

Service of Holy Communion

October 31, 2021 Reformation Sunday

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Choir

"Built on a Rock" Jay Althouse

The assembly stands.

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, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in ✝ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG ELW 504 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a sword and shield victorious;
he breaks the cruel oppressor's rod
and wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe
has sworn to work us woe!
With craft and dreadful might
he arms himself to fight.
On earth he has no equal.

Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;
 you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.
 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,
 you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,
 in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, gracious Lord, **we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

As the children of Israel enter the promised land, Moses instructs them to love the LORD and to teach God's law to future generations. Verses 4-5 are called the Shema (Hebrew for "hear"), which is still used in Jewish daily prayer and which forms the basis for the "greatest commandment" in today's gospel reading.

[Moses said to the people,] ¹Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, ²so that you

and your children and your children's children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. ³Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM READING: *Psalms 46*

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

²**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶**The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸**Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world; who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰**“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

SECOND READING: *Hebrews 9:11-14*

In ancient systems of worship, temporary forgiveness and purity came through rituals utilizing the blood of sacrificial animals. Now, however, our forgiveness and purity come eternally through the death of Jesus.

¹¹When Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹²he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 12:28-34*

The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the twelfth chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

When a scribe asks Jesus which commandment is first of all, Jesus answers that love of God and love of neighbor are interconnected and define the heart of the kingdom of God.

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard [Jesus and the Sadducees] disputing with one another, and seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment

greater than these.”³² Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; ³³and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

My neighbor and I sometimes walk in the evenings. We’ve known each other a number of years and are friends, even though we’re polar opposites when it comes to politics. We don’t usually talk politics, but the subject does come up occasionally. She’ll say ‘such-n-such’ about a current or former president, and I’ll reply, “mmm, I don’t see it that way.” Or she’ll mention a policy instituted by one administration or another, citing the source where she got her information, and I’ll say, “Not sure that’s a reliable source.” Then we’ll agree to disagree and drop the subject, because our friendship is important to us.

Those walks, with their occasional forays into political matters, remind me of the usual gospel reading for today – Reformation Sunday – which says “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” These days people have trouble agreeing on what’s true, which can lead to volatile arguments that leave us feeling anything but free. My relationship with my neighbor fits today’s alternate gospel reading better, the one we read from Mark 12.

In this text, a scribe asked Jesus to name the greatest commandment, and Jesus gave him two for the price of one: Love God with everything you are and have, and love your neighbor as yourself. They are the most important commandments. Jesus’ words fit the situation our world is in now: if we can’t agree on and be freed by what is “true,” we can at least strive to love God with our whole being, and love our neighbor, every neighbor, as we love ourselves.

The answer Jesus gave to the scribe’s question, is a central confession of the people of Israel. It comes from Deuteronomy

chapter 6, verse 4, and is known as the Shema: "Hear O Israel." The original is written in Hebrew, and can be translated several ways. "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one" which is what Jesus says in the gospel, or "Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone," as the Old Testament reading says. Both are correct.

In the Deuteronomy reading, the people of Israel had just arrived in the Promised Land after 40 years wandering in the wilderness. It must have been a relief and a joy finally to have reached their destination. But before they could pick out homesites, gather building materials, and get settled, Moses wanted to be sure they remembered who they were and how they got there.

"Hear, O Israel:" Moses said, "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone!" When the word "LORD" is printed in all capital letters, it's a stand-in for God's name. Although we don't know how to pronounce God's name, scholars often say, "Yahweh." Israel was entering a land populated by other peoples who worshiped other gods -- Baal, Asherah, Marduk. At some point, they would be tempted to try those other gods.

Before that could happen, Moses warned them, "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone! You shall love Yahweh with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Not some other god – the one down the street, or in the next village. Revere, love, trust our God, who rescued us from bondage and brought us to the Promised Land. Yahweh.

