

**The Lutheran Church of the Covenant**  
*“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”*



***Bread for the  
world: a world of  
hunger. Wine for  
all peoples:  
people who  
thirst. May we  
who eat be bread  
for others. May  
we who drink  
pour out our love.***

*Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost*  
*November 15, 2020*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! We continue to do our best in providing the safest environment possible for you to worship our Risen Lord with your whole heart, even during these COVID-19 times. Here are the precautions we are taking on behalf of our whole community of faith, so that we best care for one another and those we are around during the week.

- We ask you wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, unless you have a medical condition preventing you from doing so.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements are available for you to pick up as you enter from the back of the sanctuary. The Communion elements are available in wine and grape juice form as well as wheat and gluten-free wafers. We will partake of the body and blood of Christ together from our respective seats.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected for supporting our congregational and wider-church ministry, and so an offering basket is placed beside the bulletins and Communion elements, for those who wish to give this day.
- We are asking you to refrain from singing, as we do our best to minimize the spread of droplets and aerosols around our masks. You may do so in your heart, where we believe God hears just as well as if spoken or sung aloud. We, also, ask that you continue participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print, but doing so in a whisper voice.
- There will not be a time for sharing of the peace, but we encourage you to do so with one another before or after the worship (while maintaining the physical distancing recommendations of six feet).
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, nor will there be a receiving line with the pastor after the worship. If you wish to speak for Pastor Brad, for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact him through email, text or calling him directly.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we will always err on the side of caution for those with pre-existing health conditions and compromised immune systems.

## Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

*Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the LORD will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.*

Prelude *It Is Well With My Soul* (LAU)

\*Confession & Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we take time to recognize our shortcomings, while also remembering God’s relentless grace.*

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy One,  
we confess that 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.**

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.**

Gathering Hymn *Lord Our God, with Praise We Come*

#730

Text: Peter Dass, 1647-1707; tr. Peter A. Sveeggen, 1881-1959, alt.

- 1 Lord our God, with praise we come before you.  
Let all nations humbly now implore you.  
May we endeavor to praise you ever,  
and ceasing never,  
may we forever adore you.
- 2 God is God, though lands were all forsaken.  
God is God, though all by death were taken.  
Although all races had left no traces,  
in starry spaces  
God's love embraces creation.
- 3 Vales and hills shall move from their foundations;  
heav'n and earth shall crash in consternation;  
mountains transcending will have their ending.  
Then Christ descending  
shall bring unending salvation.

### Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, our merciful master, you care for the earth and all the peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### First Lesson

Zephaniah 1:7,12-18

*Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the Lord as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the Lord.*

<sup>7</sup>Be silent before the Lord GOD!  
For the day of the LORD is at hand;  
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,  
he has consecrated his guests.  
<sup>12</sup>At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
and I will punish the people  
who rest complacently on their dregs,  
those who say in their hearts,

“The LORD will not do good,  
nor will he do harm.”

<sup>13</sup>Their wealth shall be plundered,  
and their houses laid waste.  
Though they build houses,  
they shall not inhabit them;  
though they plant vineyards,  
they shall not drink wine from them.

<sup>14</sup>The great day of the LORD is near,  
near and hastening fast;  
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,  
the warrior cries aloud there.

<sup>15</sup>That day will be a day of wrath,  
a day of distress and anguish,  
a day of ruin and devastation,  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness,

<sup>16</sup>a day of trumpet blast and battle cry  
against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring such distress upon people  
that they shall walk like the blind;  
because they have sinned against the LORD,  
their blood shall be poured out like dust,  
and their flesh like dung.

<sup>18</sup>Neither their silver nor their gold  
will be able to save them  
on the day of the LORD's wrath;  
in the fire of his passion  
the whole earth shall be consumed;  
for a full, a terrible end  
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 90:1-8, 12

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you have been our refuge  
from one generation to another.

<sup>2</sup>Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born,  
from age to age you are God.

<sup>3</sup>You turn us back to the dust and say,  
“Turn back, O children of earth.”

<sup>4</sup>For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past  
and like a watch in the night;

<sup>5</sup>you sweep them away like a dream,  
they fade away suddenly like the grass:

<sup>6</sup>in the morning it is green and flourishes;  
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

<sup>7</sup>For we are consumed by your anger;  
we are afraid because of your wrath.

