

# +DIVINE SERVICE II+

OF THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

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+THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR+ 20 NOVEMBER 2022+



## The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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A member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

902 S. Maple

Inglewood, CA 90301-3824

[tgsicms.org](http://tgsicms.org)

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# The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

“A Church where God gives and we receive.”

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- ❖ Ms. Moira Killian, Secretary (Office) 310.671-7644
  - ❖ Mr. Jay Rogers, Organist/Music Director
  - ❖ Mr. Leon Tarr, Congregational Chairman
  - ❖ Mr. Greg Griffin, Acolyte

## Welcome to our Divine Service!

*We are pleased that you are with us.*

### +Worship Notes+

*The entire service, including the rubrics of when to sit and when to kneel or stand, and what to say, is printed out in this folder so you may follow along.*

**Welcome to weekly Divine Service at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!** We are a congregation that confesses the Holy Bible as inerrant, that justification is by faith according to the Holy Bible and confessed in the 1580 Book of Concord. God bless you.

**To all of you who are visiting our service this morning, we extend a most cordial welcome in Jesus' name. Please introduce yourself to our pastor. It is our hope that you will feel at home in our midst and will be blessed by our message of Christ crucified and risen for the sins of the world. If you are looking for a church home and would like to know about our membership, pastor would love to speak with you!**

### A Note From The Organist:

“Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying” is the first of the six “Schubler Chorales” (after the publisher), one of the few Bach works published during his lifetime. They are all drawn from cantatas, although the source for one of them is lost. BWV 645 is the fourth movement of Cantata 140.

Pieter Post was a prominent Dutch organist. His setting of “Old Hundred” is harmonically and rhythmically bold.

# Confession and Absolution

## Hymn of Invocation

## 515 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, And let your lights ap - pear;  
 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain Pro - claim the Bride - groom near;  
 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience Their cross and suf - f'ring's bore,  
 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, And dark - er night is near.  
 Go forth as He ap - proach - es With al - le - lu - ias clear.  
 Shall live and reign for - ev - er When sor - row is no more.  
 A - rise, O Sun so longed for, O'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The Bride - groom is a - ris - ing And soon is draw - ing nigh.  
 The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; The gates wide o - pen stand.  
 A - round the throne of glo - ry The Lamb they shall be - hold;  
 With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, We plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; At mid - night comes the cry.  
 A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; The Bride - groom is at hand.  
 In tri - umph cast be - fore Him Their di - a - dems of gold.  
 The day of earth's re - demp - tion That sets Your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907, alt.

Tune: Swedish

Text and tune: Public domain

*Stand*

*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

## Invocation

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

**C** Amen.

## Exhortation

LSB 167

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*Kneel/Stand*

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

## Confession of Sins

LSB 167

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C** **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.**

## Absolution

LSB 167

- P** 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.
- C** **Amen.**

*Stand*

# Service of the Word

## Introit

*Psalm 39:4-5, 7-8; antiphon: Isaiah 35:10*

The ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with | singing;\*  
everlasting joy shall be up- | on their heads.

**They shall obtain glad- | ness and joy,\*  
and sorrow and sighing shall | flee away.**

O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure | of my days,\*  
let me know how fleeting | I am!

**Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as  
nothing be- | fore you.\***

Surely all mankind stands as a | mere breath!  
And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

**My hope | is in you.**  
**Deliver me from all my trans- | gressions.\***  
**Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!**  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

The ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with | singing;\*  
everlasting joy shall be up- | on their heads.  
**They shall obtain glad- | ness and joy,\***  
**and sorrow and sighing shall | flee away.**

## Kyrie

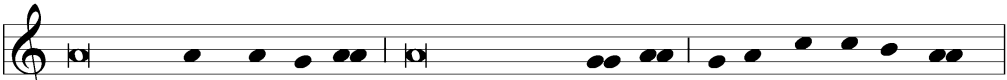
LSB 168



**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



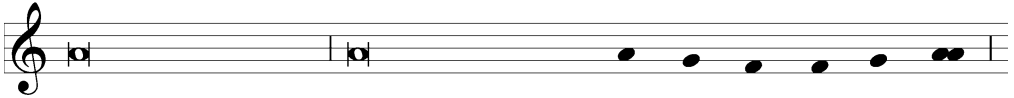
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



