

WORSHIP November 22, 2020

(To watch the videotaped version of the worship service, click the link below)

https://youtu.be/BSe5Ljt0J_E

(To read the service, continue on from here)

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

Worship is a time to learn the ways of God.

As God's love is genuine, may our love toward one another be authentic.

Worship is a time to be caught up in the Spirit of God.

We call upon God to instill within us a spirit of generosity, hospitality, and hope.

Worship is a time to nurture peacefulness within and among ourselves.

We pray for a humbleness of heart and a willingness to forgive and receive forgiveness.

May this time of worship nurture us in the ways of God.

A BRIEF CONFESSION

If we say we have no sin, if we believe we are not broken; we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We trust that your mercy is our forgiveness, your compassion our healing.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We live in the power of a forgiving God.

We live in the presence of Jesus the Christ ... we are forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

GREETING

The Lord be with you

Be filled with the spirit of God today.

We worship to open our hearts for God's blessing.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1st Reading

EZEKIEL 34:11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 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. 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 O 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. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. 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 strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them; I myself will judge between the fat sheep and lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and

wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord have spoken.

2nd Reading

PSALM 95:1-7A

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

MUSICAL OFFERING – Kristan Youn

Gospel reading

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:31-46

“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. 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, and he will put the sheep at his right hand, and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you visited me, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ 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.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 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.’ 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?’ 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.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Christ the King Sunday, Nov. 22, 2020. “Times’ Up!” Bethany

Today is the last reading for this Church Year, and it is the final reading on judgment for this year. These past four weeks we have hearing about doing the right thing and doing the wrong thing—like not being prepared or doing nothing. At times the whole judgment thing sounds more than just a little unfair to the one being judged. But now here we are at the Great Judgment Scene. Jesus, he is the Son of Man, the angels, the throne of glory, and all the nations—all the peoples of the world are now in front of his throne. Its’ vastness produces more than just a little awe. And more than just a little uncomfortableness. In our mind’s eye we can envision the vastness of the throng of peoples fanning out beyond the horizon—no social distancing required here—and there we are in the midst of that enormous mass of humanity. Now, suddenly some kind of division is taking place, and we wonder, just what is going on now?

Let’s take a quick look back to the beginning of the Church Year, because in truth we have been building toward this day all year. We have been with Mary and Joseph at the birth of Jesus; we have followed Jesus as he was tempted in the desert and as he called his disciples. We have been with him as he healed the sick; casted out evil spirits; laughed and taught his disciples and the crowds; and then we walked with him on that long road to Jerusalem and to the Cross on Good Friday. And we went with the women to the empty tomb that changed all things forever. And now we at a point beyond history and the end has come but the surprises from our Lord haven’t ended quite yet.

His voice rolls forth from the throne. We have been separated into groups of sheep and goats—surprise! But the words that are spoken are a surprise. Not questions here; no balance scales here; just words about compassion and mercy. Geez, no one is even asked how many times they went to worship or if they were even a Christian, just these words: When you fed the hungry; when you visited the sick; when you visited the prisoners; when you clothed the naked; when you gave the thirsty a drink of water, you did so to me. Wow! That wasn’t what we were expecting! These words speak about how we have served others in the name of Jesus. These words speak about how we have shown grace, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness to others as it was first shown to us by our Lord Jesus! This isn’t some kind of universal salvation by works or deeds that Jesus is speaking of here, but rather how we are light and life to those around us in the midst of the darkness of the world. And often we do so without even realizing that we are being light and life to others. And that is the reason for the surprise of the sheep as they say: When did we do that?! Whenever you did it to the least of these, you did it also to me. And are there not strange people that we sometimes help and we wonder who they were, because there was something different about them?

And for the goats—while let’s just say, they weren’t prepared when the opportunity occurred to show compassion and care toward someone else.

This scene of judgment ought to be a reminded to us as to what we should be about as the people of Christ in the world. John Furnish, a theologian of our Lutheran church writes: “The present time of the Church is also a time for doing. And what the Church is to do is to treat ALL PEOPLE as they would treat Christ himself, and as they have already been treated by Christ.” The words of Jesus today remind us that true faith is always active in love for our neighbor, no matter who that neighbor is. Indeed, for it is in our neighbor that we find the Risen Christ. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*We believe in God,
Creator of the universe,
Giver of every good gift,
Author of life itself.*

*We believe in Jesus Christ,
who reminded us of the coming of God's kingdom,
who commanded us to care for those in need,
who taught us to store up treasures in heaven, not on earth,
and who gave us the example of self-giving love.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who inspires us to faithful stewardship of God's gifts and
that God has given us gifts to be shared freely and generously, in a spirit of love and joy.
We believe that faithful stewardship is an act of worship,
a means of praising God who has blessed us abundantly.
We believe that God has great things in store for us,
for it is in giving that we receive. AMEN*

(Allen & Sara Ewing-Merrill, 2004)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless our lives, lead us in your ways, gives us hearts for gratitude and service. Fill us with your grace, that what we desire is also what you desire. Grant us the understanding that our hearts' true desire is the love of you. May the love of Christ urge us on, may we walk by faith. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless those who govern. Bless the leaders of nations, countries, towns, and cities. Bless all those who lead in all manner of ways – social, political, and religious. Fill the hearts of all with your wisdom. Guide us in the way of justice and integrity for all. Guide us to walk by faith. Holy God, tend to those who suffer in mind, body, and spirit. Tend to the tired, the dying, the poor and the hungry. Help us to follow the love of Christ, a love which urges us on to seek and serve Christ in others. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... We pray for Bethany members on our prayer list. Give them the blessing of your presence amid their times of trial. We pray for our congregation in this time of suspended worship that we will still continue to be a committed community of faith seeking to be the light of Jesus in our community and world. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... We pray for our world in a time of pandemic and societal distress and change. Give our leaders wisdom, compassion, insight, and courage to lead in ways that serve all the people under their charge. We pray for doctors and nurses, EMT's, and all those on the frontline of healthcare amid this COVID-19 pandemic. Give them health, energy, compassion, and the strength to care for those struggling with illness and hospitalization. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Listen to each of us, Lord, as we come to you in a moment of silent prayer

Into your hands, great and compassionate God, we commend all for whom and about which we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OFFERING *(Please mail your weekly offering to the church - 4300 N 82nd St. Scottsdale, AZ 85251)*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

God of all blessing, giver of all good gifts; day by day you shower us with what we need to live and prosper. With glad and generous hearts and in a response of thanksgiving, we return a portion of our wealth. May what we give be a symbol of our gratitude and a blessing of your love for those who may be helped through our offering. AMEN

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.**

BENEDICTION

*People of God, look for Jesus!
Seek him as a treasure in this great wide world.
Seek him in the eyes of your loved ones and in the eyes of strangers.
May your heart burn within you as the Lord draws close to you this week.*

DISMISSAL

*Go in Peace ... to live and serve in the way of the cross
Thanks be to God.*