

Home Service for November 20, 2022

Welcome and Announcements

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

Call to Worship:

It is done. God has always been in charge; yesterday and today. Even when things seem out of control, God's reign is on its way. Let us prepare the way for God.

Opening Prayer:

Tender Shepherd, you gather us here to dwell in your love and grace. You comfort and guide us. You heal and redeem us. As we sing your songs of praise, send your light into our lives. As we commit ourselves to the ways of Christ, our guide, ruler, and savior, bless us with your presence. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Forgiving God, how many times we have spoken words of commitment and faith and then turned our backs on these commitments to follow the temptations of the world. We wander after the false prophets of greed, selfishness, arrogance, ignorance, hatred, stubbornness, and then shout our displeasure at how we are being treated. We want you to come in and clean up all our messes, excusing us from any responsibility for them. Forgive us for such foolishness. Help us remember the power of your healing love, which has been given for us. Forgive us when we think we know everything and then discover that we have behaved and thought in ignorant ways. Teach us to listen and to place our trust in your abiding power. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Even though we doubt God's faithfulness to us, yet God is steadfast in God's love for each one of us. Receive that love in your hearts this day. Know that you are healed and forgiven in God's sight. AMEN.

Read Luke 1:68-79

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
69 He has raised up a horn^[a] of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
71 salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
72 to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

Prayers of the People:

Patient God, we seem to think that being people of faith is a campaign for your favor. We posture and make gestures of holiness and grace, but then we easily slide back into habits of self-centeredness. Yet you have forgiven us, each time, calling us beloved children. Today we are about to complete the journey of this Christian year, during which we have learned of the witness of Jesus Christ, the birth and growth of the church, and the great lessons of the Hebrew Scriptures. This year has been an opportunity for us to renew our acquaintance with all those who have gone before, who have been faithful disciples. Help us take these lessons into our hearts and lives. Let the reign of Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, our Savior, be evident in all that we say, think, and do. Give us the confidence and courage to truly be your witnesses all the rest of our days. For we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. 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: Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. ² Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD. ³ “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. ⁴ I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.

⁵ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will raise up for David^[a] a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

⁶ In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:11-20

being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[a] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all

things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 23:33-43

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”^[a] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”^[b]

⁴³ Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Message

Today is Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the church year, the Sunday in which we dwell on the kingship of Jesus. His reign as He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the father, the right hand of mercy and love.

All of our lessons this morning point to this kingship of Christ and what that means for our lives and it describes our response to this King of kings. All our lessons speak of this king who many missed. Where would you look to find a king? It would be quite easy, wouldn’t it? We would try to find a palace. We would try to find a royal throne, and there we possibly would at least find where a king had been or would be from time to time. This morning as believers by God’s grace we look once again to the cross of Christ. There we see on that cross which was the greatest throne of all even though the world would look at it solely as an

instrument of torture and death. We know that the cross is more than an instrument of torture and death. It is also a throne of God's abundant grace.

In our lesson from Jeremiah, the kingdom of God is described in terms of justice and righteousness. Jeremiah speaks of the coming of a king whose name is a remarkable summary and affirmation of the faith to which the whole Bible witnesses. "The Lord is our righteousness." The name can also mean, "The Lord is our salvation."

Righteousness means a right relationship with God that puts us into a right relationship with everything else. Both the Old and New Testaments make it clear that we can live in a right relationship with God. Not because of who we are but because of who God is. Not because we are good but because God is loving. The Lord is our righteousness.

The Lord is also our salvation. To be saved is to be brought into a life-shaping right relationship with God. In his Old Testament Theology, Gerhard von Rad tells us that Israel knew God primarily as a God who acts in human life and history to save his people from real troubles, like bondage in Egypt. The New Testament tells us more about God's saving work but it is a great mistake to let our New Testament understanding of salvation get separated from the Old Testament understanding. The Lord is our salvation.

In Colossians Paul reminds us that the world desperately needs to know Jesus. While we cannot see him with physical eyes and cannot know his physical appearance, we can know him through his divine roles.