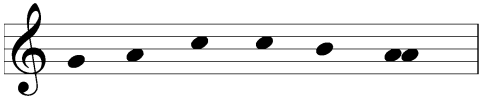
and for the uni - ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



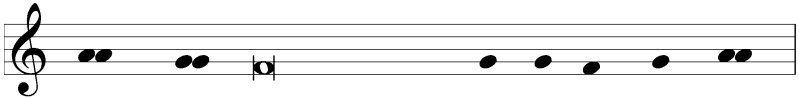
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



**C** A - men.

**This Is the Feast**

*LSB 171*



**A** This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,



whose blood set us free to be peo-ple of God.



Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and strength and



hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are His.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le -



lu - ia. Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and might be to



God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God,  
 for the Lamb who was slain has be - gun His reign.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**Salutation and Collect of the Day**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And al - so with you.

**P** Let us pray.

O Lord, absolve Your people from their offenses that, from the bonds of our sins which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon ourselves, we may be delivered by Your bountiful goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** A - men.

*Sit*

**Old Testament Reading:**

*Isaiah 65:17-25*

<sup>17</sup>Behold, I create new heavens  
 and a new earth,  
 and the former things shall not be remembered  
 or come into mind.



<sup>18</sup>But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.  
<sup>19</sup>I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.  
<sup>20</sup>No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not fill out his days,  
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,  
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.  
<sup>21</sup>They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
<sup>22</sup>They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
<sup>23</sup>They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,  
and their descendants with them.  
<sup>24</sup>Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
<sup>25</sup>The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent's food.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,"  
says the LORD.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Gradual

*Psalm 45:14-15*

**In many-colored robes [the king's daughter] is led | to the king,\*  
with her virgin companions following be- | hind her.  
With joy and gladness they are | led along\*  
as they enter the palace | of the king.**

## Epistle

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

### The Day of the Lord

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

### Alleluia and Verse

LSB 173



**C** Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

### Holy Gospel

Matthew 25:1-13

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.



**C** Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>For 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, they all became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

## Nicene Creed

**C** I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.

**And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.**

*Sit*

**Hymn of the Day**

**514 The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us**



1 The Bride-groom soon will call us, "Come to the wed-ding feast."  
2 There shall we see in glo - ry Our dear Re-deem-er's face;  
3 There God shall from all e - vil For - ev - er make us free,  
4 In that fair home shall nev - er Be si - lent mu - sic's voice;



May slum-ber not be - fall us Nor watch - ful - ness de - crease.  
The long - a - wait - ed sto - ry Of heav'n - ly joy takes place:  
From sin and from the dev - il, From all ad - ver - si - ty,  
With hearts and lips for - ev - er We shall in God re - joice,



May all our lamps be burn - ing With oil e - nough and more  
The pa - tri - archs shall meet us, The proph - ets' ho - ly band;  
From sick-ness, pain, and sad - ness, From trou - bles, cares, and fears,  
While an - gel hosts are rais - ing With saints from great to least



That we, with Him re - turn - ing, May find an o - pen door!  
A - pos - tles, mar - tyrs greet us In that ce - les - tial land.  
And grant us heav'n - ly glad - ness And wipe a - way our tears.  
A might - y hymn for prais - ing The Giv - er of the feast.