<sup>8</sup>Our iniquities you have set before you,  
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

<sup>12</sup>So teach us to number our days  
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

## Second Lesson

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

*Though we cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord.*

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

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*Gospel

Matthew 25:14-30

*Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>14</sup>“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, o Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *By Your Hand You Feed Your People*

#469

Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952

1 By your hand you feed your people,

food of angels, heaven's bread.  
For these gifts we did not labor,  
by your grace have we been fed:

*Refrain*

Christ's own body, blessed and broken,  
cup o'er flowing, life outpoured,  
given as a living token  
of your world redeemed, restored.

2 In this meal we taste your sweetness,  
bread for hunger, wine of peace.  
Holy word and holy wisdom  
satisfy our deepest needs. *Refrain*

3 Send us now with faith and courage  
to the hungry, lost, bereaved.  
In our living and our dying,  
we become what we receive: *Refrain*

\*Prayers of Intercession

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, let us pray to see God's power in the church and in the world, responding to each petition with the words, "hear us and help us."

*A brief silence.*

God of us all, watch over your church in our community and throughout the world. Raise up and sustain all your precious children to use their talents in aiding those near and far away during this difficult time. O God, you are the Temple of your people: **hear us and help us.**

Creator God, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. During this autumn season, give to plants and wild animals a time of rest. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin. O God, you are the Maker of the heavens and the earth: **hear us and help us.**

God of peace, bring an end to war and terrorism. Cultivate a worldwide spirit of



cooperation that will seek just international agreements and shared human rights. Rescue humankind from the worship of wealth, and give a homeland to migrants. O God, you are the Haven we seek: **hear us and help us.**

God of all nations, we lift up our country. Quell attempts at violence, and restore national good will. End prejudice of all kinds, and lead us into a unity that embraces diversity. Comfort those who live in fear of the future. O God, you are our Mighty Fortress: **hear us and help us.**

Healing God, visit with health and good medical care all the sick, especially the thousands who each day are contracting the coronavirus. Prepare a vaccine to save our world from COVID-19. Give food, employment, and housing to the countless who are struggling to live. O God, you are our holy Physician: **hear us and help us.**

We remember before you all the saints who have lived and died in the faith. At the end of time, bring us all into your peace. O God, you are the Light perpetual: **hear us and help us.**

Receive these prayers, and in your gracious mercy grant your strength to our neediness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

\*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:  
surrounded by evil and bordered by death  
we appeal to you,  
our Sovereign, our Wisdom, and our Judge.

We praise you for Christ, who proclaimed your reign of peace  
and promised an end to injustice and harm.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,  
the sacrifice of his life and death  
and the victory of his resurrection,  
we await with all the saints  
his loving redemption of our suffering world.

Holy Spirit, bless these gifts of bread and wine  
and all who share in the body and blood of your Son:  
teach us your mercy and justice,  
and make all things new in Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever. **Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those**

**who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Thine* (ORGAN)

*Please use this time to meditate or pray for those dear to your heart.*

Prayer after Communion

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet.  
Sustain us on the journey,  
strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,  
and give us glad and generous hearts  
as we meet you on the way. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the God of all creation,  
in whose image we are made,  
who claims us and calls us beloved,  
who strengthens us for service,  
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!  
The blessing of God,  
Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit,  
be with you today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*

#674

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

1 Let us talents and tongues employ,  
reaching out with a shout of joy:  
bread is broken, the wine is poured,  
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

### *Refrain*

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

2 Christ is able to make us one,  
at the table he sets the tone,  
teaching people to live to bless,  
love in word and in deed express. *Refrain*

3 Jesus calls us in, sends us out  
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share:  
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere! *Refrain*

### Dismissal

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

**Thanks be to God.**

Postlude *Lobt Gott, ihr Christen* (WALTHER)

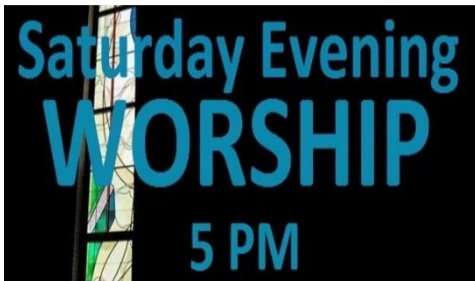
### **Praying Together**

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Steve Dobush, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Tom Juhasz, Ralph Kane, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Claudia Senderak, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tim Susanek, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

## LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 11/8/2020: \$2019

Next Sunday, November 22, our worship together will celebrate a Day of Thanksgiving for the many blessings that still remain in our life.