Take a trip with Paul through a marvelous portrait gallery of Jesus. Paul will direct our attention to four portraits. Each is startling in its own way. Each shows Jesus in his divine grandeur. **First is Jesus as the Rescuer.** What is it God, through Christ, has rescued us from? He has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness. He has brought us to a better and safer place, namely the kingdom of light. It is no small thing to be rescued.

Second is Jesus as the Creator. This is a startling picture. Paul tells us that as the Son of the living God, Jesus was an agent in creation. This makes Jesus' sacrifice for us all the more unbelievable. The Creator came to bless the created! Even though Jesus had this most lofty position, he did not shy away from coming to his creation and dying for his creation.

Third is Jesus as Lord. The risen Lord is the ultimate authority. He is Lord of all, but is particularly the Lord of the church. There are many churches today arguing over power and authority issues. Ministers and laymen argue over who is the head of the church. They will never solve the problem until they realize Jesus is the head of the church.

Finally Jesus as the Peacemaker. Peacemaking may be the hardest business on earth. Just ask arbiters who try to make peace between management and labor. Just ask ambassadors who try to make peace between warring nations. Just ask counselors who try to make peace in feuding families. Jesus made peace between us and God. Most people don't think of themselves as being enemies of God, but in their sins they are. Jesus went to the cross, to bridge forever the enmity between God and his creation.

In the background of all these pictures is the image of a cross. It is the crucified and risen Savior who is worthy to be seen as the Rescuer, Creator, Lord, and Peacemaker.

Our gospel lesson seems out of place as it describes the crucifixion of Jesus. It is more of a Good Friday text, not the kind of text one would see on Christ the King Sunday. But is it? Jesus came as a different kind of King. Not the kind that most people thought of.

A poem says it well:

They Missed Him by an unknown author:

They were looking for a lion,

He came as a Lamb, and they missed Him.

They were looking for a warrior,

He came as a Peacemaker, and they missed Him.

They were looking for a king,

He came as a Servant, and they missed Him.

They were looking for liberation from Rome,

He submitted to the Roman stake, and they missed Him.

They were looking for a fit to their mold,

He was the mold maker, and they missed Him.

What are you looking for? Lion? Warrior? King? Liberator?

What are you looking for?

They were looking for their temporal needs to be met,

He came to meet their eternal need, and they missed Him.

He came as a Lamb to be sacrificed for your sin. Will you miss Him?
He came to make peace between God and man. Will you miss Him?
He came to model servant hood for all mankind. Will you miss Him?
He came that we might have true liberty. Will you miss Him?
He came to give you eternal life. Will you miss Him?
When we submit to the Lamb, we will meet the Lion.
Join with the Peacemaker, and we will meet the Warrior.
Work with the Servant, and we will meet the King.
Walk with the Submitted, and we will meet the Liberator.
Concern ourselves with the eternal, and we will have the temporal.
If Jesus is not fitting into the mold you have, then come to the mold maker and get
a new one. Submit to His plan for your life and you will see the eternal need met
first; then all the other things you have need of will be taken care of as well.
They missed him. People saw the Christ through their own eyes and missed him.
They wanted a warrior and he came as the king of peace. They wanted a lion, he
came as a lamb. Jesus was not the kind of king that most people thought. He came
as a suffering king and many missed him.

So I do think our text is appropriate for today, because Jesus came as the suffering
Messiah and they missed him.

There is not one of us here who deserves to be saved at all. God does it by His
grace, and we rejoice that Christ is our King, that Christ is our King on the cross
and we confess His Name Thank God every day that by His grace, He has called
you to follow Him, and He has overcome so that in the end we too will overcome.
The world and unbelievers may mock Him and may make fun of Him, but we as
believers stand firm in our Christian faith confessing that Christ is our King on His
throne of grace, the cross. Amen.

Benediction:

*Though the days increase in their darkness, the Lord of light and love reigns
supreme. May the power of God's love be in your hearts and reflected in your lives
now and always. Go in peace and may God's peace be with you. AMEN.*