

**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 “When Peace like a River (It Is Well with My Soul)” ELW 785**

1. When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

*Refrain:* It is well (it is well) with my soul, (with my soul,) it is well, it is well with my soul.

2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blest assurance control, that Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and has shed his own blood for my soul. *Refrain*

3. He lives--oh, the bliss of this glorious thought; my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! *Refrain*

4. Lord, hasten the day when our faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend; even so it is well with my soul. *Refrain*

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**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...**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.**

**WORD First Reading: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18**

<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.



### **First Reading: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 (CONTINUED)**

<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.**

### **Psalm: Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12 (Read Responsively)**

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.

<sup>2</sup>**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God.**

<sup>3</sup>You turn us back to the dust and say, "Turn back, O children of earth."

<sup>4</sup>**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night;**

<sup>5</sup>you sweep them away like a dream, they fade away suddenly like the grass:

<sup>6</sup>**in the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered.**

<sup>7</sup>For we are consumed by your anger; we are afraid because of your wrath.

<sup>8</sup>**Our iniquities you have set before you, and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.**

[<sup>9</sup>When you are angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

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

<sup>11</sup>Who regards the power of your wrath? Who rightly fears your indignation?]

<sup>12</sup>**So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.**

### **Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

<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: Matthew 25:14-30**

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.** [Jesus said to the disciples:]<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



## Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30 (CONTINUED)

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 the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon PRINTED ON LAST PAGE OR PROVIDED LATER

### Hymn of the Day "Take My Life, That I May Be" ELW 583

*Refrain:* Take my life, that I may be consecrated, Lord, to thee; take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

1. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love; take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee. *Refrain*
2. Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold; take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose. *Refrain*
3. Take my voice and let me sing always, only for my King; take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee. *Refrain*
4. Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine; take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne. *Refrain*

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### 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: 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.**

#1. 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.**



## Prayers of Intercession (CONTINUED)

#2. 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.**

#3. 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.**

#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: Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. We especially pray for all those on the prayer list — Dorothy, Mary, Phil & Janice, Florence, Jenny, Marcie, Donn, The Family of Ruth Jokinen, The Family of Lori Ann Mikesell \_\_\_\_\_ 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 "Christ, Be Our Light" ELW 715

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

*Refrain:* Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.



## **Sending Hymn "Christ, Be Our Light" ELW 715**

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair. Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice.

*Refrain:* Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

5. Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong. Let us be servants to one another, signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

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## **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 to you, from our Lord Jesus, who risked all for our sakes. Amen When Jesus taught in parables, he did it to help us see God and God's Kingdom. His parables may have been crafted not to make us think, but to help us feel.

Sometimes when we look at a parable, we may think about how its lesson applies to someone else. But when I see how the parable applies to me, it shows me where I struggle to follow Jesus – where I fall short, where I am in need of God's grace. When I allow a parable to make me uncomfortable, later I find that the Holy Spirit used it to move me to be a more faithful disciple.

The Parable of the Talents often focuses on the message that God is calling us to use our talents for the good of our neighbor, for the good of God's Kingdom. Everyone has talents, gifts, skills that can bless others, something they can add to the offering. But today let's focus on another angle in this parable– how we can risk something we value to receive a greater blessing.

In the parable, all three slaves received money from their master. We aren't told whether they were asked to do something with it. Two did. They risked the coins entrusted to them. But they were able to double the amount– to the delight of their master.

The third slave had a hard time risking the coin he received. He feared what might happen. He feared that he would be blamed for losing what had been given to him. So the third slave held on to his one coin until he could return it to his master. And his master wasn't very happy about that.

Now, here's how I hear this parable in our context, in our lives: Does God want us to play it safe and someday return our faith to God? God wouldn't be very happy about that. God would much rather find us using our faith to bless others. And for many of us, that may feel risky.

Decades ago, I had a job in an office. One day a co-worker stopped by my work area, and asked what my plans were for the weekend. I didn't know her all that well, and hadn't talked about my faith with many at work, but I told her I would be doing something at my church that weekend.

She looked surprised and asked a few questions. I learned she hadn't been raised in any faith. In the months to come, she kept stopping by my desk with more questions about the Christian faith.

In my jobs after college, I didn't often share my faith at work. It felt... risky. But I learned taking that risk can bless people who may be open to faith in God.

Our faith is valuable, even more valuable than those precious coins. Faith can help us get through difficult times. It can add extra joy to memorable times. Even though we might be tempted to play it safe, to hide our faith, there can be greater joy when we're willing to take some risks and share our faith with others. They may be people we've known a long time, or people we hardly know at all. Open our hearts prayerfully, and trust that God will lead us and help us when the time is right.

May God help us to be faithful to God's call to share God's Good News with all people. Because that's the treasure that's worth taking these kinds of risks— the Good News that proclaims that God loves you, today and always, that Jesus died to defeat death and give us eternal life, that the Holy Spirit calls us and equips us to be God's people, to be Christ's disciples, now and forever. If we can step out in faith and take some risks, God can bless our families, our neighbors, our coworkers. God can bless us and the Church. Amen