It's an important distinction Moses is making. "Don't believe everything you hear," he's saying. "Don't pick up any habit that seems interesting. Discern the voice of Yahweh; remember the covenant Yahweh has made with you. Love Yahweh with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself. So that your days may be long, and it may go well with you in the Promised Land." Hear, O people, you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

It's been said, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Life was very different in Jesus' day -- no cars, no electricity, no technology... yet it was also very similar – people divided against each other along political and religious lines, with the differing factions always trying to put each other in a bad light.

In the Temple, Jesus turned over the tables of the money changers, saying “My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations.” Local religious leaders – angry at his behavior, his words – surrounded him and said, “What gives you the right to do this?” They wanted to shut him down, but Jesus revealed their double-mindedness by asking what they thought about John the Baptist’s ministry – God inspired or only human led? They couldn’t answer that.

Other religious leaders tried to trap Jesus by asking him about taxes. Should faithful Jews pay taxes to the evil Roman empire that tried to put itself in God’s place? His opponents were confident Jesus couldn’t escape that dilemma, but he did.

Next, the Sadducees asked a tricky question about resurrection (which they did not believe in). Jesus knew they just wanted to make him stumble. He scolded them, and gave an answer they couldn’t refute. The endless bickering and finger-pointing was as tiring then as it is now.

But a bystander, a professor of religion, was impressed with Jesus, and asked a genuine question. “What’s the greatest commandment?” Jesus heard the honesty in the man’s voice and said, “Love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

The professor was also tired of the animosity, the constant debates that sought, not truth, but only to crush one’s opponent. He responded eagerly to Jesus’ words: “Yes, Teacher! You’re right! To love God with all the heart and understanding and strength, and to love neighbor as oneself – this is more important than anything else: knowledge or fame, being king or governor, giving the most money or making the best sacrifice, winning the argument or being proved right... To love God and love neighbor is far better.”

They stood there, Jesus and the professor, each with a spark of warmth in his eye. Jesus gave a slight nod and said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” What a beautiful thing to say; what an incredible thing to hear.

It’s so hard these days to know what’s the right thing to do, what’s the best thing to say. How far do I go in stating what I think is true? When should I simply listen, allow someone else to speak whether or not I agree? – which can be a gift of grace. Will I know when I should risk arguing or debating, and when I should let it go? Do I have the energy for all of this?

We live in challenging times and these are not easy matters. Sometimes, in our efforts to identify and articulate what is true, we'll do well and other times we'll mess up badly. But here's the heart of everything for us, as stated by Moses, re-stated by Jesus, and fought for by the Reformers of the 16th century:

The two greatest commandments are these: Love the Lord your God – the one we know in Jesus – with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, putting nothing before God-in-Jesus-Christ... and love your neighbor as yourself. Nothing is more important than that.

So, I expect my neighbor and I, opposites though we are on politics, will keep meeting to walk in the evenings.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 517 *“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”*

- 1 Lord, keep us steadfast in your word;
curb those who by deceit or sword
would wrest the kingdom from your Son
and bring to naught all he has done.

- 2 Lord Jesus Christ, your pow'r make known,
for you are Lord of lords alone;
defend your holy church, that we
may sing your praise eternally.

- 3 O Comforter of priceless worth,
send peace and unity on earth;
support us in our final strife
and lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

The assembly stands.

NICENE CREED

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

**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 THE PEOPLE

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Strengthen the church to rediscover paths of love throughout the world and raise up teachers and leaders to guide communities of faith into joyful ways of welcoming, worshiping, healing, praying, singing, feeding, teaching, loving, and living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Embolden movements of people to care for the world around us. Reveal to us creation's beauty and teach us to care for your fields, valleys, mountains,

streams, oceans, and deserts, so that future generations will continue to be awed by them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Grant courage to world leaders who hear your call for peace. Protect those who live in lands affected by violence. Strengthen the United Nations and all worldwide peace efforts that help us to live in harmony as neighbors who share a common planet. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Provide refuge and help for all who lack adequate food, housing, or health care. Strengthen organizations that provide neighborly care to those who struggle. Heal and be present with the sick and the suffering. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Pour out your wisdom upon voters who will go to polling places on election day. Uplift candidates and campaign workers locally and nationwide, that your vision of neighborly love and justice would infuse every community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the witness of the saints, especially reformers throughout generations who worked to rediscover the proclamation of the gospel. Guide us in their way of living until we all gather together at your table of abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the prayers of this gathered people...

