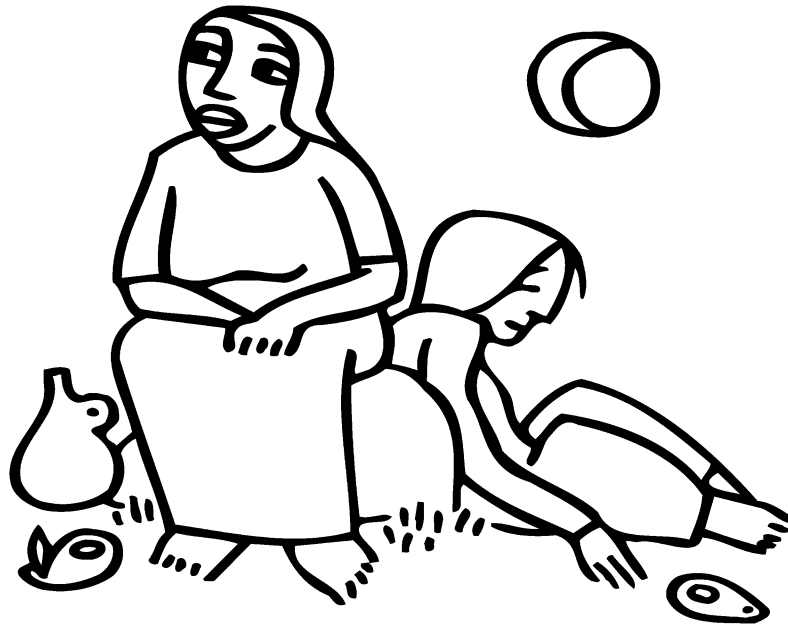


**St John Center Lutheran Church
East Earl, Pennsylvania**



November 8, 2020
23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Thomas Darr, Pastor 717-320-3642
Vickie Kissinger, Director of Music, Organist
717-445-5505 office@sjclutheran.org / website www.sjclutheran.org

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *"Psalm"* Gordon Young

C Please respond to the portions of the service in bold print.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
 2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
 3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
 4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,

our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
 suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
 from ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
 short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
 soon bears us all away;
 we fly forgotten, as a dream
 dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
 our hope for years to come,
 still be our guard while troubles last
 and our eternal home!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
 Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

THE DIALOG

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe,
for in your wisdom you have formed us.

You feed the hungry and clothe the naked.
We bless you and praise your name forever.

You set free those who are bound.
We bless you and praise your name forever.

You raise up those whose courage falters.
We bless you and praise your name forever.

You provide for our every need.
Accept our grateful praises.

You have called us from all peoples.

We rejoice and bless your name forever.

You bless your people with peace.

We bless you and praise your loving grace.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe,

for in your wisdom you have formed us.

APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray together. **Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people to seek more eagerly the help you offer, that, at the last, they may enjoy the fruit of salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen**

FIRST LESSON: AMOS 5:18-24

A reading from Amos, the fifth chapter.

¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light; ¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion,
and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,
and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.

²³Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND LESSON: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

A reading from 1 Thessalonians, the fourth chapter.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:1-13

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 25th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you, O Christ

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY HUM VERSE 1 ONLY - LBW 25

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ring bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;

the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.

The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see

Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

Offering Moment

Let us pray our offering prayer, to bless the gifts that we continue to give in response to God's gifts to us.

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

THE PRAYERS

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Strengthen those whose bodies and souls are hurting, especially *Carine, Sally, Cindy, Doris, Bob, Deb, Elmo, Mary Jean, Anna, Mary, Catharine, Bev, Jane, Jack, Maudie* and those we name before you.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

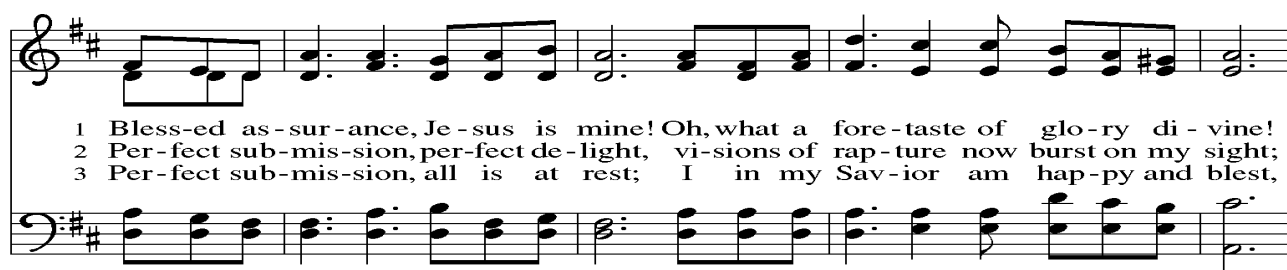
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who
 trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen

THE BENEDICTION

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

SENDING HYMN HUM VERSE 1 ONLY - WOV 699

Blessed Assurance



1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!
 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood.
 an-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love.
 watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.

Refrain



This is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long:



this is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915
 Music: ASSURANCE, Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830–1908

SERVICE PARTICIPANTS**Rev. Thomas E. Darr***Organist: Vickie Kissinger*

ALTAR FLOWERS are offered to the glory of God and in honor of Wendi Kimball’s birthday by her family.

BULLETINS are sponsored in memory of Elmer Oatman by Judy Oatman.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE will meet following this morning’s service.

FINANCE COMMITTEE will meet on Tuesday, November 11 at 6:30 PM.

