

Service of Holy Communion

November 22, 2020 Thanksgiving

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Forever" Chris Tomlin

One Voice

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved.

Amen.

Silence 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 #840 "Now Thank We All Our God"

(Intro by SKLC Handbells & Piano) Johann Cruger/JS Bach arr Laura Page

- 1 Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers' arms,
has blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.
- 2 Oh, may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,

and keep us all in grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all harm
in this world and the next.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE *"I Sing Praises"*

Verse 1

I sing praises to Your name O Lord
Praises to Your name O Lord
For Your name is great
And greatly to be praised
I sing praises to Your name O Lord
Praises to Your name O Lord
For Your name is great
And greatly to be praised

Verse 2

I give glory to Your name O Lord
Glory to Your name O Lord
For Your name is great
And greatly to be praised
I give glory to Your name O Lord
Glory to Your name O Lord
For Your name is great
And greatly to be praised

CCLI Song # 17061

Terry MacAlmon

© 1989 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing (Integrity Music, David C Cook))

For use solely with the SongSelect®. Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI License # 11534117

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

¹¹Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As 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. ¹³I 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. ¹⁴I 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. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I 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.**

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

²³I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And 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

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

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

³For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.

⁴In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours.

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

⁶Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

^{7a}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*

In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I 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, ¹⁸so 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, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God 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, ²¹far 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. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Sing Alleluia”

Sing Alleluia to the Lord. Sing Alleluia to the Lord.

Sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia to the Lord. *(repeat)*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 25:31-46*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³¹“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. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then 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; ³⁵for 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, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then 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? ³⁸And when was it that

we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And 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.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I 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.' ⁴⁴Then 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?' ⁴⁵Then 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.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

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

SERMON

Today we are celebrating Thanksgiving, such as it is this year... limited gatherings, threats of a COVID resurgence, and all the griefs we carry – little griefs and big griefs, rituals we've lost and loved ones we've lost. But still, Thanksgiving Day is nearly here and it is always time to give thanks to God for everything good in our lives and in the world. Thanks be to God for this day, for this opportunity to gather in the Spirit, for food and clothes and shelter and family and friends. Thanks be to God.

Today is also Christ the King Sunday, a day when we celebrate Jesus as our true Sovereign, not this president or the previous one or the next one; not the head of the European Union or the leader of the Arab states or Vladimir Putin. The one who truly reigns over heaven and earth is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, the Lamb of God who dies with us and gives us everlasting life. We give thanks that the one who rules eternally is not me or you or anybody else, but is Jesus.

Today is also the end of this Church year, which means this is our last gospel reading from Matthew for a while. All year we've been in the gospel of Matthew, and we might have noticed that Matthew portrays Jesus, not only as redeemer, but also as judge. That is certainly the case in today's gospel reading where Jesus tells a story about separating the sheep from the goats, those who have lived the "Jesus way" and have born the fruits of the spirit, from those who have not. Those who are "of Jesus" receive eternal life, and those who are not, go to eternal damnation. The story is a bit stark, awfully final, and kinda' scary.

I both love and dread this passage from Matthew 25. I love it because those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and imprisoned, don't even know they've served Jesus. Which indicates that their actions were not performed so as to pass a test or prove how worthy they were of God's favor. They weren't motivated by self-righteousness or a desire to show-off. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick – were all simply part of how they lived.

I dread the passage because those who did not care for their neighbor in need, also did not realize they were not living “the Jesus way.” They had no idea, and thus were astonished when Jesus packed them off with the other goats to dwell in eternal torment. If neither the sheep nor the goats were aware of aligning with or against Jesus, yet some went to hell and the others to eternal glory, what does that mean for you and me? That’s the scary part.

But it’s also an important part of this reading, because it shows that none of the people – sheep or goats – earned their salvation by how they conducted themselves in daily life. That is a good thing – we can’t earn God’s love by what we do – and it’s a scary thing, because our salvation is completely out of our hands. I thank God for this text, as difficult as it is. Jesus speaks to us in this scripture reading, announcing good news, and pushing us to wrestle with what it all means.

Our lives are intertwined with the lives of others. Matthew’s gospel makes that clear: “Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” and “You are the light of the world; let your light shine before others...” and “Whatever you did to the least of these your brothers and sisters, you did to me.” Salvation is not simply about me and Jesus, or you and Jesus; it is about us with each other, and Jesus as our Shepherd.

In today’s text, Jesus points out that those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and imprisoned **are** saved. He does not say that what they did saved them. Rather, they are saved because Jesus lives in them. That comes first. Those who ignore the hungry, turn aside from the naked or the sick, are **not** saved. But even here, Jesus is not condemning them for their lack of compassionate action; he’s simply pointing to the evidence that he does not live in them.

Earlier Matthew’s gospel said, “You will know a tree by its fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.” In this morning’s reading, it’s as if Jesus is in the orchard, taking note and commenting on the state of things. Those who cared for their neighbors – whether or not they thought much about it – they have born good fruit because Jesus lives in them. Those who have not tended to the needs of other people, must not belong to Jesus, and therefore they have born bad fruit. We who are a part of Jesus bear good fruit, not because we try harder or we’re better people, but because Jesus lives in us, because Jesus is the living tree we’ve been grafted onto.