*Stand*

### Prayer of the Church

*Proper response is "Lord, have mercy."*

- P** In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the Church, as she eagerly awaits the return of her Bridegroom, that we would not grow weary, but that God would strengthen us through His Word and Sacraments to ever hold fast to His promise of salvation won by Christ, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For the priesthood of all believers, that we may proclaim the riches of God's name for the benefit of all people; and that the Word of God may speed throughout all lands and nations, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For all farmers, ranchers and everyone who works to deliver the bounty of God's goodness, that God would grant seasonable weather and plentiful harvests; that He would keep us ever mindful that the fruits of our labor are all a gift from His hand; and that He would make us faithful stewards over all He has entrusted to our care, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For those who govern us, especially Joseph, our president; Gavin, our governor; and all who make, administer and judge our laws, that God would grant them wisdom, humility and integrity, so that the work of their hands would be of benefit to all whom they serve and in accordance with His will; and that God would bring peace to our troubled world, so that all would hear the message of the Gospel and rejoice in His salvation, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For those afflicted with pain, sickness, trials and difficulties, especially *Alice, Bev, Carmen, Cynthia, Debra, Dolores, Gayle and her family, Helen, Hoshea, Jane, Jod, Johnathan, Karen, Lynette, Marion and her family, Megan, Royce, Sabrina, Sophia, and Timothy* that they may be granted health and the certainty that our bodies will be incorruptible and immortal when Christ returns to make all things new, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For all who commune this day, that the Giver of the feast would grant them repentance and faith to receive His body and blood in a worthy manner, showing forth His praise in their lives, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** O Lord, heavenly Father, we gratefully remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together 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, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**Offering** *Collected after service in the back of the church.*

**Offertory**

LSB 176



**C** What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all His ben - e-fits to



me? I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing and will



call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-



va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my



vows to the Lord now in the pres - ence of all His peo - ple, in the



courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

**Service of the Sacrament**

## Preface

LSB 177

**P** The Lord be with you.

**G** And al-so with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**G** We lift them to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

## Proper Preface (Abbreviated)

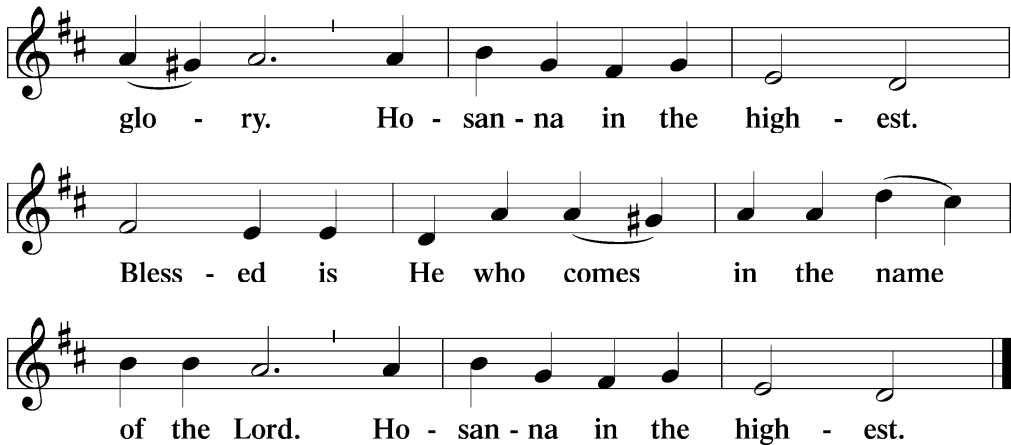
LSB 177

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

## Sanctus

LSB 178

**G** Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of  
pow'r and might: Heav'n and earth are full of Your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is He who comes in the name  
 of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### The Words of Our Lord

- P** 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  $\text{✝}$  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  $\text{✝}$  blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

### Proclamation of Christ

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** 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

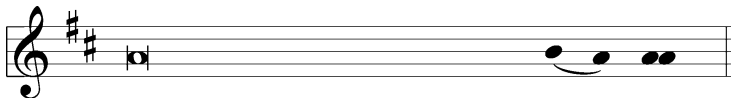
- C** **Our Father who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be Thy name,  
 Thy kingdom come,**



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**

*LSB 180*



**P** The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



**C** A - men.

**Agnus Dei**

*LSB 180*



**C** Lamb of God, You take a - way the sin of the world;



have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a - way the



sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of



God, You take a - way the sin of the world;

grant us peace, grant us peace.

