

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



*Twentieth Third Sunday after Pentecost*  
*November 13, 2022*



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



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with \* are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!

### ***Our Worship Leaders & Staff***

Ministers

Presiding Minister

Organist

Lector

Parish Administrator

Custodian

All People

The Rev. Bradley Ross

Robin Crawford

Bert Zahn

Jennifer Lasher-Dobush

Vince Besednjak

*The Lutheran Church of the Covenant*

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*Maple Heights, OH 44137*

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## Twentieth Third Sunday after Pentecost

*The end is near. There is no doubt about it. The warnings are dire. The tone of today's texts is ominous. But the baptized know how to live in the meantime. The baptized are strengthened for the living of these days in word and sacrament. The baptized rally around the invitation of the apostle: "Do not be weary in doing what is right."*

Prelude *Come, You Thankful People, Come* (Bloedow)

United Handbells

Welcome & Greetings

\*Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who redeems us in Christ Jesus,  
whose steadfast love endures forever.

**Amen!**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,  
**we confess that we have sinned against you  
and our neighbors.  
We have ignored voices  
that call for your justice.  
We have neglected actions  
that witness to your grace.  
We have spoken and acted  
in ways that disrupt your beloved community.  
For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.  
Restore our troubled spirits,  
so that we may live in newness,  
follow the way of the Holy Spirit,  
and build up the body of Christ.  
Amen.**

Rejoice and be glad!  
God hears the prayers of all,  
and restores us to life through the death  
and resurrection of Jesus Christ.  
Therefore, your sins are forgiven  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the ✠ Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen!**

\*Gathering Hymn     *Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow*

ELW #327

\*Greeting

The grace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

\*Canticle of Praise     *This is the Feast*

ELW pg. 101

\*Prayer of the Day

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without you nothing is strong, nothing is holy. Embrace us with your mercy, that with you as our gracious Lord and steadfast guide, we may live through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Malachi 4:1-2a

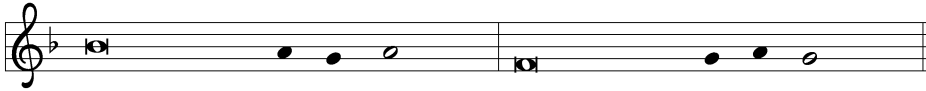
*Malachi, whose name means “my messenger,” warns that “the day is coming.” On that day, the evil will be destroyed like stubble in a fire, but the “sun of righteousness” will shine on those who honor God.*

<sup>1</sup>See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2a</sup>But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

*The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below:*



Antiphon: In righteousness will the LORD judge the world. (*Ps. 98:9*)

<sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done | marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>**O LORD, you have made | known your victory,  
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.**

<sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.

<sup>4</sup>**Shout with joy to the LORD, | all you lands;  
lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing.** Antiphon

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD | with the harp,  
with the harp and the | voice of song.

<sup>6</sup>**With trumpets and the sound | of the horn  
shout with joy before the | king, the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,  
the world and those who | dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup>**Let the rivers | clap their hands,  
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to | judge the  
earth.**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD will judge the | world with righteousness  
and the peo- | ples with equity. Antiphon

## Second Lesson

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

*Some members of the Thessalonian community, because of their belief in the nearness of Christ's return, had ceased to work, living off the generosity of other members of the community. The writer of this letter warns them bluntly that if they want to eat, they need to work.*

<sup>6</sup>Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. <sup>7</sup>For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup>and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. <sup>9</sup>This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. <sup>10</sup>For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. <sup>11</sup>For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. <sup>12</sup>Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. <sup>13</sup>Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

\*Gospel Acclamation



**\*Gospel**

Luke 21:5-19

*As history moves toward God's fulfillment there will be frightening signs and events. Before the end, believers will draw strength from their relationship to God and will be given the words they need to testify and to endure without fear.*

The Gospel according to Luke, 21<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

<sup>5</sup>When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, [Jesus] said, <sup>6</sup>“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>7</sup>They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” <sup>8</sup>And he said, “Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them.

<sup>9</sup>“When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.” <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; <sup>11</sup>there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup>“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. <sup>13</sup>This will give you an opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup>So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; <sup>15</sup>for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all because of my name. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your souls.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *My Life Flows On in Endless Song*

ELW #763

\*Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ,  
God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

\*Prayers of Intercession

United with your saints across time and place, we pray for our shared world.

