

## LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

First and Foremost  
November 25 & 26, 2023

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### AS WE GATHER

Preparing for Christ's return means loving the people around us. Today's Readings reveal that also means living the orthodox life today. *Orthodox* means "right glory," and today we glorify God for sending His Son, David's descendant, to fulfill the promise in Ezekiel and to care so deeply for us that He died for us. In essence His cross was His throne, loving us to death. We dare not wait to share that news, for Christ has already risen, Paul reminds in the Epistle. Right now the end time in which we live has multiple opportunities to share God's love. In the Gospel, Jesus explains that means caring for the "least of these My brothers" (Matthew 25:40) in their hunger, poverty, and even separation from society. Why? Because the Kingdom has already been graciously prepared for us. Today's Readings encourage us to give God "right glory" by sharing His love.

**Reception of Holy Communion:** If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

### WELCOME

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

### HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

### OPENING HYMN #905 "Come, Thou Almighty King"

Come, Thou Almighty King, Help us Thy name to sing; Help us to praise;  
Father all glorious, O'er all victorious, Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

Come, Thou incarnate Word, Gird on Thy mighty sword; Our prayer attend.  
Come and Thy people bless, And give Thy Word success,  
And let Thy righteousness On us descend.

Come, holy Comforter. Thy sacred witness bear In this glad hour!  
Thou, who almighty art, Now rule in ev'ry heart,  
And ne'er from us depart, Spirit of pow'r.

(Rise) To Thee, great One in Three, Eternal praises be Hence evermore!  
Thy sov'reign majesty May we in glory see, And to eternity Love and adore.

### INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

### CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us confess our unworthiness and ask His grace and mercy.  
Through Ezekiel, God said that He would "search for My sheep and will seek them out."

People: **We confess that we have wandered away as erring sheep, preferring the pleasures of this world rather than the rich pastures you have provided. Forgive us, O Lord.**

Pastor: Paul wrote that "God has put all things in subjection under Christ's feet."

People: **We confess that we have not always been loyal subjects of our Lord, but have made decisions based on our own thoughts and desires. Forgive us, O Lord.**

Pastor: Jesus foretold that He will judge people about how they treated others—the hungry, strangers, and prisoners.

People: **We confess that we have not always sought to share your love and meet the needs of the people around us. We cannot change without your grace, mercy, and strength. Forgive us, O Lord.**

Pastor: Rejoice! The One who comes to judge is the same Jesus who is the one who gave His body and shed His blood for you on the cross. He is the first to rise from death, and by His grace we shall follow Him to His eternal kingdom. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**Refrain:** This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
whose blood set us free to be people of God. **Refrain**

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,  
and honor, blessing, and glory are His. **Refrain**

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:  
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. **Refrain**

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.  
This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

### **SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

**Pastor:** Let us pray. Eternal God, merciful Father, you have appointed your Son  
as judge of the living and the dead.

**People:** **Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the  
kingdom prepared for your own from the foundation of the world;**

**Pastor:** through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** **Amen.**

(Be seated)

### **10:30 BAPTISM SONG #740 “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb”**

I am Jesus’ little lamb, Ever glad at heart I am;  
For my Shepherd gently guides me. Knows my need and well provides me,  
Loves me ev’ry day the same, Even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away. Jesus is my staff and stay.  
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, Into pleasant pastures leads me:  
When I thirst, He bids me go Where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am, Even now the Shepherd’s lamb?  
And when my short life is ended, By His angel host attended,  
He shall fold me to His breast, There within His arms to rest.

### **✠ WORD ✠**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24* (God will shepherd His people Himself.) <sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And 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 ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares 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, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

**Lector:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** *1 Corinthians 15:20–28* (Christ is the first to rise from death; death will be destroyed.) <sup>20</sup>But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup>For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup>Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup>For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. <sup>28</sup>When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

(Rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 25:31–46* (The Christian life involves loving the people around us.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

**People: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who 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 drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire 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 no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, 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.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ.**

(Be seated)

5

## CHILDREN’S SONG & CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

**“Rejoice in the Lord Always”** (AGPS 203)

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice. *Repeat song*

### SERMON HYMN #790 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

O my soul, praise Him, for He is your health and salvation!

Let all who hear Now to His temple draw near, Joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things is wondrously reigning  
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.

Have you not seen All that is needful has been Sent by His gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully, wondrously, made you,  
Health has bestowed and, when heedlessly falling, has stayed you.

What need or grief Ever has failed of relief? Wings of His mercy did shade you.

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;  
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.

Ponder anew What the Almighty can do As with His love He befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!

All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!

Let the Amen Sound from His people again; Gladly forever adore Him!

