

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, November 15, 2020
24th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction to the day

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the LORD will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake
God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,

I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,

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

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG *O Zion, Haste* (ELW 668)

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 O Zion, haste, your mission high fulfilling,
to tell to all the world that God is light;
that he who made all nations is not willing
one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

Refrain

Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace,
tidings of Jesus, redemption, and release.

2 Publish to ev'ry people, tongue, and nation
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;
tell how he stooped to save his lost creation
and died on earth that we might live above. Refrain

3 He comes again! O Zion, ere you meet him,
make known to ev'ry heart his saving grace;
let none whom he has ransomed fail to greet him,
through your neglect, unfit to see his face. Refrain

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

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

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

L: A reading from Zephaniah.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

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

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

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 90:1-8 [9-11] 12 read responsively

¹Lord, you have been our refuge

from one generation to another.

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

³You turn us back to the dust and say,

“Turn back, O children of earth.”

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

⁵you sweep them away like a dream,

they fade away suddenly like the grass:

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

⁷For we are consumed by your anger;

we are afraid because of your wrath.

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

⁹When you are angry, all our days are gone;

we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

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

¹¹Who regards the power of your wrath?

Who rightly fears your indignation?

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

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

L: A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

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

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* (ELW 693)

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 Come, ye thankful people, come; raise the song of harvest home.
All be safely gathered in ere the winter storms begin.
God, our maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

2 All the world is God's own field, fruit unto his praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear.
Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be.

3 For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his harvest home;
from his field shall in that day all offenses purge away;
give his angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store in his garner evermore.

4 Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest home.
Gather then thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified, in thy garner to abide.
Come, with all thine angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home!

APOSTLES CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: 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.

A: Lord of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature (*local places of natural beauty may be named*). Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Lord of the nations, sound forth your justice in the ears of all leaders. Increase concern for those who are most vulnerable, especially as international leaders forge trade agreements and cooperate to end human rights abuses. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins. Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors (*especially*). Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

CHOIR ANTHEM – *Simple Gifts/Pachelbel's Canon* piano

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings.

Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

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 our thanks and praise.

PREFACE by Pastor

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

**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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

surrounded by evil and bordered by death

we appeal to you,

our Sovereign, our Wisdom, and our Judge.

We praise you for Christ, who proclaimed your reign of peace

and promised an end to injustice and harm.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
the sacrifice of his life and death
and the victory of his resurrection,
we await with all the saints
his loving redemption of our suffering world.
Send your Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine
and on all who share in the body and blood of your Son:
teach us your mercy and justice,
and make all things new in Christ.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

C Amen

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please come forward to receive the "body of Christ" by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying "the body of Christ given for you," and you respond "Amen," then go to the left or right and receive the "blood of Christ" from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don't touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, "the blood of Christ shed for you." There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice.

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond

Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

**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.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Jesus, Remember Me*

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: 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.

C: Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

P: 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

Postlude

Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.

Christmas-at-Sea Seafarers Update

Hello Everyone, Pastor Marsh Drege came today and picked up 698 Seafarer bags at the synod office. With the pandemic, I think that is a total win! So glad many of our congregations and individuals continued to reach out and fill these bags. Many, if not all, the seafarers have been on the ships for a year now, unable to be home with their families or return to their home countries. They are not allowed off the ships at this time because of the pandemic, although the chaplains can go aboard and offer short visits. These bags will be welcomed and appreciated.

Announcements

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Cindy Cummings, Dawn Hauser, Ralph Lehman, Sara Leighow, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Cora Pellitier, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Ben Saar, Jane Shaffer, Rev. Gary Shumway, John Truax, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our brother, C. William Marks, in remembrance of his birthday. Love Mick, Carl and family!!

Special Thanks to this week's helpers: Lectors – Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers - Gary Johnson and Karen Aucker; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher - Dawn McCloskey; Tellers- Shane Snyder and Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin sponsor - Cynthia Breon;

Next week's helpers: Lectors –Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers -Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants -; Head Usher -Dawn McCloskey; Tellers- Shane Snyder and Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin sponsor -Cynthia Breon;

The Lutheran Church **Women's Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597
Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659
Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

Bible Study - Bible Study is held at 10:00 a.m. every Monday in the large Sunday School room. Please join us. We will begin a new Bible Study for Advent: *A Wonderful Life on November 16.*

Chancel Choir is FUN! Choir invites you to join us—make a joyful noise unto the Lord and have great fellowship! Choir practices are held on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Choir members are asked / required to wear a mask or shield at all times. We'd love for you to join us!

Harvest Home Today, Sunday, November 15 is our annual collection of food donations for Harvest Home. This year we are collecting any flavor of Jello for the Food Pantry.

Special Council meeting - Following worship this morning there will be a special meeting of the St. John Council following the 9:00 a.m. worship service.

Congregation Meeting - The annual congregation meeting to elect new council members, elect synod delegates, and approve the 2021 budget will be held after the worship service on Sunday, November 22. If interested in serving as a synod delegate, please let Pastor or Bill Ely know now. We need 2 candidates. Conference Assembly will be in May and Synod Assembly will be in June.

Giving Plus+ Download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone. This feature is also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card. Now this feature is available. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Aucker.

Give+ Text: Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

“Grab-a-Tab” - The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn’t matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville. “Grab-a-Tab” program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a “Home-away-from-Home” to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.

Christmas Toy Shop -Gently Used and New Toys at no charge to parents. In the loving spirit of Christmas, the Oval United Methodist Church is providing Christmas toys for your young ones. Saturday, December 5, 2020 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m. Have toys to donate? Please provide clean and complete toys. Drop off at Oval UM Church basement from November 30 - December 4, 2020 **Donations not needed to shop Oval United Methodist Church, 6796 SR 44 Hwy, Jersey Shore * 570-745-3197.

Christmas Bazaar Cancelled - After a long and meaningful discussion about this year’s Annual Christmas Bazaar a motion was made to cancel the bazaar for 2020. A vote was taken and unfortunately yet unanimously; the motion carried. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

St. John Endowment - We are in search of a volunteer to serve on the St John Endowment fund for a period of three years starting January 1. If you would be willing to serve on the Endowment committee contact Chuck Gottschall.

Angel Tree - The Angel tree can be found in the 2nd level Elevator Room. Please take an angel. The gifts need to be returned to the church on Sunday Dec 6. **Unwrapped, but please attach the angel to the gift** so we know which gift goes to which child. Any questions contact Lynette Yost or Carol Yost.