*Sit*

## Distribution

### Distribution Hymn

### 642 O Living Bread from Heaven

1 O liv - ing Bread from heav - en, How well You  
 2 My Lord, You here have led me To this most  
 3 You gave me all I want - ed; This food can  
 4 Lord, grant me then, thus strength - ened With heav'n - ly

feed Your guest! The gifts that You have giv - en  
 ho - ly place And with Your - self have fed me  
 death de - stroy. And You have free - ly grant - ed  
 food, while here My course on earth is length - ened,

Have filled my heart with rest. Oh, won - drous food of  
 The trea - sures of Your grace; For You have free - ly  
 The cup of end - less joy. My Lord, I do not  
 To serve with ho - ly fear. And when You call my

bless - ing, Oh, cup that heals our woes! My heart, this  
 giv - en What earth could nev - er buy, The bread of  
 mer - it The fa - vor You have shown, And all my  
 spir - it To leave this world be - low, I en - ter,

gift pos - sess - ing, With prais - es o - ver - flows.  
 life from heav - en, That now I shall not die.  
 soul and spir - it Bow down be - fore Your throne.  
 through Your mer - it, Where joys un - min - gled flow.

## Distribution Hymn

## 601 All Who Believe and Are Baptized



1 All who be - lieve and are bap-tized Shall see the Lord's sal - va - tion;  
2 With one ac - cord, O God, we pray: Grant us Your Ho - ly Spir - it.



Bap-tized in - to the death of Christ, They are a new cre - a - tion.  
Help us in our in - fir - mi - ty Through Je - sus' blood and mer - it.



Through Christ's re-demp-tion they shall stand A - mong the glo-rious,  
Grant us to grow in grace each day That by this sac - ra -



heav'n - ly band Of ev - 'ry tribe and na - tion.  
ment we may E - ter - nal life in - her - it.

Text: Thomas Hansen Kingo, 1634–1703; tr. George A. T. Rygh, 1860–1942, alt.  
Tune: Etlich Cristlich lider, 1524, Wittenberg  
Text and tune: Public domain

*Stand*

## Thank the Lord

LSB 181



**C** Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what



He has done. Let ev - 'ry-one who seeks the Lord re -



joice and proud - ly bear His name. He re-calls His prom-is-

es and leads His peo - ple forth in joy with shouts of thanks -  
 giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**Post-Communion Collect**

**P** Let us pray.  
 We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** A - men.

**Benediction**

LSB 183

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
 The Lord make His face shine on you  
 and be gracious to you.  
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**C** A - men.





**Acknowledgments**

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✝ **THIS WEEK'S NOTES** ✝

**Announcements**

- + Last Sunday's Attendance: 35**
- + Altar Guild Set Up:** November 20<sup>th</sup> Susie  
November 27<sup>th</sup> Marie  
**Cleanup for November:** Gayle and Royce
- + Church Council Meeting today after service at 11:30am.**
- + Sunday, November 27th @ 11:30am is the Congregational Voter's Meeting! It is strongly encouraged for all who can attend! In the November's Voter's Meeting, we vote together on the election of Church Officers and approve the budget. Please prayerfully consider adding your name to the ballot. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Killian or Leon Tarr. Nominations can be submitted now and up to the time of voting. Thank you!**
- + Join us on Wednesday evening, November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm for a Thanksgiving Vespers Service.**

**November Birthdays**

Barbara Hurd 20<sup>th</sup>  
Clinton Galloway 30<sup>th</sup>  
Gayle Tarr 30<sup>th</sup>

**Upcoming Advent Services**

Advent I Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm  
Advent II Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm  
Advent III Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm  
Advent IV Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> @ 7pm  
*Advent Suppers will begin at 6pm each Wednesday before service.*

