

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY  
COMMITMENT SUNDAY  
NOVEMBER 21, 2021

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



PRELUDE

*All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

Setting: Tim Fields

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #549 Sts. 1, 3, 5, 7 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

- 1 All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all.
- 3 Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,  
Ye ransomed from the fall,  
Hail Him who saves you by His grace  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
Hail Him who saves you by His grace  
And crown Him Lord of all.
- 5 Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget  
The wormwood and the gall,  
Go, spread your trophies at His feet  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
Go, spread your trophies at His feet  
And crown Him Lord of all.
- 7 Oh, that with yonder sacred throng  
We at His feet may fall!  
We'll join the everlasting song  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
We'll join the everlasting song  
And crown Him Lord of all.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

EXHORTATION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*(We observe a moment of silence for self-reflection.)*

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS*

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father

**Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Almighty God in His mercy 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  $\times$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*KYRIE*

see p. 152 for music

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**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.**

For this holy house and for all who offer their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Amen.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE*

p. 155

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ,  
**so govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your glorious return, we may persevere in both faith and holiness of living; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



*THE LITURGY OF THE WORD*

*FIRST LESSON (Be seated)*

Isaiah 51:4-6

“Give attention to me, my people,  
and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law will go out from me,  
and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.  
My righteousness draws near,  
my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples;  
the coastlands hope for me,  
and for my arm they wait.  
Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
and look at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke,  
the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;  
but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never be dismayed.”

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

*PSALM 93 (Read responsively)*

The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty;  
the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt.  
**Yes, the world is established;  
it shall never be moved.**

Your throne is established from of old;  
you are from everlasting.

**The floods have lifted up, O LORD,  
the floods have lifted up their voice;  
the floods lift up their roaring.**

Mightier than the thunders of many waters,  
mightier than the waves of the sea,  
the LORD on high is mighty!

**Your decrees are very trustworthy;  
holiness befits your house,  
O LORD, forevermore.**

**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*

Revelation 1:4b-8

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)*

**Alleluia.**

**Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

*GOSPEL*

Mark 13:24-37

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very

gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

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:

I don't often go into high-end stores, but I've passed by enough to notice that many of them will have a doorkeeper. You've probably noticed that too. The doorkeeper stands at the entrance and engages people as they approach – politely inquiring about your business and offering to be helpful. But their primary task, quite obviously, is to maintain security. The doorkeeper's presence lets you know right away that you're being watched.

In the Gospel lesson just read, Jesus uses an illustration that includes a doorkeeper. Jesus has been teaching his disciples about his return at the end of time – the day when he will come as the judge of all people – and he tells the people to “be on guard” and “keep awake” so that they are ready for his return. He then illustrates the teaching by saying “It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.”

As with any illustration, there are certain points of comparison in these words of Jesus that we are definitely meant to catch, but others which may not apply. Illustrations can be confusing. So, let's take some time and unpack what Jesus means here.

The master who goes on a journey and plans to return home certainly represents Jesus. Jesus, too, will soon “go on a journey” so to speak – meaning he will leave this world and go to the Father. After a while, Jesus will then return to earth and people will see him again.

The servants who are in charge are Jesus' followers. They are the ones who are to maintain his “household and business” while he is away. As followers of Jesus today, you and I fill this role. We are the ones who are to maintain his household of faith – meaning the church – and go about our master's business, which is the making of disciples from among all the nations.

Notice that Jesus, when talking about this, inserts the phrase “each with his work.” The master puts his servants in charge, “each with his work.” This phrase reminds us that we all have certain work to do, and that we are all important in the household of God. We each have different abilities to use, and we all have time that we are to share. That's how the household functions and carries out its mission.

At St. Paul's right now we are thinking about the time, abilities and resources that our congregation possesses and how to best use them together in our mission. We are doing this as a very important part of our stewardship effort. The church has tasks that need to be done. And we could do new tasks too if we had the gifts and resources to do them.

We need our people to let us know what they can do. And we need people to be bold and generous in offering their service. I appeal to you today to join us in our stewardship and mission efforts.

Back to Jesus' illustration. The final detail Jesus gives is about the doorkeeper. The master commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. But why?

