:
Fruit of the mystic rose,
Yet of that rose the stem,
The root whence mercy ever flows,
The babe of Bethlehem.
- 3 Crown Him the Lord of love.
Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angels in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bend their wond'ring eyes
At mysteries so bright.
- 4 Crown Him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife
For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die.
- 5 Crown Him the Lord of heav'n,
Enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the king to whom is giv'n
The wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns
As thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns,
For He is king of all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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