As of right now, we plan on re-starting our Saturday worships (5pm), beginning Saturday, December 5, and continuing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month from the sanctuary.

### *Lectionary Blog: Don't Bury the Kingdom!*



I'm not great at investing. I majored in economics and business management, among other things, so I understand how the economy works. But I have a more difficult time understanding how people work. And the stock market is just a collection of humans buying and selling based on what they think other people are going to do—it isn't a rational process. For this reason, the financial markets

and I aren't exactly friends. The parables on investing talents have always scared me because I thought (and actually heard preached a time or two) that we had to literally make economic gains for the kingdom. But I've become convinced that little else could be further from the point that Jesus was actually trying to make.

This parable is situated among several others toward the end of Matthew's Gospel that all address how to be ready when Jesus returns. Like we read last week, Jesus is again telling his hearers that they need to be doing the work of the kingdom while he is away so they will be ready for his return. I'm grateful for the parable of the talents for the additional nuances that Jesus gives in making largely the same point.

The first thing to pay attention to is that the number of talents (five, two or one) is given to bondservants according to their abilities (Matthew 25:15). The one with the least ability to make a profit wasn't given an enormous task, and the one who was most able to see a return was given the most talents. In the parable, the lord knew his servants' capabilities and treated the men accordingly, not expecting the same result out of each.

We all know how the parable progresses. The one who was in charge of five talents earned five more. The one in charge of two talents earned two more. The one in charge of one talent dug a hole and buried it. According to slightly later rabbinic law, if the man buried money in the earth, even if it was later stolen, the servant wouldn't be responsible for the loss because he had done his best to keep the talent safe (BT. *Bava Metzia* 42a). In burying that which was entrusted to him, the man was declaring that he didn't want to be responsible for it, one way or another—neither for its increase nor its disappearance.

Unsurprisingly, the master commends the first two servants and even invites them into his "joy" (presumably a feast). But when the last servant was called to account, he blamed his inaction on his master. He said the master was a hard man, reaping and gathering where he had not worked. We have to read this as the appalling critique it was meant to be. The servant said the master was gaining wealth too quickly and succeeding too much! Therefore, he purposefully chose to inhibit the increase of his master's estate by burying the money to ensure that it would not bear any profit. He pointedly tells the master to take (only) what is his.

The furious master responds that the slave, knowing that the estate is growing rapidly, should have done the very least and given the talent to bankers so they would make a profit for the master. Instead, the wicked and delaying (probably a better translation than "lazy") servant worked extra hard to dig a hole to hide the massive amount of money to ensure that the master didn't profit off of it at all.

Some Christians make a point of refusing to engage in good works of (social) justice, righteousness and charity because they think it detracts from Jesus' salvific work. So they rest on his salvific work and refuse to do any work for the kingdom. This is exactly the behavior that the parable of the talents warns against.

For other Christians, Jesus' salvific work—saving us because we could never save ourselves—is the cause of great joy and gratitude. That gratitude and joy can't help but spur us to loving acts of good works on behalf of God and neighbor. That is all Jesus is after here: the natural response of sharing the love that God first gives us with our neighbors, *according to our abilities*. It's actually more difficult work to shut off the love that God intends to flow through us into God's world than it is to simply let the kingdom increase through the love of God in us. You don't have to be an investing genius, just don't bury the kingdom!



*Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.*

# EUCCHARIST

H B C O M M U N I O N P K N R K N  
X Y B J C E R E M O N Y I G D F U  
Y O A W Z C E X E K X A S G O D Z  
L A S T S U P P E R H J K Z W V A  
B O D Y P R I E S T X J J Q V X R  
D H C K Z W I N E N Q E T U G I S  
D X A E B C R G P I T S L H N Z B  
C U T A H H W Y I J V U J A Q C B  
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D K C T X I D N Y P J P Y I F K O  
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C F C W G N S P A S S O V E R G S  
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BLOOD	BODY	BREAD	CATHOLIC
CEREMONY	CHRISTIAN	COMMUNION	EUCCHARIST
EXDOUS	GOD	HOLY	JESUS
LAST SUPPER	PASSOVER	PRIEST	SACRAMENT
WINE			