*A brief silence.*

Reviving God, keep your church active in its mission and ministry. Encourage bishops, deacons, pastors, and lay leaders to risk boldly in their proclamation and fill them with wisdom and endurance for challenging times. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Renewing God, as the northern hemisphere prepares for winter, make us mindful of the ordered beauty of your creation. Teach us to treasure cycles of rest and new life. Help us care for what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**



Loving God, accompany all who make sacrifices for the sake of others. Safeguard first responders and active duty military personnel. Grant peace to veterans and heal any wounds in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Healing God, your people cry out to you. Sustain doctors, nurses, and hospital personnel in their tireless work. Uphold mental health professionals and those in their care. May the sun of righteousness rise on all who are sick (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Uniting God, unite this assembly in its shared mission and ministry for the sake of the gospel (*specific ministries or initiatives may be named*). Highlight ways we can better work together and give us patience to work through disagreement. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Consoling God, abide with all who grieve for loved ones who have died (*especially*). Comfort us with the promise of resurrection and new life with you. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

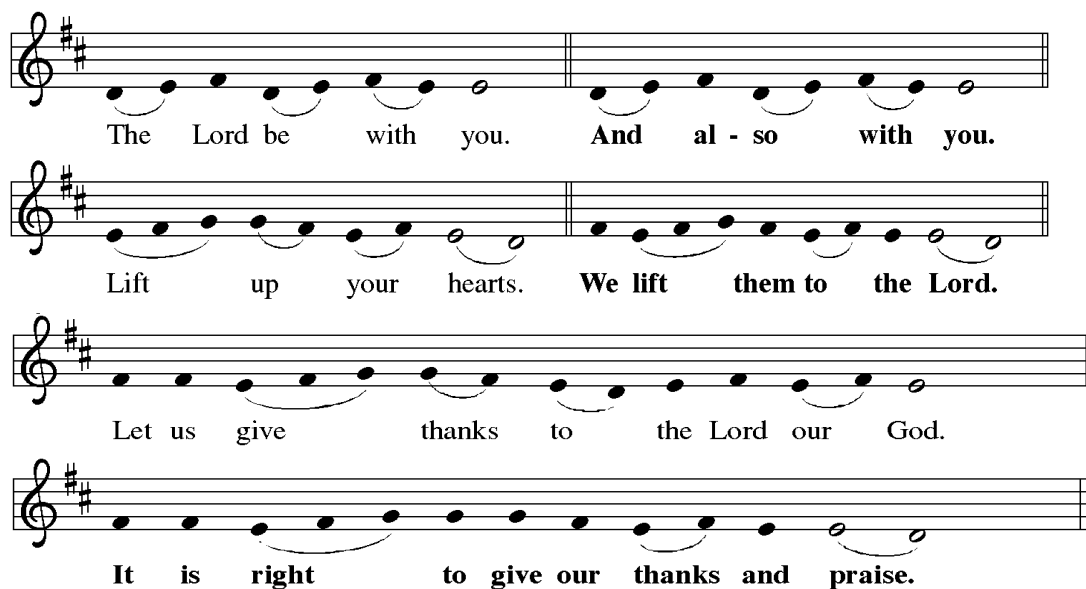
Accept these prayers, gracious God, and those known only to you; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

\*Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you always!  
**And also with you.**

\*Music Interlude    *Dialogue* (Gawthorp)

\*Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

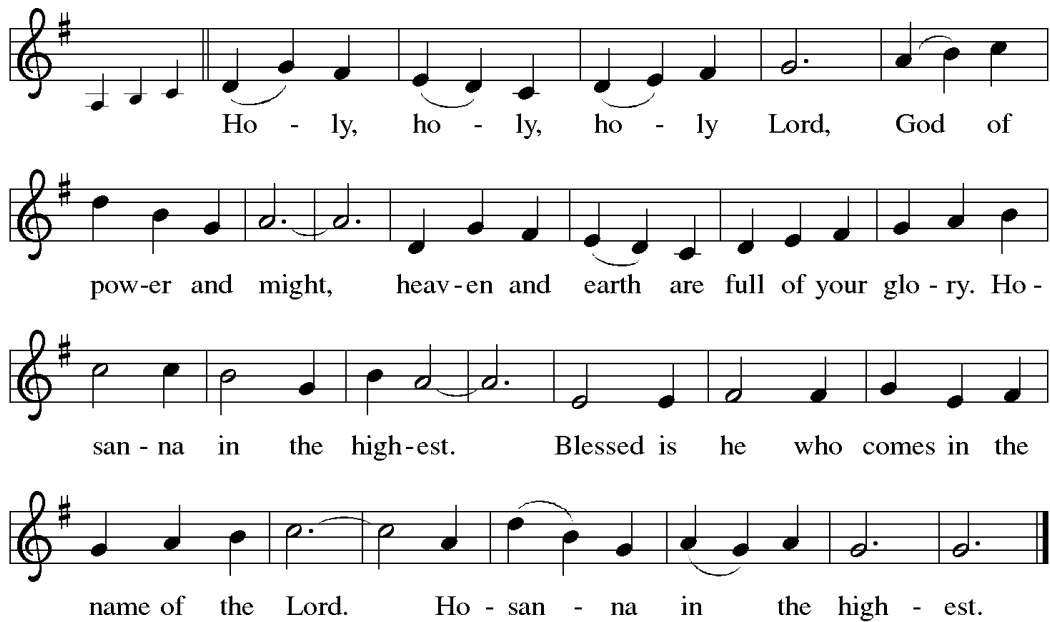
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical score consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are quarter notes, mostly on a single melodic line. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words in bold. The first staff has a double bar line after the first measure. The second staff has a double bar line after the first measure. The third staff has a double bar line at the end. The fourth staff has a double bar line at the end.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



### \*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God,  
our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,  
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,  
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.  
You sent your Son to eat with sinners  
and to become food for the world.

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,  
his life given for us  
and his rising from the grave,  
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

Holy Spirit, nurture and sustain us with this meal:  
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,  
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.**

**\*Invitation to Communion**

Christ spreads a table of new life before you.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Communion**

Music Interlude *Sonata on “Ebenezer”* (Thygerson)

**\*Prayer after Communion**

We give you thanks, most gracious God,  
that you have fed us with the bread of heaven  
and given us a foretaste of Paradise.  
Enliven us to be your body in the world  
and to serve those who are in need;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen!**

**\*Blessing**

The God of peace,  
who creates all things and calls them good,  
who makes us alive in Jesus,  
and who breathes on us the Spirit of hope,  
✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen!**

**\*Sending Hymn** *How Firm a Foundation*

ELW #796

**\*Dismissal**

Go in peace. Be a blessing in the world!  
**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *Postlude on “Foundation”* (Lasky)

Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Alex Hohenstein, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Steve Senderak, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Maud 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.

General Fund receipts for week ending 11/6/2022: \$2185.

FREE  
**community**  
MEAL

Our next FREE community meal is this Thursday, November 17 (5-6pm) downstairs in our fellowship hall. Have a seat and we will serve you! Help us spread the word!

Next Sunday, November 20, we will celebrate a day of Thanksgiving, as we take time to give thanks to God for all the blessings of this life we often take for granted, including an opportunity to be still and know God is God before the hectic holiday season.





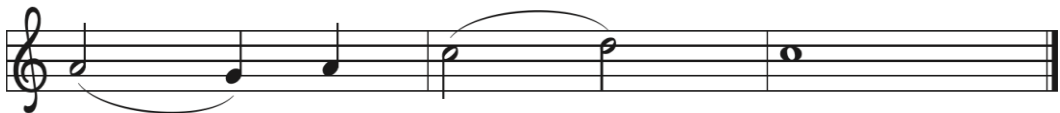
1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—  
 2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.  
 3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.  
 4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,  
 5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'ed to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.  
 Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.  
 Em - pow'ed to serve with gifts, both great and small,  
 we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;  
 we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space:  
 Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:  
 we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.  
 a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.  
 Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Paul D. Weber, b. 1949

Music: FOUNDED ON FAITH, Paul D. Weber

Text and music © 2017 Paul D. Weber, admin. Augsburg Fortress

## ***Lectionary Blog: After Things Fall Apart***

One of my favorite parts of studying the Bible is holding in my hands an entire library that reflects the inspiration and experience of several human lifetimes. Early Israelite monarchy, the era of the prophets, the patriarchal narratives, post-exilic works, the Gospels and the Epistles all reflect different sensibilities and unfolding understandings about who God is and how God wants to interact with humans. The richness of Scripture, inspired over hundreds and hundreds of years, is comparable to that of a long friendship or romantic relationship. A brief engagement, no matter how passionate, will never have the shared history, deep engagement, and wisdom gained from ups and downs that a longer relationship contains.

The Bible tells of times of triumph: the exodus, the enthronement of (relatively) good kings, Jesus' incarnation and resurrection. It also tells of times of woe: the destruction and exile of the Northern and Southern kingdoms, and the persecution and executions of Jesus and many of his early followers. This week's lectionary invites us to focus on what happens during and after the times when things fall apart, and how God is always there and remains with God's people.

Malachi is one of my favorites of the prophetic books because of the didactic relationship between God and the people. The book's context is that God has restored Jewish exiles to the promised land after the Babylonian exile. God, working through the messenger ("Malachi" is probably best understood as a role i.e., "my messenger" as in 3:1, rather than a proper name), announced frustration with the ingratitude and laxness of the recently restored community. The people, especially the leaders, cut corners and failed to live up to religious, educational, communal and economic commitments—basically practicing injustice toward God and neighbors. The call of Malachi was to get serious, to understand that God had punished the people before and would do so again if they continued their slide toward indifference to loving God and neighbor.

But instead of exiling the whole people, God promised to differentiate among the righteous and unrighteous. The evildoers would be like burnt chaff, without a root or branches, without a past or a future (Malachi 4:1). But for those who fear God's name, the sun of righteousness would rise upon them with healing in its wings (2). After a terrible calamity, God brought the people back together. As the memory of past suffering, and, crucially, the reason for the past suffering, began to fade, God reminded the people that what they did—and did not do—mattered. Even after things fell apart, God still saw



the people, cared about them and wanted them to live in right relationship with God and with each other.

Jesus made much the same argument in warning of the tragedy to come. Jesus' early followers would face two kinds of persecution. As the gulf grew between his Jewish followers and those who didn't see Jesus as the promised messiah, his followers would be mistreated and pushed out of their communities (Luke 21:12). Much more cataclysmic than this, however, the brutal Romans engaged in several wars against Jews in different parts of the empire, destroyed the temple, renamed Jerusalem and Judea, and slaughtered and enslaved tens of thousands of Jews (6-11). Just as the righteous prophets had fallen victim to violent co-religionists and foreigners alike hundreds of years before, Jesus promised that his followers would be victims of attempts at religious purification and the ruthlessness of the empire.

But in this persecution, just as things were falling apart, Jesus told his followers not to worry. He would provide them opportunities to give their testimonies (13-14). More than that, Jesus would provide eloquence and wisdom during interrogations that would confound the examiners (15). As the civilization of his followers was crumbling from within and without because of baseless hatred, Jesus told them that God still cared what they did and what they said, and that Jesus would be with them. Even if they were killed—and most of Jesus' earliest followers were murdered, it seems—not a hair on their head would perish because of the hope of the resurrection. God doesn't abandon God's people—not during war, persecution, death or anything else.

In this week's lectionary, things have fallen apart. Countries have been invaded or are just about to be. Ideas about who God is and what God wants are debated, with violent disagreements springing up and religious communities fracturing. This may sound familiar to many readers. The good news is that God was, is and will be present. God sees what is happening and never wavers from standing beside those who fear God's name.

*You may find this Lectionary Blog and other resources for the journey of faith available at [LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org).*

*Cory Driver is the assistant to the bishop for emerging ministers and ministries for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

From our worship resource, *Sundays & Seasons*:

### From Life to Death and Death to Life

In our baptisms we move *spiritually from death to life*. We are reminded of this in the words from the service of Holy Baptism: “In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 227). We begin in death, and grace raises us to life. Still, we tend to focus on the spiritual nature of this change or transformation.

It is easy to forget that by the very nature of that baptism, we can in an instant move *physically from life to death* for the sake of the life we are gifted with in baptism. We hear the words of promise and trust in the gifts and blessings of baptism, but overlook the accompanying responsibility. Like a teenager with a brand new driver’s license we relish our newfound freedom and may forget all those other drivers on the road whose safety depends upon the new driver.

### Luke 21:5-19

Writing mainly to Gentile Christian communities in the late 80s, Luke includes much of the description of the coming apocalyptic events as found in Mark 13 and Matthew 24. The beauty of the temple “dedicated to God” was due to the largesse of Herod, a hated puppet monarch. The temple was destroyed in 70 CE: thus the early Christian communities are reminded that what is valued in religion and society may not last. Messianic claims were common. Verses 9-19 follow stereotypical biblical and intertestamental descriptions of the apocalyptic end of time, with calamities in nature and society, and include comfort for the coming persecutions of Christians, for heresy by Jewish religious authorities and for sedition or political disloyalty by the Roman Empire. This passage is one among many in the gospels that indicate that many people became Christian as individuals, and were alienated from their family because of it. Luke casts this passage as a public discourse made by Jesus, and this section stresses that the end is still far distant.



## Malachi 4:1-2a

A person named Malachi, which means “my messenger,” is otherwise unknown. The post-exilic author addresses the people’s expectation that their return to Jerusalem was supposed to ensure their prosperity. Yet because of the injustices in society, God is not accepting the worship of the priestly activity in the temple, which was restored by 515 BCE. The day of the Lord is a time of judgment, and the tree that is the nation will be destroyed. The Babylonian god of justice Shamash was depicted as a winged solar disk whose presence in the sky, like the sun, brought light to the earth and law to society.

## 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Written either by Paul in the 50s or in the late first century by a disciple of Paul, this passage addresses the problems caused by those in the local church who, either in celebrating Christian freedom or in assuming that the eschaton has already begun, have quit working. That Paul earned his own living is held up as a model of Christian life. In the first century churches had no clergy, paid or unpaid.

## Images in the Readings

Apocalyptic imagery arises periodically when a people are so downtrodden that they cannot foresee any relief from their suffering unless a cataclysm destroys everything and the earth begins anew. Thus, for example, the Jews living under the oppression of the Roman Empire popularized this literary genre. Natural disasters, political injustices, religious persecution, and family disruptions could however be seen positively, since they were signs that God would soon intervene to end evil for once and for all. Thus “law” and “gospel” meet. Such apocalyptic tendencies are thriving also in our time.

The temple in Jerusalem had once again been rebuilt and refurbished. Yet it was yet again and finally to be destroyed, and currently its ruined wall is all that remains. For Christians, Christ is our temple, and the members of the church are its building stones. May God keep us from being thrown down!

The passage from Malachi refers to “neither root nor branch” left after God’s fire destroys evil. What stands behind this passage is the ancient Near Eastern image of the nation-state as a tree of life, its height and strength likened to the power of the government. In an ancient example of the cultural adaptation of religious symbolism, the Hebrew prophet appropriates an image of Shamash, the enemy’s sun god, when speaking of the coming promise of the God of Israel.

# Signs of the End of the Age

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation. Isaiah 12:2

The puzzle is based on Luke 21:5-28 (NIV).



O B R O T H E R S W X X W G R  
 F P A R E N T S W I A W A R S  
 P R I S O N S T O I G T L C R  
 Y A I K E E U I R P H N C E B  
 W I J G N A N M R F K E S H E  
 H Q H O H O R E Y M S T X D A  
 E Y T H I T A T O X F L S I U  
 A S Z T E J E D H I V E D S T  
 R W A Y K A G N G Q V P D C I  
 T N H X L N V P E I U W K I F  
 E E G W I P B E T D N A R P U  
 P F M K F X D A N E A R K L L  
 U G I P E R L F A M I N E E X  
 T L T V L E F R I E N D S S S  
 Z Z I O R E V O L U T I O N S

HEAR  
 REVOLUTIONS  
 PRISON  
 EARTHQUAKES  
 NEAR

BEAUTIFUL  
 NATION  
 DISCIPLES  
 WATCH  
 STONES

WARS  
 HEAVEN  
 TIME  
 RELATIVES  
 KINGDOM

FAMINE  
 FRIGHTENED  
 SIGNS  
 WORRY  
 LIFE

PARENTS  
 TEMPLE  
 FRIENDS  
 BROTHERS  
 GIFTS