

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

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

Confession and Forgiveness

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

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 Hymn

“All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name”

#634 vs. 1,2,3,6

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.

Responsive Reading from Psalm 95:1-7a

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

²**Let 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.

⁴**In 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.

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

^{7a}For the LORD ¹is our God,
and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 25:31-46

[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

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

We live in a skeptic society.

We hear something and our go to response is, “is that real?”

This has been shaped in part by the spread of technology and the ease in which truth can be altered, or stretched, to fit a narrative. And we have all done it. And we’ve perhaps all fallen victim to it as well.

Our Gospel text today, for this Reign of Christ Sunday has Jesus comparing himself to the many demographics that we are perhaps most skeptical about.

The hungry. The thirsty. The stranger. The naked. The sick. The imprisoned.

As a society we have written the stories for these demographics. We have ascribed the narratives that fit our feelings to their truly lived experiences.

It is next to impossible to travel from here to anywhere in Downtown Eau Claire and not pass someone that we would define as homeless. And the closer you get to certain locations the more dense this demographic becomes.

And, the almost immediate feeling we have when we encounter these situations is “how do I know they aren’t scamming me? How do I know they aren’t just going to go straight to the liquor store? Why is it up to me to help them? I didn’t put them in that situation. They did!”

And I’m afraid we all do it.

Now, some of the excuses are almost too easy.

“I only carry credit cards. I don’t have cash.”

“The light turned green I need to go.”

Never have modern day conveniences been so inconvenient.

But, Jesus, this Reign of Christ Sunday, the Sunday that wraps up our church year, where we hear and wonder together what it means that Christ is leading us and we live in His kingdom, tells us that what we do to the very least among us, these demographics for whom we have written the story, we do to him.

When we clothe them, give them something to drink, welcome them in, visit them, be the radically hospitable people of faith that we are called to be, we are doing that to Christ.

But, when we don’t clothe them, don’t give them something to drink, don’t welcome them in, don’t visit them in prison, don’t be the radically hospitable people of faith that we claim to be, we aren’t being that for Christ.

In a world where we want to prescribe stories to folks we have never interacted with; Christ calls us to prescribe His story to them. It is core to our beliefs as people of faith that we are made in the image of God. That, in the beginning when God created humans, God picked up the dust and clay of the earth, molded it, formed it, shaped it in the image of God, and breathed life into it.

What that means for us is that we are made in the image of God. That, when we look into the mirror it is the face of God looking back at us. When we tell ourselves all of the things we don’t like about ourselves, or what could be better about ourselves, we are saying that what God has done is not perfect.

And, when we do the same thing looking at our neighbor: that it isn’t our fault that they are hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or a stranger, or imprisoned, and thus is not our problem to fix, then we are saying that what God has done is imperfect.

This is a Holy indictment. And, know that I do not stand in front of you scolding you, rather I stand in front of you confessing this with you.

As Jesus speaks these words he is telling us what the Kingdom of God looks like. This is God’s idea of life in God’s Kingdom. And, when we speak of God’s Kingdom, and hear Jesus speak of God’s Kingdom, we realize it is not an image of what is to come, but rather what God desires it to be here and now.

This is God’s hope for us as people of faith.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Song of the Day

“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

#857

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, from Christ we receive our call to feed, clothe, and welcome. Direct your church to respond to this call with faithfulness and generous love. We pray for the work of ELCA World Hunger and partnerships with global feeding ministries. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Christ, the rock of our salvation, we are brought into union with all of creation. With mountains, seas, dry lands, and animals of the field, we seek your guidance and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Christ we know merciful judgment. Guide rulers of every nation in ways of humble leadership and wise decision-making. Allow aid to come to all who are underserved and care to any who are neglected. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Christ we feel the depth of your love and care toward us. Nourish all who hunger, connect any who are isolated, and surround all who experience rejection or abuse. We pray for those who suffer (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Christ we are made the people of his pasture. Inspire the outreach and social ministries of this congregation (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, family of Verna Gunderson*). We pray for all people who serve and attend to the needs of others. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Holy God, in Christ we are welcomed home. We praise you for the faithful witness of those who have served you and extended your welcome and love to us (*especially*). Unite us with them as one body of Christ. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory 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.

Words of Institution

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

Communion

#471 & #474

Prayer

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.

Dismissal

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

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!

And all of Good Shepherd said...

AMEN!

Sending Song

“Crown Him with Many Crowns”

#855 vs. 1,4

Blessing

May the God of all creation,
in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved,
who strengthens us for service,
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God,

Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit,
be with you today and always.

Amen.

November Financial Snapshot

Your Generosity in Action:

It was a cozy Sunday in worship with a blessing of our wonderful quilts! Following worship, 6 quilts went to the Veterans home in Chippewa and 18 to Affinity House - LSS.



THANK YOU!!

Through November 15

Total Revenue **\$10,328**

2 More Sunday Offerings

Total Expenses **\$12,396**

November 2022: \$17,903

Difference to date:

-\$2,068

Our prayers and sympathy to the family of Verna Gunderson. Her service will be here at the church on Friday, Nov. 24 at 11 a.m.

If you would like to have flowers on the altar in the coming year, please talk to DeAnne in the office.

Thanksgiving Worship

Join us at St. James the Greater Catholic Church on Tuesday, Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the food pantry. Hospitality will follow the service.

Outreach is sponsoring a Diaper Drive Nov. 26-Dec. 10 for Shepherd's Closet to refill their cabinets for the upcoming months. Help us help them as they open their doors to community members.

Upcoming Events at Good Shepherd

Choral Program will be Sunday, Dec. 10 at 9 a.m.

Faith Formation (Children's) Program will be Sunday Dec. 17 at 9 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship will be Sunday, Dec. 24 at 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Christmas Day worship will be at 10 am.