Since the master is going to be away on a journey, we might get the impression that the master just wants someone to be at the door when he returns, so that he doesn't have to wait outside, especially if his return is at night.

But that's not what's going on here. Like at a high-end store, the doorkeeper also has the job of security. The doorkeeper needs to watch out for thieves or those who seek to do some other kind of harm. That is their task in the household – one that they are to perform not only while the master is away but also while he is there. The task is critical. Which is why the master better not find the doorkeeper asleep.

As we did with the other characters, we should seek to identify who the doorkeeper in the illustration represents. The most obvious answer is that the doorkeeper is a church's pastor. The pastor is the servant in God's household who has the task of watching out for danger.

When the COVID pandemic hit, I found myself enacting that doorkeeper role at St. Paul's in a very literal way. Upon resuming in-person services, my task was to stand at the door to the sanctuary and make sure people were following our rules for gathering. I tried to be a welcoming and helpful presence too, but my first priority was to see that we were doing what we needed to do to guard against the virus.

Since that time I have found that I like welcoming people from that position. I may just stay there. We'll have to see.

Of course, a pastor's primary door-keeping task is to keep out other viruses – ones that are not only harmful to the body but also to the soul. These are the viruses of false doctrine, and of an ungodly spirit, and of division, and of sin. The pastor has the very important role of watching for these threats to the household and warning people when a threat has emerged. The pastor may even find that he has to do battle with one or more of these threats – even at the risk of his own welfare.

Last week's reading from the book of Hebrews reminded me of one particular threat that all churches have been facing in a new way since the arrival of COVID, and that is the threat of isolation because of not meeting together. The reading from Hebrews suggests that isolation leads to a lack of love and good works, for it says: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (10:24-25)."

Yes, the pastor has a special role in carrying out the task of door keeping in the household. And knowing this, I've been trying to do my best to keep people safe, not only from isolation but from all that truly harms. But notice, too, how Jesus concludes his use of the illustration by addressing everyone, not just the doorkeepers. He says: "Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep."

And this addressing of the command to all should remind us that the task of door-keeping is actually a task for everyone in the household. As fellow servants, working and living together, we are all to watch out for threats. We are to point out false doctrine if we hear it. We are to be on guard against ungodly spirits – like those of anger or jealousy or indifference. We are to stand against divisions and sin among us and instead promote unity and understanding among God's people.

With this in mind, we should then see the church as not only our household but also our doorkeeper. It is the church which plays the role in our lives of lifting up the holy and pointing out the evil. It is the church which serves as our moral compass and source of God's grace.

When you come to the church and consider God's word with his people, you are engaging in exercise meant to strengthen your moral fiber and hold you accountable in your choices. The weekly gathering is a check-in for your conscience, a boost for your morale and a reconnection with the Spirit that God gives through Word and Sacrament.

Since today is the culmination of our three-week stewardship emphasis at St. Paul's, let me point out that your gifts to the church serve as means of providing for your doorkeeper. And the better you keep this doorkeeper in shape, the more opportunities this doorkeeper has to impact your life. And the more this doorkeeper impacts your life, the better you will stay awake and the more you will be protected from the evil around you.

We are truly blessed to be able to pool our resources together and support this door-keeping effort among us at the church. Not that we understand our whole task together as safety and security. We must go out into the world in mission too. But we can only do this well when our hearts are guarded from that which deceives and hurts. We need our church to be a place of refuge and healing too.

Jesus speaks to the important role of the doorkeeper in his household. And that doorkeeper can be understood as the pastor, the church, and... what's more... an important part of each of us.

I'm not sure exactly what to call it. It's more than just our conscience. It's more than just our spiritual side. I guess maybe it's just that part of us that is attuned to the holy. That part of us that bears the image of God.

Whatever it's best called, this is an important function in your life, worthy of your attention. Our stewardship theme – "providing for our doorkeeper" – is also meant to direct your attention to this need as well.

You provide for that doorkeeper in your life when set aside time in your schedule to meditate on what is healthy and helpful. You provide for that doorkeeper in your life when you set aside a portion of your income for receiving spiritual care. You provide for that doorkeeper in your life when you use your gifts and abilities to help others by strengthening the household of faith.

