CHRIST THE KING THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR NOVEMBER 20, 2022

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

H H H

PRELUDE

Prelude in Classic Style G. Young

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #802

- Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes, Most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.
- 2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light, Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
 Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
 Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

- 3 To all life Thou givest to both great and small— In all life Thou livest, the true Life of all;
 We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree And wither and perish but naught changes Thee.
- 4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
 Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
 All laud we would render:
 O help us to see
 'Tis only the splendor of light that hides Thee.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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.

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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 + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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Amen.

KYRIE		p. 152
	In peace let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.	
	or 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 Goo	l, and
	for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.	
	Lord, have mercy.	
	For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let to the Lord.	us pray
	Lord, have mercy.	
	Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.	
	Amen.	

THIS IS THE FEAST

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,

You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

H H H

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

Malachi 3:13-18

Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."

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

SECOND LESSON

Colossians 1:9-20

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

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

(10:00) CHILDREN'S SERMON

GOSPEL VERSE (Stand) #747

 No saint on earth lives life to self alone Or dies alone, for we with Christ are one. So if we live, for Christ alone we live, And if we die, to Christ our dying give. In living and in dying this confess: We are the Lord's, safe in God's faithfulness.

 For to this end our Lord by death was slain, That to new life He might arise again. Through sorrow on to triumph Christ has led, And reigns o'er all: the living and the dead. In living and in dying, Him we bless; We are the Lord's, safe in God's faithfulness.

GOSPEL

Luke 23:27-43

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 23rd chapter Glory to You, O Lord.

And there followed [Jesus] a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

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:

It's always compelling to hear the conversation between Jesus and the two thieves on the cross. The conversation clearly outlines the two responses one can have to Jesus. And even more, Jesus' words of promise to the one who cries for his help are comforting beyond measure.

That being said, it's also a little jarring for us to hear the story this time of year. We're used to this text being read on Good Friday, or perhaps some other time during Lent.

But on Christ the King Sunday, in our year of reading Luke, this text makes the needed points better than any other from this Gospel. The repentant thief says: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Here we are reminded that Jesus is indeed a king and that his kingdom will be seen in all its glory by those who trust in him.

Christ the King Sunday is observed on the last Sunday of the church year, which also means that on this day we remember the end times as well. When Christ our king comes again, he will end the world as it is known by us now. Thereafter, a new age with a new creation will commence.

And when that new age comes, only those who have been saved from their sins will enter it. For Christ our King will come also as our judge, and he will pronounce sentence upon all people at that time. We heard this message already last Sunday when Jesus warned us about the day when we will "stand before the Son of Man." We heard it today in our first reading, from the prophet Malachi.

Speaking even before Christ appeared, Malachi tells of the day when God will "make up [his] treasured possession." This possession will include those whose names are written in a "book of remembrance" – those who "feared the Lord and esteemed his name."

And as we see, not everyone's name will appear in the book. Malachi states that there will be a "distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."

Malachi is very clear on this point because many in his day did not think God noticed who was serving him. In fact, they complained about his supposed lack of vision – even concluding that it was vain to serve him. They said: "Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test, and they escape."

But God responded by assuring his people that the wicked do not escape. God sees their evil. And he knows their hearts. They will be excluded from the good life to come.

These words from the prophet are meant to speak to us as well. They should remind us that God sees our actions and knows our hearts. We too are to live life rightly, otherwise there will be consequences.

And we need this motivation from the Law. For without it we quickly become complacent and avoid thinking about such things.

Still, God prefers to move us through the Gospel. We see this in Malachi where he says of his people: "they shall be mine in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him."

In these last days, God has given us the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Good News is that God has arranged to pay for our sin. He did this when he sent his own Son, Jesus, into the flesh and did not spare him but allowed him to endure the agony of the cross as a sacrifice for sin.

Our second reading today speaks beautifully about that Son. And it comes in the context of Paul urging the people to live rightly.

Notice how Paul connects the two – the Law and the Gospel. Paul wants us to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," which will include our "bearing fruit in every good work." He prays for this, which tells us of its importance.

But Paul also explains how we can do such things. He shares the good news that we are "being strengthened with all power, according to [God's] glorious might."

Paul then goes on to share more words of Gospel. He says that we are "qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." And this has happened because Jesus "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

On this day of Christ the King, we should notice the kingdom reference in these words. Paul tells us we have been "transferred to the kingdom of the Son." As Christians, our primary citizenship is no longer one of the world's kingdoms. Rather, we are citizens of Christ's kingdom – the one which is led by our gentle and glorious king Jesus, where we are kept safe and secure until the life to come.

Having shared this Good News of our salvation, Paul then goes on to give further description of Jesus our Savior. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation," etc. and etc. These meaning-filled words describe Christ our King in all of his beauty and glory and conclude with the great work he accomplished through the "blood of his cross."

Today on Christ the King Sunday we lift up our beautiful savior Jesus – praising him for his goodness and mercy and acknowledging him as our Lord and King.

Today we also think about "walking in a manner worthy of the Lord" and "bearing fruit in every good work." We do this according to our other theme for today – Commitment Sunday.

Commitment Sunday is the name we give to the culmination of our stewardship emphasis at St. Paul's. We believe that making a commitment is a good way to help with our stewardship efforts.

Stewardship, I will remind you, is the managing of God's gifts in ways that are pleasing to him. It means not being wasteful nor over-indulgent with the gifts God gives us. It also means being generous in sharing them – having an eye for giving toward those things that truly benefit people, as guided by the Lord God.

Part of good stewardship will involve setting aside a portion of your income or savings for God's work through the church. Proportional giving toward God, in this way, promotes fairness and equity among all givers. Some people, as we know, have many gifts and resources in their pockets, while others have much less. We each give according to what we can.

