

Home Service for November 13, 2022

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

New life comes through change. A new beginning is always near. Embrace the changes God is bringing.

Call to Worship:

Have you heard? Something new is coming, a different world than the one we know. And we're the ones to help make it happen! Let us gather together, to support and encourage one another and to praise God— for new visions, for hope, for new beginnings, and for new possibilities.

Opening Prayer:

Our loving and caring God, we need this time together to be united with our sisters and brothers in the faith; we need this time of worship to be comforted and strengthened in your presence. We hear of wars and rumors of wars. We read of persecution and oppression. Remind us again of your vision, that all might live in a world of peace and justice and love. May this time together imprint this vision and promise on our hearts, that we may live into this beloved community. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Merciful God, we come before you this day as those who are often afraid to confess all the many ways in which we have disappointed and betrayed You. You have given us continual opportunities to serve and love others, but we have withdrawn into lives of selfishness and greed. We have turned our backs on others in need. We have denied the gifts you have given us. Where can we turn now that we have run from you? Your voice calls to us to come home, to come to you unafraid, to receive forgiveness and healing. Open our hearts this day to receive these magnificent blessings. Help us understand the many ways in which you love us, and help us share that love with all those whom we meet. For we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Even though we have turned away from God, yet God is faithful to us. We are beloved of God and recipients of God's love and blessings. Rejoice, children of God! For God's mercies are ever before us. AMEN.

Read Psalm 118:14-29

The LORD is my strength and my defense^[a];
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:

“The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!

¹⁶ The LORD’s right hand is lifted high;
the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!”

¹⁷ I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.

²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

²³ the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

²⁵ LORD, save us!
LORD, grant us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.^[b]

²⁷ The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up^[c] to the horns of the altar.

- ²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Prayers of the People:

How shall we thank God for the many blessings God has given to us? Shall we offer mighty songs of praise? Shall we give of our abundance? Shall we again pledge our loyalty to God through lives of service and compassion? Yes, in all these things we shall offer our praise and our commitment to God. Each new day, each new opportunity is a blessing given freely to us. God's new heaven and new earth reside in us. We have come before God today, proclaiming our faith. We have brought the names and situations of those near and dear to us before the throne of grace, seeking God's healing and redeeming love. We place our lives in God's care. In all of this, we are part of God's new creation, meant to bring hope and forgiveness to all. Open our hearts, Lord, we want to be your agents of peace and hope. Open our lives, Lord, and help us work for you in this world so that in the world to come we may have eternal peace. 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

Read the Lesson: Isaiah 65:17-25

- “See, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;

the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.
20 “Never again will there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not live out his years;
the one who dies at a hundred
will be thought a mere child;
the one who fails to reach^[a] a hundred
will be considered accursed.
21 They will build houses and dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them,
or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree,
so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy
the work of their hands.
23 They will not labor in vain,
nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD,
they and their descendants with them.
24 Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
and dust will be the serpent’s food.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,”
says the LORD.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching^[a] you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer

ourselves as a model for you to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. ¹³ And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 21:5-19

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶ “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”

⁷ “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

⁸ He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

¹⁰ Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

¹² “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ And so you will bear testimony to me. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ Stand firm, and you will win life.

Message

Our Gospel Lesson this morning deals with a subject that can frighten many, make many try to predict its coming and can catch many off guard, the subject is the second coming of Christ. Even Christ says in Mark.13:32 and 33: “But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come.” Be on

guard, be alert! This text from Luke's gospel can either garner in us fear, or in gladness and hope. Fear about the end of time, or gladness that we who believe will be with Christ at the end of time.

So many Christians think there is no hurry. Wait until tomorrow. Don't start until things are more favorable. Procrastination many times can be the one of the major downfalls for Christians. Another downfall is popular is to place high importance on our accomplishments. Jesus saw both of these kinds of attitude in his day. As He and the disciples were in the temple, the disciples couldn't stop themselves from being in awe of the splendor of the temple, the accomplishments of those who built it gave to them a sense that the beauty and wonder of this temple would somehow save them. The temple was to many Jews the Messiah, and in Jesus' eyes it was a false messiah so he say in verse 6, "As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

Then Jesus warns them of other false messiahs, advises them to be prepared, to be ready for the coming of the real Messiah, and assures them he will always be with them. That same warning apply to us, also. Our technologies, our wonder drugs, our Star Wars defense systems, our own egos can be and sometimes are false messiahs. Jesus warns the disciples about them in verse 8 as he says: "Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name saying I am he and the time is at hand! Do not go after them." But we do, don't we. We are a people who are easily led astray by the latest fads, the comforts of our abundance, the power of our business community, the false sense that somehow through Lotto, or dog and race horse tracks, we can become rich, and then life will be secure. False messiah, yes.

The next warning takes place in verse 9 when Jesus speaks of God's time coming as He says: "And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

Jesus is saying that God's time is beginning but not in an expected way, maybe through a way of suffering and upheaval. God is in control, God is breaking in, maybe not the way we expect it. Or maybe God might be saying, "Look my people I have tried it your way, now it is my turn.

God's great love is like a long kite string. He lets us run out all our line, but still we cannot be content, so then God waits patiently for us to repent, to turn away from false messiahs and, begin the process of preparing for His coming. Jesus warns of

an unexpected, coming. As we saw in that verse from Mark's gospel, no one knows when, but we must be ready.

But how much do we procrastination? We put it off. We feel we have plenty of time, we won't meet our maker now, but how do you or I know.

As it says in 2 Peter 3:8 "But do not forget one thing, my dear friends. There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years, to him the two are the same."

Are you prepared? What if Jesus came today, what if you died unexpectedly with no chance for a last minute for asking for forgiveness and making a means for your life? Are you as ready now as you will ever be? Do you trust in Christ as your personal Saviour?

I read somewhere that being a Christian is like being in a holding pattern on an airplane above a busy airport. You circle and circle. You know eventually you will land, but when that you do not know and sometimes neither does the captain. You wait and wait. Then all at once, the announcement comes fasten seat belts and you land. Then the hurry to leave the plane because you are late.

As Christians we are in a holding pattern for meeting Christ. When? We don't know. Are you ready? Only you and God know that. But have you thought about it serious way, or do you take your relationship with Christ in a casual way, a take it for granted way. No seriousness, no thought of how your faith life is growing and maturing with the help of the Holy Spirit. Are you in a constant state of preparedness?

And the final warning, no not warning but assurance Christ gives the disciples is found in verses 18 and 19 as He says: "But not a hair or your head will perish, By your endurance you will gain your lives". Jesus is assuring the disciples and us that while we are in this holding pattern, he will be with us giving us the courage the strength, the confidence to remain faithful to Him in spite of all the hardship or suffering that might cause us.

What God says is true. He will keep you as Jesus says in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are tired of carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy and the load I will put on you is light."

In our holding pattern, in our state of preparedness, Christ is there walking with us easing our burdens, giving us the courage, the spirit to be His witnesses in this world. Because of His presence with us through the means of grace, the Word and sacraments, through the church, His body, we can remain faithful and at ease with the sure confidence if Christ came today, this minute we would be prepared, we would be ready.

Be Cautious, Be Prepared, Be Assured. Amen.

Benediction:

We go from this place rejoicing in God's love. We commit our lives to serving God by serving others. God's love has made us new. God's peace goes with us in all that we say and do. AMEN.