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

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life.

Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministry of Jesus at Shepherd King. If you wish to give to Shepherd King, there is a donate button on our website - www.skicsa.org

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

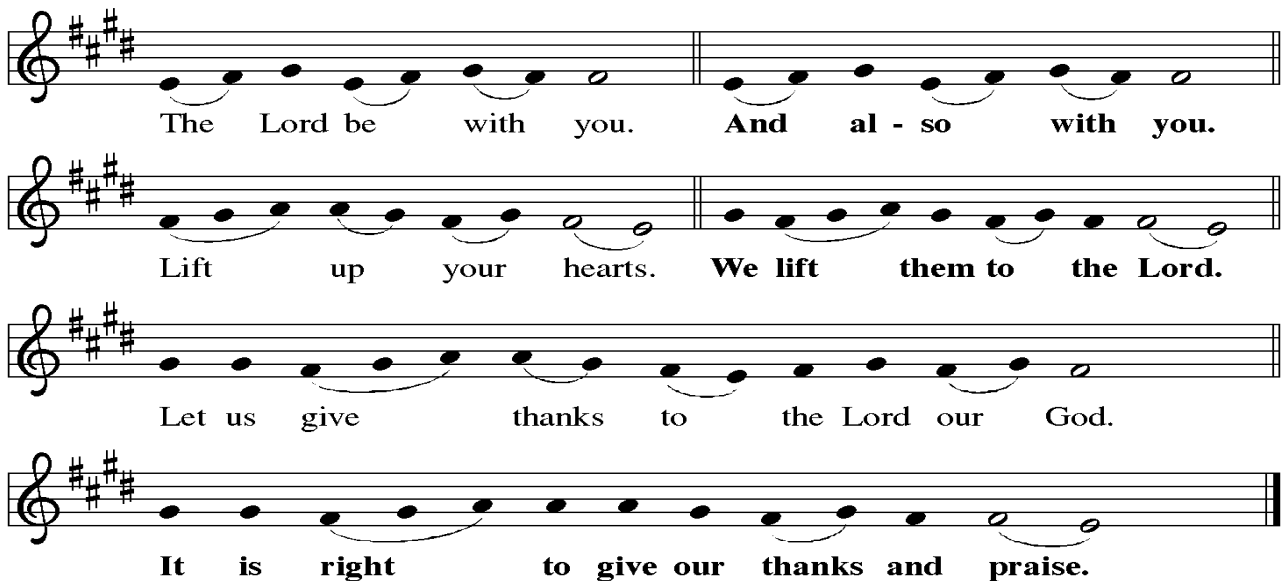
Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance, you cause streams to break forth in the desert and manna to rain from the heavens. Accept the gifts you have first given us. Unite them with the offering of our lives to nourish the world you love so dearly; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

