

Faith Lutheran Church

Sunday, November 22, 2020

Christ the King Sunday



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

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. **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. May we take a moment to go before God in open and honest confession.

Prayer of Confession (please join in confessing our sins)

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. 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

Declaration of Forgiveness

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 alone, 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. **Amen**

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

O God of power and might, Your Son shows us the way of service, and in Him we inherit the riches of Your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world You have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- **Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24** *God will shepherd Israel*
- **Psalm 95:1-7a** *We are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.*
- **Ephesians 1:15-23** *The reign of Christ*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus compares Himself to a king who moves among His subjects to see how He is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to His family is truly done for Him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and He will put the sheep at His right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave Me clothing, I was sick and you took care of Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and gave You clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw You sick or in prison and visited You?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family you did it to Me.’ ⁴¹Then He will say to those at His left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from Me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not give Me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

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.

Are you a sheep or a goat? And before you answer that question, let me tell you that we are *not* hosting auditions for the Sunday School Christmas program! That's what you thought, right? I can hear you now. I've been a shepherd before. I've been Mary. I've been Joseph. I've even been a wise man who was always referred to as a wise guy! Now you want to know if I'm asking you to be a sheep or a goat, right? Nope. That's *not* the question today.

Our scripture I just shared from Matthew 25 refers to sheep and goats. And while we know there is a difference between the two animals, this parable isn't about animals anyway.

This scripture is also quite fitting to hear as we approach Thanksgiving. A time when we offer thanks for all our blessings God has gifted us and a time that we may be more aware of those around us who are in need.

Today our parable is about a king who separates his sheep and his goats; the sheep are at his right hand and the goats are at his left hand. There is a clear divide between the two.

To the sheep, the king invites them to come near. They are blessed. They will inherit the kingdom that is prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Why? Because you cared for me, the king will say. "...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

Really? When did we do that to you, master? And the king will reply that, though you did not do that *directly* to me, you did it to one who is family. One of my own.

And then the king will say to those at his left hand, the goats, so to speak, you are condemned to eternal hell. But why, master, what did we do?

And the king will reply, "I was hungry and you gave me *no* food, I was thirsty and you gave me *nothing* to drink, I was a stranger and you did *not* welcome me, naked and you did *not* give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did *not* visit me."

And those at his left will ask, when did we see you and not help you? And the king will reply, "Truly I tell you, just as you did *not* do it to one of the least of these, you did *not* do it to me."

First, let's take a look at the blessed ones. I found it quite interesting that they helped the king, the master, the Son of Man, and they didn't even know it. They met the needs of the poor, and the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the incarcerated. They didn't hesitate. They didn't question it. They just did it. And they didn't even realize what they had done. They didn't have a sign or need to be told that the one they were helping all along - was Jesus. They did what was needed. And, for that, they were blessed.

And now let's take a look at the ones who were condemned. The ones who turned their backs on the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the incarcerated. They turned inward and focused on themselves rather than outward by helping others. They judged by appearance and made assumptions that weren't fair. They only saw with their eyes and not with their heart. They didn't realize that Jesus was right in front of them. Waiting to be helped. To be cared for. To be ministered to. They didn't notice that Jesus was even there.

Let me say that, I am not asking you to identify with being a sheep or a goat. My intention isn't to guilt you into recognizing yourself in this parable.

What I *am* suggesting is that you look around and identify where *you* see Jesus. Because Jesus *is* the one asking for food and drink. Jesus *is* the one who is naked and cold, who needs clothing and shelter. Jesus *is* the one who is sick and needs medications picked up or chicken soup dropped off. Jesus *is* isolated and needs to know He is not forgotten. Jesus *is* our brother. We are *all* children of God.

You don't really need to look too far to see Jesus in the eyes of the ones around you. You see, Jesus *is* in the face of our neighbor. Because Jesus *is* our neighbor. **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.*

Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear Your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all social ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served.

You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth.

Bring peace to every place where conflict rages. Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in Your reign of unity and reconciliation.

Heal the sinful divisions we erect between us and release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see Your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away.

Pour out the gifts of Your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work in children's ministry, youth ministry, and campus ministry as they nurture the gifts of young people.

Hear our cries 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).

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see Your presence in those in need around us. 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)*

Blessed are You,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through Your goodness You have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to Your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that You have made, for the sake of Him who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. 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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sources:

www.presbyterianmission.org

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ Pastor Rita is currently available for phone calls and email! ❖

Following quarantine guidelines, Pastor Rita is not available for face-to-face meetings but she is available via phone and email if you need to get a hold of her.

Her phone number is (312) 478-6212 and her email is critawilliam@gmail.com

WELCOME PASTOR RITA!!!

❖ In-person Worship Services at Faith are suspended through December 8th. ❖

At the November 17th Council Meeting, it was decided to keep in-person worship services suspended through the 8th of December, staying in line with the current plan for area schools. Closer to that date, we will have a better idea if longer suspension is a possibility or not, Church Council and CCR members will help keep everyone informed of the decisions made. Until we are able to gather together again, you can always watch our livestream on our Facebook page and soon a YouTube channel.

❖ Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays at our Facebook page! - You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at 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.

❖ **Community Thanksgiving Project 2020** – Thanks to you, Faith Lutheran managed to raise \$245.00 for this amazing cause. That comes out to helping cover the cost of almost 25 turkeys. This event will provide more than 300 families & individuals with shelf stable food, in-season fruits/vegetables and a turkey. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make this happen!



❖ **Youth Wreath Fundraiser** – Christmas Wreaths are available to order by contacting Sean in the church office at 906-632-7246. The cost is \$25.00/wreath and orders need to be in by November 29th, (that's just one more week!). Wreaths will be available for socially-distanced pick up on December 6th & 7th from Noon—2PM. Proceeds from this fundraiser will support Faith Lutheran's youth.

**ORDER YOUR
Poinsettias**

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in honor or memory of loved ones to adorn our sanctuary on Christmas eve, contact Sean in the office at 632-7246. The cost per poinsettia will be \$8.00. **The last day for orders will be December 4th.** Poinsettias will be available for socially-distanced pick up the following Monday.