

## *Faith Lutheran Church*

*Sunday, November 8, 2020*  
*23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*



### Welcome

### Call to Worship

We gather together in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### Call to Confession

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved. **Amen.**

### Prayer of Confession (please join in confessing our sins)

Holy One,

**we confess that we are not awake for You. We are not faithful in using Your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings. We do not see Your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides Your beloved community. Open our hearts to Your coming, open our eyes to see You in our neighbor, open our hands to serve Your creation. Amen.**

### Declaration of Forgiveness

Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through † Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world. **Amen.**

### Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

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

### Readings and Psalm

- **Amos 5:18-24** *Let justice roll down like waters*
- **Psalm 70** *You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, do not tarry.*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** *The promise of the resurrection*

### The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:1-13

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and

buy some for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon

**Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

Waiting...and waiting...and waiting...

Like millions of other people, I, too, have been waiting for the results from the presidential election.

I should probably state that I typed this sermon on Wednesday afternoon, November 4<sup>th</sup>. As I began typing this, the clock on my computer said it was 1:35 pm. I have a Zoom meeting at 7:00 pm so I have a little more than five hours to get the jumbled thoughts from my brain trickled down to my fingers racing across the computer keys. My sermons *must* be done on Wednesdays so that they can be emailed to staff of my three churches by that evening.

Yesterday was Election Day here in the United States. Among many other important positions, the presidency was one of them. Probably *the* most important one. Unless you were one of the other candidates vying for an elected position.

Right before I started typing this sermon, I briefly looked at Facebook. No one was making posts about which candidate had won the presidential election, so I assumed there was no clear winner - at that time, anyway.

I knew before Tuesday that it could be a long wait before we had the final results. Political commentators had been saying for days that there *may not* be a clear winner on election night. Tuesday evening, I tried to calm my anxiousness by drinking a hot cup of chamomile tea, watching a couple of episodes of a series I’ve been watching on the television, and playing some games on my iPhone. I tried to stay away from the news predictions and Facebook banter.

Let me ask a quick question: did you stay up Tuesday evening waiting to hear if a winner would be declared? I didn’t. Oh, I usually have in the past. But Tuesday night I did not stay up and wait.

I, like millions of others, went to bed Tuesday evening not knowing who the next President of the United States would be. And it’s not that I didn’t care. But it had been a long day and I was tired. I already had a busy schedule set for Wednesday so the smartest thing for me to do was to just go to bed. I have realized I’m less grumpy that way!

I’ll admit I was a little tired of waiting when I got up this morning, Wednesday morning. I had hoped the results would have been determined. And maybe they will be later this evening. Or maybe it will be Thursday or even Friday. Maybe it will take even longer.

I’m not very patient when it comes to waiting. I know a lot of us aren’t very good at waiting. We want something and we want it *now*. We are used to having things immediately. We want instant results. For

me, it's like walking one mile and then stepping on the scales to see if I lost any weight! Waiting just isn't usually one of my strong suits.

In our gospel reading for today from Matthew 25, we have the parable of the ten bridesmaids. Five wise ones and five foolish ones. They were waiting for the bridegroom to come. They didn't know what day or what time. Only that the bridegroom *would* come. Until then, they had to *wait*.

The wise bridesmaids prepared by having extra oil for their lamps while they waited for the bridegroom's arrival. The foolish ones didn't prepare like that and had no extra oil with them. Their time of waiting wasn't spent wisely.

The bridegroom was delayed and the bridesmaids all fell asleep. At midnight the wait was over! The bridegroom was coming! But the foolish bridesmaids had run out of oil. Since the wise ones wouldn't share, the foolish ones left to go get more oil.

Naturally, the bridegroom came while they were away. The bridegroom and the five wise bridesmaids went into the wedding banquet. The foolish ones were late. And they missed out. They hadn't prepared and the door closed on them.

This parable is a clear message about how the foolish bridesmaids weren't prepared. They didn't plan properly and certainly hadn't planned on the bridegroom being delayed. We can certainly use this as a lesson to be prepared for Christ's return.