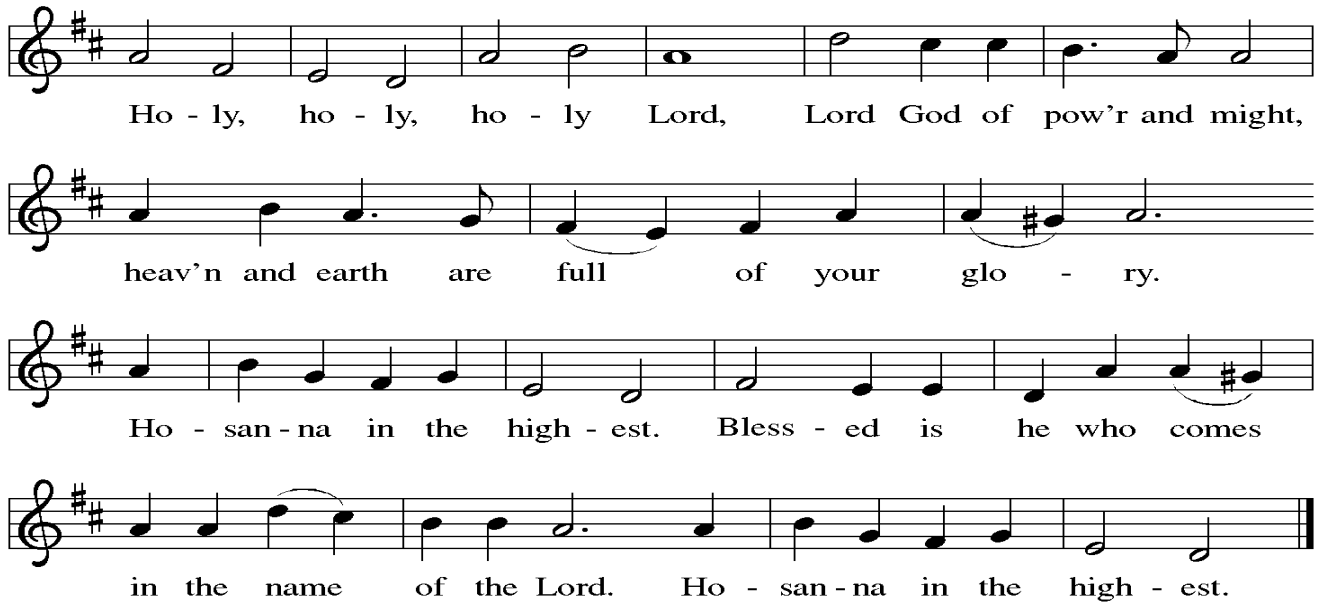


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAY

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,
al-mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resur-rec - tion
opened to us the way of ev - er - last - ing life.
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

"Holy, Holy, Holy"



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The LORD is our God, the LORD alone: God who made heaven and earth, who flung the stars across the sky, who raised up Moses to lead Israel from bondage into freedom, who renewed his covenant through prophets and priests, and who in these last days has spoken to us by his Son. Blessed be God for the Word made flesh. Blessed be God for Jesus who ate with sinners, challenged those in power, welcomed everyone, showed the way of the kingdom, and died and rose again that we might have 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

All who hunger and thirst, come. The table is ready.

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 of life, in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy, bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for worshiping with us on this Reformation Sunday. Those of you who are with us on the ground, please come to the Fellowship Hall after the service for a Congregational Conversation. We're going to gather around tables and talk about the effect these nearly two years of pandemic have had on us – how they've changed our lives as individuals and as church. We'll have some snacks so you don't go hungry. Those of you online, please send comments about how your life has changed or how you see the church or anything in the world that has changed since the pandemic.

On Saturday, please remember to set your clocks back one hour. Don't miss that extra hour of sleep. It's the time of year when we revert to standard time.

Next Sunday is All Saints Sunday. Those worshipping at home are encouraged to build a home altar or ofrenda: clear a space on a table or counter for some candles, pictures of deceased loved ones, some flowers, some mementos of things they loved. Those who will be with us in the building are invited to bring pictures of your deceased loved ones; we'll display them on a table in front of the altar.

Confirmation Class meets next Sunday from 1:00 to 2:30.

We're glad so many of you tune in to worship with Shepherd King on Sundays. Please call us at 210-344-5881, if you're in need of prayer, a listening ear, or anything else.

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BLESSING

People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, ✝ one God, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN ELW 729 *"The Church of Christ, in Every Age"*

1 The church of Christ, in ev'ry age
beset by change, but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

2 Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live before they die.

3 Then let the servant church arise,
a caring church that longs to be

a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Piano

“Christ is Made the Sure Foundation”

Henry Purcell arrg by Cindy Berry

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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We ask at the end of the service that you kindly throw away your bulletin, communion cup and any trash you may have in the receptacles provided at the rear of the sanctuary. Your assistance is most appreciated.

Prayer concerns this week: