

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



**November 15, 2020**  
24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Thomas Darr, Pastor 717-320-3642  
Vickie Kissinger, Director of Music, Organist

717-445-5505 [office@sjclutheran.org](mailto:office@sjclutheran.org) / website [www.sjclutheran.org](http://www.sjclutheran.org)

**INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY** 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.

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE** “*Gloficamus*” John Redford (1486-1525)

The English composer, organist and poet John Redford served as organist at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Many of his compositions are based on plainsong.

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

GATHERING HYMN HUM VERSE 1 ONLY - LBW 397

O Zion, Haste

1 O Zi - on, haste, your mis - sion high ful - fill - ing,  
 2 Pub - lish to ev - ry peo - ple, tongue, and na - tion  
 3 Give of your own to bear the mes - sage glo - rious,  
 4 He comes a - gain! O Zi - on, ere you meet him,

to that tell to all the world that God is light;  
 give God, in whom they live and move, is love;  
 make of your wealth they to speed them on their way;  
 know to ev - 'ry heart his sav - ing grace;

that he who made all na - tions is not will - ing  
 tell how he stooped to save his lost cre - a - tion  
 pour out your soul for them in prayer vic - to - rious,  
 let none whom he has ran - somed fail to greet him,

one soul should per - ish, lost in shades of night.  
 and died on earth that we might live a - bove.  
 and haste the com - ing of the glo - rious day.  
 through your ne - glect, un - fit to see his face.

*Refrain*

Pub - lish glad tid - ings, tid - ings of peace,

tid - ings of Je - sus, re - demp - tion, and re - lease.

Text: Mary A. Thomson, 1834-1923  
 Music: ANGLIC SONGS, James Walch, 1837-1901

## **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. **Lord God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that, always keeping in mind the end of all things and the day of judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of life here and may live with you forever in the world to come, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

**FIRST LESSON: ZEPHANIAH 1:7, 12-18**

A reading from Zephaniah, the first chapter.

<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.

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

## **SECOND LESSON: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11**

A reading from 1 Thessalonians, the fifth chapter.

<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.

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 25:14-30**

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

<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.'

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

**SPECIAL MUSIC**    *“No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus”*

Steffany Gretzinger

Soloist - Vickie Kissinger

**SERMON**

O Christ the Same

1 O Christ the same, through all our sto - ry's pag - es—  
 2 O Christ the same, the friend of sin - ners, shar - ing  
 3 O Christ the same, se - cure with - in whose keep - ing

our loves and hopes, our fail - ures and our fears;  
 our in - most thoughts, the se - crets none can hide;  
 our lives and loves, our days and years re - main;

e - ter - nal Lord, the king of all the a - ges,  
 still as of old up - on your bod - y bear - ing  
 our work and rest, our wak - ing and our sleep - ing,

un - chang - ing still a - mid the pass - ing years:  
 the marks of love in tri - umph glo - ri - fied:  
 our calm and storm, our plea - sure and our pain:

O liv - ing Word, the source of all cre - a - tion,  
 O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heav - en—  
 O Lord of love, for all our joys and sor - rows,

who spread the skies and set the stars a - blaze;  
 O Prince of life, in all your sav - ing power;  
 for all our hopes when earth shall fade and flee;

O Christ the same, who wrought our whole sal - va - tion,  
 O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are giv - en:  
 O Christ the same, be - yond our brief to - mor - rows,

we bring our thanks for all our yes - ter - days.  
 we bring our thanks for this the pres - ent hour.  
 we bring our thanks for all that is to be.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926  
 Music: LONDONDERRY AIR, Irish tune

Text © 1984 Hope Publishing Co. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## 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

Lord of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world.

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

Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin.

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

Lord of the nations, sound forth your justice in the ears of all leaders. Increase concern for those who are most vulnerable, especially as international leaders forge trade agreements and cooperate to end human rights abuses.

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

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress, especially *Nairi, Carine, Bob, Sally, Cindy, Doris, Deb, Elmo, Mary Jean, Anna, Mary, Catharine, Bev, Jane, Jack, Maudie and those we name before you.* Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins.

Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others.

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

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors.

Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love.

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 801

### Thine the Amen



1 Thine the a - men thine the praise al - le - lu - ias an - gels raise  
2 Thine the life e - ter - nal - ly thine the prom - ise let there be  
3 Thine the tru - ly thine the yes thine the ta - ble we the guest  
4 Thine the king - dom thine the prize thine the won - der full sur - prise  
5 Thine the glo - ry in the night no more dy - ing on - ly light



thine the ev - er - last - ing head thine the break - ing of the bread  
thine the vi - sion thine the tree all the earth on bend - ed knee  
thine the mer - cy all from thee thine the glo - ry yet to be  
thine the ban - quet then the praise then the jus - tice of thy ways  
thine the riv - er thine the tree then the Lamb e - ter - nal - ly



thine the glo - ry thine the sto - ry thine the har - vest then the cup  
gone the nail - ing gone the rail - ing gone the plead - ing gone the cry  
then the ring - ing and the sing - ing then the end of all the war  
thine the glo - ry thine the sto - ry then the wel - come to the least  
then the ho - ly ho - ly ho - ly cel - e - bra - tion ju - bi - lee



thine the vine - yard then the cup is lift - ed up lift - ed up.  
gone the sigh - ing gone the dy - ing what was loss lift - ed high.  
thine the liv - ing thine the lov - ing ev - er - more ev - er - more.  
then the won - der all in - creas - ing at thy feast at thy feast.  
thine the splen - dor thine the bright - ness on - ly thee on - ly thee.

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926

Music: THINE, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929

Text and music © 1983 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

**SERVICE PARTICIPANTS**

**Rev. Thomas E. Darr**

*Organist: Vickie Kissinger*

**ATTENTION- Worship Assistants**

Beginning with Advent, November 29, we will again be using worship assistants for our in person worship. If you have been a worship assistant in the past and are not willing at this time to come inside, please notify Pastor Tom. Otherwise we will assume you are willing and we will schedule you accordingly.

Christmas Eve – It has been decided that our Christmas Eve service will be held in the parking lot. It will begin at 4:45 pm which is sundown for this day. By doing this we will be able to sing the hymns in the car and should be closer to a normal service.

**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
44	13	17

**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](mailto: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, **Nairi Millard (Darr's)**, 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 33

### A Significant Trust

On one level we can read the parable of the talents and see a simple lesson: A property owner entrusts property to his workers and goes away. The workers respond in different ways to this trust, and he responds to them in different ways upon his return. The third is paralyzed by fear. We ought not fear putting the gifts God has given us to work for good in our world.

There is another depth to this story found in the property entrusted to the workers: One is given five talents, the second two talents, and the third only one talent. We are told this is according to their ability. How much was a talent? In our culture, where we have coins and bills for our currency, this last worker seems to be entrusted with pocket change. A talent, however, was not a denomination of currency in the way we might understand. A talent was more than fifteen years' wages for a laborer. Fifteen years!

For illustration purposes, let us assume a laborer today makes \$10 an hour. If a person works forty hours per week with two weeks of vacation, a year's wages would be \$20,000. Fifteen years of wages would be \$300,000. This would be one talent. Two talents would be \$600,000; five would be \$1,500,000.

Why all this math? What we see in the value of the talents are significant amounts of property entrusted to the workers—even the one with the least ability. What is beautiful in this story is the trust the property owner has in his workers. His disappointment with the third shows the trust to be sincere. What if this one had trusted himself as much as the property owner did?

Psalm 139 tells us we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Perhaps this parable is an invitation for us to believe in ourselves as much as God believes in us, and thus experience the joy our loving Creator already has for us.