## **An Excerpt from Martin Luther's Writings**

"Faith has nothing of its own, but only Christ's works and life. The works do have something special from you, but they should also not be your own, but belong to your neighbor. Therefore, you see that the Gospel is not properly a book of laws and commands which demand our activity from us, but a book of divine promises in which He promises, offers, and gives to us all His blessings and benefits in Christ. That Christ and the apostles gave much good instruction and explained the Law is to be counted among the benefits as a second work of Christ, for correct teaching is not the least benefit. Therefore, we also see that He does not dreadfully force and drive us, as Moses does in his book and as is the nature of a command. Christ teaches us in a pleasing and kind way, and only tells us what to do and not to do, and what will happen to evildoers and benefactors. He drives and compels no one. He teaches in such a tender way that He entices us more than commands us as He begins to say: "Blessed are the poor...Blessed are the meek," etc. [Matt. 5:3, 5]. The apostles commonly use the words "I admonish," "I ask," "I implore," etc. But Moses says, "I command," "I forbid," and then threatens and frightens with dreadful punishments and torments. With this instruction, you can read and listen to the Gospels beneficially." *Dr. Martin Luther's Werke WA 10.1.1 S. 12/13 (translation used: Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 75, p. 9/10).*

### **A Snippet From 1517**

...I think we have all had people in our lives we wish we had known sooner, people who changed us. Our lives would have been different if we had lived longer in their company. That blessing of companionship is what I would like you to think about as we listen to this reading from Matthew.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is harsh. Jesus is warning His disciples about the second coming. There will be a time when Jesus returns. The moment of His return is the end of the opportunity to believe: You either believe or you do not. You are either saved or damned. It *is* that simple and it *is* that stark.

There will be a time when Jesus returns. The moment of His return is the end of the opportunity to believe: You either believe or you do not.

For those who are accustomed to living in the spiritual land of opportunity, the parable is frightening. It systematically strips away all of our defenses.

There will come a point when there is no more time to believe. On that day, just being in the company of other Christians will not do it. All of the bridesmaids are together but not all of them are saved. Relying on the faith of others will not do it. The foolish bridesmaids cannot borrow oil from the wise. Having the right intentions will not do it. Though they want to buy oil, the foolish bridesmaids cannot secure it and find themselves locked out. Relying on the fact that Jesus will not snuff out the smoldering wick or break the bruised reed will not do it. A time comes when the door closes. The wick is snuffed out. The reed is broken. And, when the door closes, it closes. Even if you stand out in the dark crying,

“Lord, Lord, open to us,” He will say, “I do not know you.” Our god of second chances is suddenly gone. Our god who, when he closes the door, opens a window, is nowhere to be found. This time when God closes the door, He locks all the windows and pulls down the shades.

The parable is harsh. It judges. If you do not believe, you will not be saved.

But let us pause for a moment and think about why Jesus is telling the parable. Let us look behind the hardness of His hand to the softness of His heart.

Jesus wants all people to be saved. Jesus has come to bring salvation to sinners and to initiate the gracious rule of God leading to the final restoration of all things. Jesus wants all people to come to the knowledge of the truth... and His love is so strong, His desire to work in your life is so great, that He wishes you would know Him sooner rather than later. He wants you with Him now, rather than just on the last day.

Jesus wants you with Him now, rather than just on the last day.

Jesus does not want to be a figure hovering on your horizon, someone you always intend to get to know. Jesus does not want to be a friend you call as your lifeline, your last-ditch effort to get yourself out of a jam. Jesus does not want to be your backup husband, the one you turn to when all the others are gone. No, Jesus wants to be more. He wants to be your only bridegroom, your only Savior, the only One who loves you into life – a life you had no idea existed, a way of being you could not have dreamed of. And Jesus wants to do that now.

So, what He does in this parable is scare the living daylights out of us. He condemns those who are ignoring His call, those who are pushing Him away, those who are letting Him hang out in the margins. To this half-hearted spiritual dabbling that looks at Him as one of many options, He says, “No.” He pulls back the curtain and reveals how on the last day, He will be the one who comes with all the power and all the glory. He will open the doors to those who are His and He will shut the doors on those who are not. And He wants you to be His, to live in His kingdom... not just in the end but today. Jesus does not want you to wish you had known Him sooner. He wants to know you now.

So, if you do not know Jesus, this shocking parable is His way of getting your attention. He has come to save you. If you do know Jesus, this is your moment to sit back and give thanks for the things He has done. Rejoice in His love and give your heavenly Father thanks that Jesus is part of your life. *David Schmidt, 2020*