And when you provide for your doorkeeper, you will be better equipped to fight off life's temptations, and better guarded against evil attacks. Certainly, these are important needs for all of us.

Today we hear Christ's urging to stay awake. But let us also make sure we hear Christ's words of promise. At the beginning of today's reading we heard Jesus say: "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven."

The promise of Jesus is that he will come in power. Jesus is king over all, and someday his power will be fully known. By everyone.

You and I who have faith in his power can look forward to that day, for we are the elect whom he mentions in this promise. We are the ones who have been redeemed by his blood. We are the ones who have been given his Holy Spirit.

We are the ones whom he will gather upon his return and bring from the ends of earth and heaven into his new creation. There we will live forever with him in paradise restored – the kingdom of glory which awaits.

Knowing this promise of Jesus, we are now moved to freely and joyfully give of ourselves so that others may know his promise too. We want all to receive his salvation. We want all to be numbered with the elect.

Christ is king over all, and his rule is gentle in its power and glorious in its serving. Let us, as his people, reflect his gentle and glorious rule in all that we do. And especially as we give of ourselves in commitment and faith.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our King. Amen.

- 1 At the name of Jesus  
Ev'ry knee shall bow,  
Ev'ry tongue confess Him  
King of glory now.  
'Tis the Father's pleasure  
We should call Him Lord,  
Who from the beginning  
Was the mighty Word.
- 3 Humbled for a season,  
To receive a name  
From the lips of sinners  
Unto whom He came,  
Faithfully He bore it  
Spotless to the last,  
Brought it back victorious  
When from death He passed;
- 4 Bore it up triumphant  
With its human light,  
Through all ranks of creatures  
To the central height,  
To the throne of Godhead,  
To the Father's breast,  
Filled it with the glory  
Of that perfect rest.
- 5 In your hearts enthrone Him;  
There let Him subdue  
All that is not holy,  
All that is not true:  
Crown Him as your captain  
In temptation's hour;  
Let His will enfold you  
In its light and pow'r.

*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*



*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH*

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For Christ's Holy Church, that God would give its people grace to serve Him with reverence and awe, granting faith to stay awake and endure to the end, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For pastors and all church workers, that God would lead and protect them in their door-keeping tasks and give them the words to testify to God's love in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the troubled in mind and spirit, that God would give them strength to cast every care on Him, granting them quietness of heart through a firm trust in Christ, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the lonely, that God would place them into the family of His Church to find peace in Christ and fulfillment through loving service to their neighbors, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the leaders of our nation, that they may walk in the way of justice and truth, using the power vested in them to protect the weak and innocent, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all threatened by natural disasters, wars, famines and troubles of any kind, that God would fill all hearts with repentance and humility to trust Him in every circumstance, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the hungry, that they would be filled with good things; for the poor and unemployed, that they may find gainful employment; for the sick, that they may be healed; for those who mourn, that they may be comforted; and for those who travel, that God would watch over them, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For each communicant, that with faith and a repentant heart they would be worthy to receive Christ's body and blood this day, not to their judgment but for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

In thanksgiving for all who have departed this life in faith, that as we see the signs of our Lord's second coming, we would not lose heart, but remain faithful unto death and receive the crown of life, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**



*THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION*

*PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION* (Stand)

p. 160

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

*SANCTUS*

**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.**

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. 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. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the 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.**

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*PAX DOMINI*

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

*AGNUS DEI*

**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 (Be seated)*

*The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.*

*COMMUNION MUSIC*

*At the Name of Jesus*  
Setting: John Hebden Schaffer

Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.  
My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of ev'ry people:  
A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.  
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.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

BENEDICTION

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 (Be seated)*

*DISMISSAL*

*POSTLUDE*

*Lift High the Cross*  
Setting: Paul Manz

*Altar Flowers: "Prayers for my 3 children and my 6 grands." By MaryAnn Wollerton*

Those serving:

Sunday, November 21, 8:30 a.m.

Greeter: Michael Chamberlain

Comm. assist: Dede Dixon

Reader: Michael Chamberlain

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Steve Janssen

Comm. assist: Judy Koucky

Reader: Charles Fisher

Acknowledgements

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