How are you planning for Christ's Second Coming? I think we certainly can keep watch and be ready when He comes. We can be more like Christ each day and anxiously await His return. We can use this time to work together to increase Christ's kingdom among our friends and our neighbors.

But let's talk for a minute about the wait. Waiting for the bridegroom to come. Waiting for Jesus' return. The anticipation, the anxiousness, the urgency, maybe even a bit of fear of not knowing what to expect.

In Psalm 70, we hear, "come to me quickly, O God. You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry." With these words, the psalmist is crying out, Lord, *please end this wait*.

And Matthew's gospel today ends with these words, "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Men - and women - of old used to wait for the Second Coming of Christ, believing that it would happen in their lifetime. Throughout scripture, we hear the urgency of being prepared. Even Jesus' disciples thought they would see their Lord again after His resurrection and ascension. Their waiting seemed to be in vain; their hope wasn't realized in their time.

We wait. We wait for Christ's return. We wait for evil to be defeated. We wait for the earth to be restored. And we wait for the time that Christ will take us to His glorious eternal kingdom that has been prepared for us.

In our second reading for today from 1 Thessalonians 4, we hear, "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we

who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.” They believed it would happen soon. Their wait would be over. And yet, it wasn’t.

We wait. And, until that time, we prepare.

Well, folks, I am done typing my sermon. My Zoom meeting will begin soon. The results of the presidential election have not been announced yet. This has been an anxious time for many of us. I pray the wait is almost over. Yet, *this* wait is but a mere pause in our time. In Christ’s time.

So, as we wait for Christ, let us sing with our loudest voices these words from the great hymn, “How Great Thou Art”:

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And then proclaim, "My God, how great Thou art" **Amen.**

### **Blessing**

And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (*Philippians 4:7*)

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Longing for Christ’s reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God’s power on the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer.

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world You have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with Your creation.

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

Holy Uniter, pour out upon us Your one and unifying Spirit, and awaken in every confession of the whole church a holy hunger and thirst for unity in You. Unite those who have been divided by the political elections. Bring peace to our country and our world.

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world.

Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members.

Holy Healer, we continue to pray for all those who are affected by the coronavirus. We pray for those suffering in any way this day, especially those we name in our hearts, our minds, and with our voices at this time.....(please name your prayer concerns).

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of Your kingdom. Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when You gather all creation around Your throne where You will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

**Our Lord's Prayer**

*I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...*

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen**

**Offering**

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry.

**Offertory Prayer** *(please join in prayer)*

**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. Amen**

**Benediction**

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace; in the name of God the Father, God the Son+, and God the Spirit that makes us one. **Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sources:

[www.presbyterianmission.org](http://www.presbyterianmission.org)

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **Pastor Melinda's email HAS CHANGED! It is now:** orlcrev@jamadots.com

❖ **Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays at our Facebook page!** - You can catch our Service at 10:30am every Sunday at [www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966](https://www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966) . You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.

❖ **Sunday, November 8th** is the **second half of Faith's Annual Congregational Meeting**. The purpose of this meeting is to review and vote on the 2021 budget. More information can be found within this week's mailing.

❖ **Community Thanksgiving Project 2020** – Chippewa County Department of Health & Human services has partnered with United Way of the EUP to secure a mobile pantry from Feeding America on **Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10am - 12 noon**. Food distribution will be outside at the Norris Center of LSSU, vehicles will pull up, where the food will then be loaded into the vehicle and then pull away. The event will provide more than 300 families & individuals with shelf stable food, in-season fruits/vegetables and a turkey. In 2019, this distribution assisted 345 households! The average cost for a turkey is \$10, so please consider donating the cost of 1 or more turkeys. We will be collecting donation until Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Checks can be made out to Faith Lutheran Church with a memo of: "Feeding America". Also if you would like to volunteer to help, more information is available by contacting Sean in the office.



❖ **Youth Wreath Fundraiser** – It's that time of year again! Starting November 1<sup>st</sup>, you will be able to place an order for Christmas Wreaths. The cost is \$25.00/wreath and orders need to be in by November 29<sup>th</sup>. Wreaths will be available for pick up the week of December 6<sup>th</sup>. More details will be forthcoming about the pick-up procedure. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go to support Faith Lutheran's youth.