

**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 "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!" ELW 634**

1. All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.
2. O seed of Israel's chosen race now ransomed from the fall, hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all. Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.
3. Hail him, you heirs of David's line, whom David Lord did call the God incarnate, man divine and crown him Lord of all. The God Incarnate, man divine and crown him Lord of all.
4. Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget the wormwood and the gall, go spread your trophies at his feet and crown him Lord of all. Go spread your trophies at his feet and crown him Lord of all.
5. Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe on this terrestrial ball to him all majesty ascribe and crown him Lord of all. To him all majesty ascribe and crown him Lord of all.
6. Oh, that with yonder sacred throng we at his feet may fall! We'll join the everlasting song and crown him Lord of all. We'll join the everlasting song and crown him Lord of all.

Text: Edward Perronet, 1726-1792, sts. 1-4; J. Rippon, A Selection of Hymns, 1787, sts. 5-6 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 power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**WORD First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24**

<sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land.

<sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.



### **First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 (CONTINUED)**

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.<sup>21</sup>Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup>I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

<sup>23</sup>I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd <sup>24</sup>And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.           The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm:           Psalm 95:1-7a (Read Responsively)**

<sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

<sup>2</sup>**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**

<sup>3</sup>For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.

<sup>4</sup>**In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours.**

<sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.

<sup>6</sup>**Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**

<sup>7a</sup>For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

### **Second Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23**

<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.           The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46**

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>31</sup>"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.' <sup>41</sup>Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire



## **Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46 (CONTINUED)**

prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' <sup>44</sup>Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' <sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

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

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

### **Hymn of the Day "Lift High the Cross" ELW 660**

*Refrain:* Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

1. Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod, our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

*Refrain*

2. All newborn servants of the Crucified bear on their brows the seal of him who died. *Refrain*

3. O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree, as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. *Refrain*

4. So shall our song of triumph ever be: praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

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### **Nicene Creed**

Let us confess our faith in the words of the Creed.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. 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: Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all social ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#1. You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**



## Prayers of Intercession (CONTINUED)

#2. Bring peace to every place where conflict rages. Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in your reign of unity and reconciliation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

#3. Heal the sinful divisions we erect between us and release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away. 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: Thank you for all the individuals who feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and tend to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us. We pray for all those on the prayer list — Dorothy, Mary, Phil & Janice, Florence, Jenny, Marcie, Donn, \_\_\_\_\_ 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 “Lead On, O King Eternal!” ELW 805

1. Lead on, O King eternal! The day of march has come; henceforth in fields of conquest your tents will be our home. Through days of preparation your grace has made us strong; and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.

2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease, and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace; for not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums, but deeds of love and mercy the heav'nly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal: we follow, not with fears, for gladness breaks like morning where'er your face appears. Your cross is lifted o'er us; we journey in its light; the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might!

Text: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1862-1917 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**      Sermon for November 22, 2020 ~ Pastor Steve Weston

Christ the King Sunday is the newest festival on the church calendar. It was established in 1925, less than a hundred years ago, by Pope Pius XI. In those days, the world was still recovering from the disaster of the Great War of 1914-1918 (which we call World War I) and the influenza pandemic of 1918-20. There were two disturbing trends in the world back then. One was a rise in secularism – people regarding worldly matters as more important than spiritual ones. The other was a rise in nationalism.

Nationalism is the idea of Germany for the Germans, Italy for the Italians, France for the French, etc. It's a divisive way of thinking. Back then people were behaving as though their first allegiance was to their country rather than to God, and they were devaluing people of other countries and ethnicities. In 1925, the nationalistic attitudes that would later give rise to fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany were already evident.

Christ the King Sunday was established as a way of reminding Christians that our first allegiance is to God, not whatever king or queen or president or prime minister or chancellor or other sort of leader we might live under, but that we are to regard Jesus Christ as our King. We need to remember that people of every nation and race are equally valued by God, and our own nation is no more special in God's eyes than any other. If we all remembered this, maybe future calamities like the Great War could be avoided. Pope Pius was right, but his message was not heeded. In less than two decades, an even greater war happened. Today world still longs for peace, and those same trends are appearing again.

Christ the King Sunday was a good idea, so although we Lutherans (along with other mainline Protestants) do not recognize the Pope's authority, we have gone along with adding this festival to our church calendars. So today we remember that Christ is our true King, and that whatever human government we live under is secondary.

And so the Gospel reading appointed for this Christ the King Sunday is the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, where Jesus invites us to imagine all humanity standing before him as King to face judgment. And what is the judgment based on? It's not based on how excellently we've been worshiping God, or on how strictly we've been keeping the details of the Commandments. It's based on how we treat one another. Here's the plain meaning of this parable: The way we treat others is the way we treat Jesus. If we're kind to others, we're kind to Jesus. If we're mean to others, we're mean to Jesus.



A person serves an ordinary human king by meeting the king's needs, supporting the king's priorities, and helping the king reach his goals. The thing is, Jesus doesn't have any needs we can help meet, so serving King Jesus means something different. In the Gospels, Jesus says of himself that he "came not to be served, but to serve." That sets him apart from the vast majority of human monarchs, tyrants and despots that have ever existed. King Jesus washed his disciples' feet. King Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross. He's a strange sort of king that way. We serve King Jesus by serving one another.

We've been hearing a lot lately about "personal responsibility." Personal responsibility is a fine thing. It's good to take care of oneself so as not to be a burden on others. But personal responsibility is not enough, especially if it leads to an attitude of, "You brought this on yourself! Why should I help you?" Jesus calls his followers to go beyond personal responsibility and think in terms of *social* responsibility. He invites us to see his face in the face of anyone in need. Why should we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, tend the sick, visit the imprisoned, house the homeless or befriend the lonely? Because they're hungry, naked, sick, imprisoned, homeless or lonely. And if anyone suffers from those things, Jesus suffers along with them.

In the parable, that's what the judgment is based on. And this word of judgment, as with all words of judgment, sounds harsh. So we need to remember that this is not Jesus' last word on the Last Judgment. The last word is one of forgiveness.

Let's put ourselves in the parable. Have you ever been kind to someone just because you thought they could use some kindness, not because there was anything in it for you? Have you ever helped someone who needed help, just because they needed help? If you have, then congratulations! You're a sheep. Now, have you ever failed to be kind when kindness was called for? Ever turned a deaf ear to a call for help? Ever said to someone in trouble, "Sorry, that's not my problem"? Then too bad for you! You're a goat.

The truth is, the dividing line between the sheep and the goats is within each of us. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. In this life, we are forgiven sinners, not former sinners. We won't be former sinners until we see the other side of the grave. That's the promise of forgiveness. Not only does God, for Jesus' sake, not hold our sins against us; God removes our sinfulness from us in the end. When we examine ourselves, if we're honest, we see a mixture of sheep-ness and goat-ness. When God takes us to our heavenly home, our goat-ness will be left behind. In the mean time, we strive to maximize our sheep-ness and minimize our goat-ness, while we live in the promise.