### SERMON

(Rise)

#### 5:00 & 8:00 NICENE CREED

**People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made**

6

**man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.**

**And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.**

(Be seated)

**OFFERINGS** As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

#### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**Pastor:** Lord God, you gather your people from all nations and bring them into your one, holy Christian and apostolic flock. Strengthen them by your grace, that they may gladly feast upon your riches in your Means of Grace and declare your praises to all who will hear. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Almighty God, you judge between your sheep, and you shepherd your people with your Holy Word. Encourage your pastors. Through their faithful service, continue to seek the lost, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Heavenly Father, you have subjected all things under your Son, who gladly subjects Himself to you. Bless the homes of your people, that parents may train and catechize their children with wisdom and love, and that children may gladly submit and honor their father and mother.

**Pastor:** Be especially with Anthony and Ameena whom you have baptized and brought into your family. Be with Mervin, Desirae, Luis and Jacqueline as they raise their children in your loving care. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** O Lord of lords, you sustain every rule, authority and power as you see fit, until this world's powers should pass away. Bless all in civil authority, that they would not provoke your wrath but maintain order and justice for the peace of your people. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Merciful God, be with John Gieschen who is remembering his wife Sue, on her birthday. We thank you for the life that you have given her and continue to give her with you in paradise. Be with him as he waits to see her again when your Son returns. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Father in heaven, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness, while now we contend with a multitude of afflictions under the curse of sin. Remember those in need of help and healing including Danielle, Marlene, RoseMarie, Dorothy, Janice, Marga, Chris, Ardis, Noah, Guy, Mike, Jill, Don, Pat, Janet, Norma, Vern, Amy, Cathy, Cindy, Helga, June, Shirley and Sarah. Preserve them, deliver them from their transgressions and hold not your peace at their tears. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** God of grace, as death came by a man, so by your Son has come the resurrection of the dead. Endow your people with penitent hearts at your table, that they would receive in your risen Son's body and blood a foretaste of the eternal feast to come. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** God of life, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. We give thanks to you for those you have gathered into your kingdom and who are asleep in Him. Strengthen our conviction that death is defeated as we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Almighty God, you have prepared your kingdom for us from the foundation of the world. Preserve us in faith and love throughout our days, that we may care for your servants and our neighbors with compassion and joy, looking toward that day when the Son of Man comes in His glory; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

#### 5:00 & 8:00 THE LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

#### THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

#### PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

#### AGNUS DEI

Page 163

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Be seated)

#### DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

#### HYMN #709 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

The King of love my shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am His And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul He leadeth  
And, where the verdant pastures grow, With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me  
And on His shoulder gently laid And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight; Thine unction grace bestoweth;  
And, oh, what transport of delight From Thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days Thy goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise Within Thy house forever!

#### HYMN #825

#### "Rise, Shine, You People"

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered Our human story;  
God in Him is centered. He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded,  
With grace unbounded.

See how He sends the pow'rs of evil reeling;  
He brings us freedom, light and life and healing.  
All men and women, who by guilt are driven, Now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate, your banners high unfurling,  
Your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.  
To all the world go out and tell the story Of Jesus' glory.

Tell how the Father sent His Son to save us.  
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.  
Tell how the Spirit calls from ev'ry nation His new creation.

#### HYMN #712

#### "Seek Ye First"

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, And His righteousness.  
And all these things shall be added unto you! Allelu, alleluia!

Ask and it shall be given unto you, Seek and ye shall find,  
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you, Allelu, alleluia!

Man does not live by bread alone, But by ev'ry word  
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, Allelu, alleluia!

#### COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

### POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, you have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of your Son's body and blood.

**People: Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end;**

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

### BENEDICTION & DISMISSAL

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### CLOSING HYMN #680 "Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise"

Thine the amen Thine the praise Alleluias angels raise  
Thine the everlasting head Thine the breaking of the bread  
Thine the glory Thine the story Thine the harvest then the cup  
Thine the vineyard then the cup is lifted up lifted up.

Thine the life eternally Thine the promise let there be  
Thine the vision Thine the tree All the earth on bended knee  
Gone the nailing gone the railing Gone the pleading gone the cry  
Gone the sighing gone the dying what was loss lifted high.

Thine the truly Thine the yes Thine the table we the guest  
Thine the mercy all from Thee Thine the glory yet to be  
Then the ringing and the singing Then the end of all the war  
Thine the living Thine the loving evermore evermore.

Thine the kingdom Thine the prize Thine the wonder full surprise  
Thine the banquet then the praise Then the justice of Thy ways  
Thine the glory Thine the story Then the welcome to the least  
Then the wonder all increasing at Thy feast at Thy feast.

Thine the glory in the night No more dying only light  
Thine the river Thine the tree Then the Lamb eternally  
Then the holy holy holy Celebration jubilee  
Thine the splendor Thine the brightness only Thee only Thee.

Preacher & Liturgist  
Lectors  
Organist

Pastor Joshua Grotelueschen  
Grant Gundersen, Katie Librizzi  
Deaconess Carole King

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