Regarding the portion itself, the scriptures commend to us ten percent – what we call the tithe. That number was given in the Old Testament and never contradicted in the New.

That being said, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament rarely speak of that number. And this is probably for two reasons. First, Jesus wants us to give everything to God, not just ten percent. We are to give toward God's good purposes in all we do, which is the more important understanding. Secondly, Jesus wants us to make our decisions in Christian freedom. And this includes the understanding that some may not be able to give ten percent at certain points in their life, while others may be able to give much more.

And let's be clear, too, that giving doesn't just involve money. We are to give of our time and talents as well. These, too, are to be offered to the Lord by sharing them with his people.

Some people will have more money than time. Some people will have more time than money. Some people will be more talented in one area; others will have different talents. We each give according to what we have.

We must remember, too, the scriptural teaching about giving our first fruits to the Lord. According to this principle, we are to give our best and not our leftovers. This also means giving to him up front, not at the end when we see how things are looking. We are to give our best talents to him and write our first checks to him.

This principle is especially important in regard to our time. We are to give our best attention and efforts to the Lord. And we do this when we carve out time for the Sabbath Day and not just show up if there's nothing better to do or only if we feel like it.

Some years ago I met a man who explained his lack of church attendance by saying: "The pastor we had before you once told me I should only go to church when I feel like it. As it turns out, I rarely feel like it." I didn't dismiss his words lightly because I knew he was a good man in many

respects. He made a decent living working an honest trade, and he and his wife had raised many foster children. Maybe he gave some financial offerings to the church too, I couldn't say.

What I did say to him was "I'm sure that your pastor wanted you to attend church with a cheerful heart and not simply out of obligation. But I'm guessing that he would also agree that rather than waiting around for that cheerful heart to just show up, you to need to summon it by making your best effort."

"The Lord loves a cheerful giver." That's a final scriptural teaching we should remember. And one that deserves some thought.

Sometimes we will need to summon up our cheer. But other times cheer comes simply as we give. It feels good to give. It does! And it feels especially good to know that what you're giving toward is making a real difference in people's lives. People need the message of the church. They need its message of fellowship and community – especially in these days of internet isolation and safety distancing. But even more, people need the church's message of God's Law and Gospel, working together in the hearts of humanity. This message, I will boldly say, is the only message that will really move people to live rightly, and the only one that saves in the end.

As God's people, you have a need to give. We all do. And we are greatly blessed by our giving.

So let us do so cheerfully, proportionally, faithfully and generously. Our Lord gives his best to us. When we follow suit, blessings abound.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY (Stand) #534

- Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendor, First-begotten from the dead, You alone, our strong defender, Lifting up Your people's head.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Jesus, true and living bread! Jesus, true and living bread!
- 2 Though the lowliest form now veil You As of old in Bethlehem,
 Here as there Your angels hail You, Branch and flow'r of Jesse's stem.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
 We in worship join with them;
 We in worship join with them.

Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor

 3 Paschal Lamb, Your off'ring, finished Once for all when You were slain, In its fullness undiminished Shall forevermore remain, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Cleansing souls from ev'ry stain; Cleansing souls from ev'ry stain.

4 Life-imparting heav'nly manna, Stricken rock with streaming side, Heav'n and earth with loud hosanna Worship You, the Lamb who died, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Ris'n, ascended, glorified! Ris'n, ascended, glorified!

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,

Hymnal, back cover

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

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. **Fellowship Cards** help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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

In thanksgiving for Christ our King, who has given us peace by the blood of His cross, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For the gift of eternal life and the paradise which awaits; and for delivering us from the domain of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the power and strength to live lives that are worthy of the Gospel, especially in our giving; and for our faith to endure till the end, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For this congregation and for the whole Christian Church on earth, that Christ, her Head, would rule over her by the forgiveness of sins and hold all things together for our good, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all Christian homes, that they would be filled with the love of God in Christ; and for all members of these homes, that as the Father's treasured possessions spared through the death of His beloved Son they would grow in the fear of the Lord, serve Him faithfully, and walk undismayed by the prosperity of the wicked until all is revealed, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all people to stand in awe of Christ who alone is King of kings and Lord of lords; for good government and preservation of life in this fallen world until the Lord returns; and for our true King to return soon and usher in the age to come, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who are troubled, sick or in need of extra care, especially all on our prayer list and all whom we name in our hearts at this time... that our King would remember them according to the pardon he spoke from the cross and heal them according to his promise, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all of us who commune this day, that we would not weep in remembrance of Christ as if He were crucified in vain but taste His kingdom's pleasure and know the victory over sin and death which he has given, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O Christ, our King, in Your blood the saints of all ages wash their robes and find entrance to paradise with You. Bring us also with them out of death into the resurrected life, that at the Last Day we may see You crowned with glory and honor; for You are the Lamb who was slain and now lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY #955

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,

And fill to the brim our cup of blessing. Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, That we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; Unite them with the prayers we offer now. Grace our table with Your presence, and give us A foretaste of the feast to come.

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THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE

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 that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

LSB 161

LSB 161

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 WORDS OF OUR LORD

- Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ♣ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
- In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My H blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."
- As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

LSB 163

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

No Saint on Earth Lives Life to Self Alone Setting: P. Grime

NUNC DIMITTIS (Stand)

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

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SENDING HYMN #525

 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

Crown Him with Many Crowns Setting: C.W. Ore Those serving:

Sunday, November 20, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Steve Janssen Comm. assist: Dede Dixon Reader: Dede Dixon 10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Marian Robinson Comm. assist: Judy Koucky Reader: Charles Fisher

Fellowship: Volunteers - Leisure Group

Acknowledgements

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