CAN YOU HELP? Someone is needed to take over responsibility for Social Hall reservations. If you are interested, please contact Alvin to discuss. Thank you.

LAST WEEK’S ATTENDANCE:

Viewed Online	Parking Lot Attendance	In Church Attendance
58	14	12

WHEN YOU COME

- Your temperature will be taken
- Masks are worn all the time – your hands will be sanitized as you arrive.
- Pick up your own bulletin and communion cup if a communion Sunday and go to your seat.
- Deposit your offering in the plate as you come in the sanctuary.
- Please sit in designated pews observing the 1-2-3 rule. 1 family per pew, 2 couples per pew or 3 individuals per pew.
- There will be no congregational singing at the in person service. The music listed is for the pre-recorded service only.
- There will be no sharing of the peace.
- Remain seated for entire service.
- We can accommodate no more than thirty people in the sanctuary. If you are planning on worshipping from home, or from the parking lot, please let me know. My email is revdrrthms@gmail.com or call me at 717-320-3642.

PRAYER CONCERNS

For those serving in the military... Conner Allen (Darr's), Christopher Buch (Susie Welsh's grandson), Trinity Gilkey (Bauer's), Jeremy Reifsnyder (J Reifsnyder), Jon Shorr (Darr's), Richard Witwer (Maudie Witwer's grandson)

For those with ongoing illness... Cindy Petersheim, Jack Weaver

For the homebound... Mary Martin

For those afflicted with cancer... Sandra Bair (M Nuessle), Ritch Bedell (Bauer's), Doris Bewley, Ed Carvell (J Oatman), Gail D. (M J Ludwig), Jeff Donahue (P Wallace), Robert Freeman (Mary Hafer), Isaiah Hoar and family (M J Ludwig), Connie Howe (V Haug), Harold Kring, Nate Mohler (Mary Hafer's son-in-law), Matt Sanger (T Wentzel), T Simmons, Jr. (Simmons'), Robyn Wiley (K Wallace)

For those facing or recovering from a hospitalization...

For those in need of strength and comfort.. Richard Burkhart, Steve Cammauf (J Kring), Dan Carpenter (B Wallace), Michael Clause, Sierra Cortez (T Wentzel), the Craven family, Amy DeFalco (J Kring), Sally Dettra, Bernice Dietrich (J Kring), Bob Dettra, Sister Phyllis Enck (D Lorah), Darlene Ganse (J Kring), Scott Gockley (C Doman), Norma Good, Sheila Good, Don Griffith (Raffauf's), Mary Hafer, Vickie Haug, Allen Kimball (W Kimball), Judy Kring, Deb Lorah, Elmo Lorah, Mary Jean Ludwig, Marie Paul (T Good), Wanda Lutz (T Raffauf), Anna McComsey, Catharine Messner, Israel Newswanger (L Burns), Carolyn Seddon (J Kring), Carine Shorr (Darr's), Bev Simmons, Shaun Sitkowski, Tim Stanley (T Wentzel), Tammy Stiffler (Haug's), Lance Stoudt, Jane Sweigart, Carlos Terres (T Weaver), Tammy Weaver, Darlene Wentzel (T Wentzel), Maudie Witwer, Steve Young (T Weaver)

*Underlined indicates names of members of the congregation. **Bold** indicates names added since last week.*

IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF PASTORAL CARE please contact Pastor Darr at 717-320-3642 or Alvin McCoy at 610-286-9647.

LECTIONARY 32

Invitation to Grace

The parable of the ten bridesmaids easily draws our attention to the differences in their levels of preparation. Some have enough oil to welcome the bridegroom; others do not. The ability of each bridesmaid to control her fate finds ready ears in a culture that favors independence and individual effort. Every day we see the consequences—good or bad—of our actions.

The early part of the parable speaks to a commonality among the bridesmaids. As they wait for the bridegroom, all of them become drowsy and fall asleep. Then comes the cry, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." We might hear this as a command. We certainly have commands from God throughout Scripture. However, what if we heard the cry as an invitation?

God's commands are a gift that invites us to live into the reality of the ever-present and ever-coming kingdom. God does not force or compel us to follow, to be obedient, or to love. It is always framed as

an invitation. The psalmists invite us to praise God. God invites the people of Israel into covenantal relationship. Jesus invites all who are weary to come to him and find rest.

If the kingdom of heaven is close to us now, of course our actions will have consequences. Whether we choose to love or hate, share or hoard, work for peace or not—all of these choices impact the people around us. And yet, God's command that we live into a way of love is not coercive, but rather an invitation to life.

In worship we gather around the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. Neither is forced; neither is required. Both are invitations to experience what Augustine called visible signs of God's invisible grace, a gift given for each and every one of us.

REMEMBER OUR VETERANS

Matthew Ament	Abram Klaassen
J. Martin Bressler	Carl Kring
Raymond Choinski	Carl R. Landau
Donald Collins	Harry D. Lorah
Patricia G. Collins	Mary Jean Ludwig
Robert Dettra	Irvin Martin
Paul A. Fake	Robert Miller
Laverne Good	Eugene L. Musser
Edward Greene	Ted Simmons
James Harner	F. Gilbert Terry
Larry Hartranft	Lester O. Weaver
Earley Hendrix	George E. Weller
Ewald Hoffman	Norman R. Weller
David B. Horst	John Wenzel
Robert Hunsberger	Robert Witman
Samuel Y. King	Warren W. Woomert