There is another message in this text that you and I might especially need to hear these days. These days when semi-quarantine is always in effect, when we can’t come together at church or in a restaurant, when we’re being advised not to gather with people outside our own household for Thanksgiving or for Christmas. These days when sometimes you just don’t want to get out of bed and face it again. Today’s gospel reading tells us that Jesus is present in all those places, all those situations, and on days when hope seems elusive. Those in prison are not forgotten; Jesus is with them – Jesus **is** them. The hungry, the thirsty, the desperate, the heart-broken...Jesus is with you, in your skin, experiencing your current reality.

I stumbled across a blog post about this scripture passage and I want to share with you a few words from it. It's by "The Listening Hermit" (*and I don't know any other name for the writer*)... He or she says "Jesus ... is the one who comes to me when I am hungry even after my lovely home cooked meal, thirsty after my bottled Evian water, a stranger in my home town, naked in my designer labels, and in prison whilst speeding down the freeway." We have all been 'hungry,' 'naked,' 'imprisoned,' and sick, and Jesus sticks with us, come what may. Even when we are among 'the least' or are lost, Jesus remains – walking beside us, hearing our cries, facing this day and its challenges together.

I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving – whether your gathering is two people or five or 10; whether you have to eat in separate houses and visit over Zoom or Facetime. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. There is so much to be thankful for, even when life is hard. Still today, God provides for you. Whatever tomorrow holds, Jesus stays close at hand. You are known and seen and loved by this church family and by the Savior, the Lord of all.

HYMN OF THE DAY *"Give Thanks"*

Verse

Give thanks with a grateful heart
 Give thanks to the Holy One
 Give thanks because He's given
 Jesus Christ His Son
 (repeat)

Chorus

And now let the weak say I am strong
 Let the poor say I am rich
 Because of what the Lord has done for us
 And now let the weak say I am strong
 Let the poor say I am rich
 Because of what the Lord has done for us

Verse (x1)

Ending

Give thanks

CCLI Song # 20285

Henry Smith

© 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing (Integrity Music [DC Cook]))

For use solely with the SongSelect. Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI License # 11534117

Apostles' Creed

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

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 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 THE PEOPLE

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.

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.**

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.**

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.**

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.**

Pour out the gifts of your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work with children - in ministry, in schools, in foster care, and at home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift to you our burdens and fears, our hope and our thanks...

Hold close the family and friends of Barbara Eickman as they mourn her death.
Thank you for her faithful, joyful life.

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 Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE #870 *"We Praise You, O God"*

- 1 We praise you, O God, our redeemer, creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.

- 3 With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With you, Lord, beside us,
your strong arm will guide us.
To you, our great redeemer, forever be praise!

Text: Julia C. Cory, 1882-1963

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

name's sake. When the time was right you sent your son, Jesus, to teach us, forgive us, and show us the way of everlasting life. We remember...

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. *(please consume the bread)*

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. *(please drink from the cup)*

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday we begin limited, in-person worship at Shepherd King. We will continue to live stream the service as well. If you are interested in coming next Sunday, please RSVP by calling the church office, no later than this Saturday at noon. You will have your temperature checked before you enter; you will need to wear a mask throughout the entire service; you will be seated 6 feet away from anyone not in your household. Communion and your bulletin will be in a sealed plastic baggie. Gluten free is available – ask an usher if you need gluten free. We plan to continue limited in-person worship unless there is a drastic rise in COVID cases here in San Antonio, or if anyone who has been in worship later tests positive for COVID.

Advent begins next Sunday. Shepherd King has packets available for pick up – they include an advent booklet about the Jesse Tree, and a luminary cutout of a church with a battery operated candle. Please call to see when someone will be in the office so you can come by and pick yours up; or you can ask us to set one aside for your family.

Shepherd King was blessed to have a PPP loan for three months. The money paid all salaries and health insurance costs September through November. Now it is used up and Kathy is sending in the paperwork to have the loan changed to a grant. With the loan money gone, we are once again relying on your offerings to meet expenses. Offerings have dropped recently, so please check and see if your giving is up to date. We understand if the pandemic has made it unlikely that you can give; but if the pandemic has not affected your finances, please continue to support the ministry of Shepherd King. Thank you.

BLESSING

sung by **One Voice**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
 Make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

Chorus

Amen, Amen, Amen
 Amen, Amen, Amen

(repeat all)

CCLI Song # 7147007 Chris Brown | Cody Carnes | Kari Jobe | Steven Furtick CCLI License # 11534117

CLOSING HYMN #439 “Soon And Very Soon”

Verse 1

Soon and very soon
 We are going to see the King

Soon and very soon
 We are going to see the King
 Soon and very soon
 We are going to see the King

Verse 2

No more crying there
 We are going to see the King
 No more crying there
 We are going to see the King
 No more crying there
 We are going to see the King

Verse 3

No more dying there
 We are going to see the King
 No more dying there
 We are going to see the King
 No more dying there
 We are going to see the King

We are going to see the King

CCLI Song # 11249

Andraé Crouch

© 1971 Bud John Songs, Inc. (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

Crouch Music Corp. (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI License # 11534117

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS018007.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.

