

**GATHERING**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

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 awake for you. 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 Song "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" ELW 632**

1. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:
2. Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure; sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame, from everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.
4. A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone, short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.
5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all our years away; they 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. Public Domain

**Greeting**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray... **O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**WORD**

**First Reading: Amos 5:18-24**

<sup>18</sup>Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light;

<sup>19</sup>as 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.

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

<sup>21</sup>I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup>Even 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.

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

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

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

**Psalm: Psalm 70 (Read Responsively)**

<sup>1</sup>Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me.

<sup>2</sup>**Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded;  
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.**

<sup>3</sup>Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back because of their shame.

<sup>4</sup>**Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
let those who love your salvation say forever, "Great is the LORD!"**

<sup>5</sup>But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God.  
You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, do not tarry.

**Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

<sup>13</sup>We 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. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. <sup>15</sup>For 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. <sup>16</sup>For 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. <sup>17</sup>Then 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. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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

**Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13**

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

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

**Sermon PRINTED ON LAST PAGE OR PROVIDED LATER**

**Hymn of the Day "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers" ELW 244**

1. Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;  
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.  
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.  
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

2. The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;  
go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.  
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.  
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.



## Hymn of the Day “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers” ELW 244 (CONTINUED)

3. The saints, who here in patience their cross and sufferings bore,  
shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.  
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;  
in triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.

4. Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;  
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.  
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see  
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907 Public Domain

## Apostles' Creed

Let us confess our faith in the words of the 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

L: 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. *(A brief silence.)*

L: Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#1. 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.**

#2. 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.**

#3. 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.**

#4. Holy One, we give you thanks that you hold all the baptized to be your saints, no matter our age, education, work, politics— sinners all, and saints in your eyes. Help us in the congregations of Northwoods STaR Ministries to see one another as you see us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: 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. We especially pray for all those on the prayer list — Dorothy, Mary, Phil & Janice, Lori Ann, Florence, Jenny, Ruth, Marcie, Donn, The Family of Dale Sarkkinen, \_\_\_\_\_ and all those we name before you now, out loud or in our hearts. *(pause)* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** *(Other prayers added here)*

L: 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.**

## THANKSGIVING

**Offering** (The offering plates are near the sanctuary entrance. Please place your offering there as you depart. Thank you for your faithful support.)

### Offering prayer

Let us pray... **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.**

### The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

## SENDING—

### Announcements

### 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 "Blessed Assurance" ELW 638

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

*Refrain:* This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior, all the day long: this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight; angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest, watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love. *Refrain*

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915 Public Domain

### Mission Statements

**Northwoods STaR Ministries**      *"United in Christ, Sharing God's Love"*

#### **Zion Brantwood**

*"We are disciples of Christ: Growing in faith, sharing our faith stories, serving others."*

#### **First Prentice**

*"We are Jesus' disciples: Welcoming every sinner, sharing Jesus' love and teachings, encouraging all to live Christ-centered lives."*

#### **First Ogema**

*"We are called and gathered to share Christ as we minister to all, bringing an unchanging God to a changing world."*

**First Westboro**      *"Feeding bodies, minds and spirits through Christ."*

### Dismissal

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

**Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

Grace and peace, you who are prepared and you who are surprised, you who are in danger of nodding off and you who are awake. God's grace and peace be with you all.

Every now and then while I'm sleeping, I have a recurring nightmare. Each time it happens, the nightmare isn't exactly the same, but when I wake up, I recognize immediately— THAT dream has happened again— the nightmare where I'm unprepared.

My recurring dream always involves travel. I'm just about to take off on a wonderful trip, heading to the airport or seaport, about to get on an airplane or ship to travel abroad. And then it happens. I realize that I'm already on my way there, but I don't have my ticket, or I've forgotten to bring my passport, and I don't have any time to turn around to get it without missing my departure.

I like to be prepared, so it's distressing to be caught unprepared, especially when— in my dream — I've already invested a lot of money & effort to go on that trip, with no way to correct my mistake.

That dream leads me to prepare carefully for every trip— Do I have everything I need? Am I preparing far enough ahead of time so I don't need to scramble at the last minute? Just the memory of that recurring dream is all the warning I need to be prepared.

How do you react to the parable Jesus tells us today? It's a little distressing to have Jesus tell us to keep awake, to watch for him, lest we be left behind. It is a call to us to be prepared.

We know Jesus loves us. He doesn't give us this warning because he wants to condemn us. Jesus wants us to be prepared to celebrate with him at his holy feast. Maybe Jesus gives us this warning so we'll use wisely what seems like too much waiting time.

Waiting. That describes a lot of our lives these days. Months of waiting due to this virus. Waiting for months to hug loved ones. Waiting extra days for our mail to arrive. A long election campaign, and days of waiting for the results. Waiting and waiting for everything to get back to normal. Waiting... and waiting... and waiting.

Are the foolish among us those who had too little toilet paper in their homes, or too much? Those who took the Covid warnings to heart, or those who tried to continue life as normally as possible? I don't know if there are any wrong answers— you'll have to be judge and jury.

In this year, this dark time in our lives, what will fuel us while we wait for our Lord? What has sustained Christians during dark times in the past still are blessings for all of us now, even during Covid.

Prayer— on your own or with others, from a book or from your heart.

Reading the Bible through Bible studies or daily reflection on a passage of scripture.

Worshiping our Lord in simple ways, wherever you are.

Encouraging others to be faithful.

Serving those who need any kind of help.

Giving to help others, person-to-person or through your church.

And Inviting others to join you in the life of faith.

May these ways to live out our faith fuel your faith and bless your life as we continue to wait for this darkness to end, and our joyful reunion as people of faith. Amen