

## **Nov 15 2020 Worship Service of Word and Prayer**

We are using the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

### **The Gathering**

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

**Hymn: ELW 668 or LBW 397: O Zion, Haste**

**The Lord be with you** ~ and also with you.

**Let us pray:** Righteous God, 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.

**We continue worship on page 198,** as we receive Chris and Kathy Tonkin into our membership this morning. Chris and Kathy have come to us from other churches, and desire to make public affirmation of their Baptism.

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

### **The Apostles' 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 for Chris and Kathy page 200-201**

#### **The Word**

The Old Testament lesson is from Zephaniah 1:7,12-18

Psalms 90 is found on page 258

The New Testament lesson is from 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Please rise for the gospel lesson.

**Alleluia, Lord whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

**Sermon ~ Rev. Norine Gullons**

Sermon Matthew 25:14-30 Nov 15 2020

This reading from Matthew is another story or parable from Jesus. A talent in his day was actually a value of money or coin. We define a talent to be a certain natural ability that a person has, a gift, or an aptitude for a certain subject.

God has given each of us unique talents. If we are blessed with a particular capacity, we could be using this to serve one another, to bring about the kingdom of God.

One of the servants in the story, buried what the master had entrusted to him. Like this servant, we too may find ourselves hesitant to use our talents, because we are afraid. We may doubt our own abilities. Or we may be concerned about how others will receive us or wonder if they may judge us.

Our fear is in direct opposition to God's grace. Our own fear can keep us from experiencing joy and spreading that joy to others. Fear can be a very powerful tranquilizer. When we live in fear of our own capacities, our focus is drawn inward and we are not able to share what God has given to us.

Sometimes we need to change our perspective and focus on being a child of God, and move forward with the work that God has gifted us to do.

While there is an important lesson in this method of understanding the parable, it misses the essential element of the story, and the essential element of our faith. *It is true that* God wants us to use his gifts to further His kingdom. But God is not concerned with the quantity of the work we do or even the quality of that work. As the apostle Paul writes – it is by grace, through faith, that we are saved, not by works lest anyone should boast.

The parable of the talent is not a lesson about ability or productivity. It is a lesson about the faith and the attitude that will serve us well.

The servant who buried his talent was afraid to try. We have all encouraged our children or even our grandchildren to try their hand at something they are interested in, but afraid to try. How many times have we told them that what counts is not whether they fail or succeed, not whether they win or lose, but that they tried to play the game, or created their artwork, or helped their friend. It is truly a modern biblical statement that we repeat to them. One that we should always remember for ourselves when we look at the both the gifts and the talents and the problems we have.

God expects us to try and work with the problems we have, so that we might become stronger, so that we can recognize the blessedness of life, and add to it for others who are struggling with the same problems.

God also expects us to try to develop the good things we have, so that those gifts might be fruitful in us and so that the world around us can benefit and add to the what the world needs.

God holds us responsible for what he has given to us as individuals. But God does not expect us to have to do all this work alone. No one is asked to do more than he or she is able. We are given companions. So we pull together with people that live in our community over a common cause and we use our talents.

We are given a church! We become involved in our family of faith, our church. We are given friends and counsellors. We are given the Holy Spirit and the living word so that we can together and impart new love and hope to those around us. We gather to support and encourage each other, and build each other up. No matter what we try, God will honor our efforts, even if we fail by our own standards. In the end we are blessed - as we never have less than what we need. Amen

### **Hymn: Master Let me walk with Thee**

#### **Our Response**

##### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

##### **Prayers of the people are led by Mark Boese**

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.*

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.**

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.**

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.**

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. We pray for Ed & Rosemary, Lucas & family, Chris & Kathy and also for Leslie, Ron, Tere, Lorraine, Barb, and Jodie. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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.**

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love. 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 of Christ be with you always . . . . . and also with you.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **The Lord's Prayer:**

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.

**Hymn: ELW # 769 - If You But Trust in God to Guide You**

**Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord's make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you,  
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

**Dismissal** Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**