

Worship in the Home: November 15, 2020

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Worship in the Home

Lectionary 33, Year A November 15, 2020

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

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.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its 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 Reading: 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.

⁷Be silent before the LORD God!

For the day of the Lord is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice
and has consecrated those who are called.

¹²At 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 the LORD do harm."

¹³Their 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵That 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,

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

¹⁷I 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.

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

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

¹LORD, you have^l been our refuge
from one generation^l to another.

²Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the^l earth were born,
from age to age^l you are God.

³You turn us back to the^l dust and say,
"Turn back, O children of earth."

⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when^l it is past
and like a watch^l in the night;

⁵you sweep them away^l like a dream,
they fade away suddenly^l like the grass:

⁶in the morning it is^l green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried^l up and withered.

⁷For we are consumed^l by your anger;
we are afraid because^l of your wrath.

⁸Our iniquities you have^l set before you,
and our secret sins in the light^l of your countenance.

[⁹When you are angry, all our^l days are gone;

we bring our years to an end^l like a sigh.

¹⁰The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength^l even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and^l we are gone.

¹¹Who regards the power^l of your wrath?

Who rightly fears your^l indignation?]

¹²So teach us to number our days

that we may apply our^l hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and 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 Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When 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! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober, ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But 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. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore 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

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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:] ¹⁴For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then 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.' ²¹His 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.' ²²And 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.' ²³His 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.' ²⁴Then 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; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But 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? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

Here at the end of the church year and at the end of Matthew the readings from the Bible are as harsh as they ever get. But much in our world seems to fit these pictures. When we fail to act in justice and to use for the common good what God has entrusted to us, a day of darkness and gloom — Matthew's "outer darkness" — descends upon us. We rightly pray, as Jesus taught us, "Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil." And God does save us. The good news this Sunday is in the second reading: in Jesus Christ, God has made salvation and not wrath to be our future. By the power of the Spirit poured out from the risen Christ, we have been clothed in faith and love and hope, like armor in dangerous times. The word of God awakens us to live as if in a light-filled day, even when surrounded with darkness. But, amazingly, Paul also says that whether we are awake or asleep, Christ has shared our death that we may live with him. In gratitude, we have a chance again to use what we have been given for the well-being of our neighbor.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 707), "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 678). Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.

[Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

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.

We pray, O God, for the church in our community and throughout the world. Raise up and sustain believers who will use their talents to assist with worship and to lead congregational ministries in this difficult time. Grant an extra measure of the Spirit to our Pastor(s) *name*. Protect your people with the armor of your Word.

A brief silence.

O God, you are the Temple of your people:

Hear us and help us.

For the earth we pray. During this autumn season, give to plants and wild animals a time of rest. Keep the coronavirus and other pathogens away from the animals that we farm.

A brief silence.

O God, you are the Maker of the heavens and the earth:

Hear us and help us.

For all the nations we pray. 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.

A brief silence.

O God, you are the Haven we seek:

Hear us and help us.

For the United States we pray. 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. Bless all newly elected officials, especially President-elect Biden, with a passion for justice and a commitment to honesty.

A brief silence.

O God, you are our Mighty Fortress:

Hear us and help us.

We pray for all who are in need. 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. We pray especially for. . . .

A brief silence.

O God, you are our Physician, our Nurse:

Hear us and help us.

For many of us, what the ancient prophet said is now true: these are days of distress and anguish. We beg you to listen to the prayers of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

O God, you are Father, Mother, Lover, Master, Friend:

Hear us and help us.

We remember before you all the saints who have lived and died in the faith, especially Elizabeth of Hungary in her ministry to the sick, and those we name here now. . . . At the end of time, bring us all into your peace.

A brief silence.

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.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "For the Fruit of All Creation" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 679), "When Peace Like a River" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 785). Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.

[When Peace like a River / It Is Well with My Soul](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O Holy One of wisdom, throughout human history and today among us here, you call us to walk the paths of justice and peace. We praise you, O God of truth, for your precious words. Grant that sheltered under their richness as under the tree of life, we live in gratitude and faithfulness, through Jesus Christ, your Word and our Wisdom, now and forever. **Amen.**

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

Offering Prayer

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

Then speak the Blessing:

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[The King Shall Come](#)"; "[Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ](#)"; "[Steal Away](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 9:1-14. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Elizabeth of Hungary, renewer of society, died 1231) Zechariah 2:1-5; 5:1-4. **Wednesday** Matthew 24:24-51. **Thursday** Psalm 95:1-7a. **Friday** Revelation 22:1-9. **Saturday** Matthew 12:46-50. **Christ the King** Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:14-23; Matthew 25:31-46.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase a copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from the forthcoming *All Creation Sings* will be available in *Worship in the Home* as copyright restrictions allow.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Annual Meeting will be held November 22nd following Worship. If you are a Team Leader please get your yearly report into the Parish Adm. as soon as possible

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Wings, Steve Murdock, Elaine Marsyla.

Family and Friends of: Shirle Sherrick, who passed away recently.