



## St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

"A Legacy of Worship and Outreach in San Antonio since 1857"

502 East Nueva, San Antonio, Texas 78205  
www.StJohnsSA.org ◇ info@StJohnsSA.org  
Phone 210-223-2611

**33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**  
**November 15, 2020**

*Welcome! Our lectionary readings during these final Sundays in Ordinary Time speak of the end times. The Prophet Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. The Apostle Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. And our Lord Jesus tells the Parable of the Talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.*



### **Prelude**

***Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven* by John Behnke**

### **Bells**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the Holy Trinity: Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God forever. Amen.**

Recognizing our need for God's mercy and grace, we confess our sin...

*(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)*

God of heaven and earth:

**We name before you the sin that enslaves us,  
the sin that wounds us and others,  
the sin that scars our world.  
We have held too tightly your gifts.  
We have lived for ourselves at the expense of others.  
Turn us again to you, O God, and toward our neighbor.  
Have mercy on us, O Lord. Amen.**

God is generous and faithful, forgiving sins without number,  
welcoming all to the feast, and giving us a place among the saints.  
Through the humble obedience of † Christ Jesus,  
who went to the Cross for our sake, you are forgiven and made whole.  
The Spirit of God is at work in you, enabling you to live for one another. **Amen.**

### **Choir**

***Let Streams of Living Justice***

### **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.**

## Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, our merciful master,  
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.**

## First Reading

## Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

<sup>7</sup>Be silent before the LORD God!  
For the day of the LORD is at hand;  
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,  
he has consecrated his guests.

<sup>12</sup>At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs,  
those who say in their hearts,  
"The LORD will not do good,  
nor will he do harm."

<sup>13</sup>Their wealth shall be plundered,  
and their houses laid waste.  
Though they build houses,  
they shall not inhabit them;  
though they plant vineyards,  
they shall not drink wine from them.

<sup>14</sup>The great day of the LORD is near,  
near and hastening fast;  
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,  
the warrior cries aloud there.

<sup>15</sup>That day will be a day of wrath,  
a day of distress and anguish,  
a day of ruin and devastation,  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness,  
<sup>16</sup>a day of trumpet blast and battle cry  
against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring such distress upon people  
that they shall walk like the blind;  
because they have sinned against the LORD,  
their blood shall be poured out like dust,  
and their flesh like dung.

<sup>18</sup>Neither their silver nor their gold  
will be able to save them  
on the day of the LORD's wrath;  
in the fire of his passion  
the whole earth shall be consumed;  
for a full, a terrible end  
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## Second Reading

## 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup>But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup>for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup>for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Holy Gospel

## Matthew 25:14-30

The good news of Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew:

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*[Speaking about the Reign of God, Jesus said to the disciples:]* <sup>4</sup>"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

<sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

<sup>26</sup>But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.

<sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

The Gospel of the Lord:

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

**Pastor James Dew**

## Anthem

**Teach Me Your Way, O Lord by B. Wayne Bisbee**

## Apostles' Creed

With the whole Church in heaven and on earth, we confess our faith:

**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 of Intercession

As a gathered people of God, let us lift our prayers for the Church, the world, and all who are in need:

Holy God, we pray for your Church, that we, your people, may be increasingly aware of all you have entrusted to us, and use all that is ours to embody your reign of justice and peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the grace, O Lord, to place our lives into your hands, to be shaped and molded by you, that we may live out with boldness and celebration the tasks of ministry which you continually set before us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, we pray for all who are facing responsibilities that seem overwhelming, that you will give them courage, help them to see the small steps they need to take, and deepen their trust that you are always near. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray, Lord God, for the growth of peace in both our neighborhoods and across the globe, that your hand will move all of us to seek new and innovative ways to provide safety, fullness, and equality for all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are broken in body or spirit, and for all who struggle in hard situations. We offer our prayers for the well-being of *Bob Cauble, Ralph Detwiler, Claudine Michalek, Frances Franz, Alwen Schaefer, Bill Brewer, Lee Iredale, Mary Jane Schessenhagen, Beth Knox, Paul and Gloria Boenisch, Jeff and Lori Sackett, Kenny and Cheri Knippa, Kim Friesenhahn, Chris Gates, Paul Mason, Dean Olson, Ron Olson, Viola Caraway*, and all whom we name in our hearts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our Father God, may the prayers we offer be a means by which you bring forth new life, not only hoped for, but worked for, through our own faithful word and deed. **Amen.**

## Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

*(Please verbally greet those nearest you with these or similar words: "Peace be with you.")*

## Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,  
Almighty and Merciful God, through Jesus our Christ,  
who, on this first day of the week, overcame the powers of sin and death,  
opening to us the way of everlasting life.  
You have made us to be a holy people,  
claiming us through the waters of Baptism and marking us with the sign of the Cross.

For on 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, as often as you drink of it, for the remembrance of me.

Every time we eat this bread, our brokenness is mended;  
every time we share this cup, we receive that grace which transforms us;  
every time we come to this meal, we proclaim the One who gives us life:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup, our Lord Jesus gives us his very self, that we  
who share in Christ's body and blood may live as a people of new life,  
and on the last day stand and be counted among the saints in light. **Amen.**

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom, and help 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.**

## **Holy Communion**

*We believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine and we welcome all who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament. During this time of pandemic, individual servings of the Eucharist are being offered in the pews at the direction of the Pastor.*

## **Communion Prayer**

God of Promise,  
in these simple signs of bread and wine  
your Son comes among us today  
to be our companion on the road  
and to help us carry our burdens.  
May we learn from him  
to go all the way with one another  
on the humble road of serving love.  
We ask you this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Benediction**

The Spirit of the Lord rest upon you.  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,  
the Spirit of joy in God's presence

And the blessing of God,  
Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit  
Be among you, and shine through you. **Amen.**

## **Choir**

***The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve***

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace to serve both God and neighbor.  
**In the Name of Christ. Amen.**

## **Postlude**

***Simple Gifts by J. Wayne Kerr***

*Worship is central to who we are as a people of God. Every time we gather to hear and respond to the Word, to offer up our prayers for the needs of many, and to receive Christ's living presence in the consecrated bread and wine, we seek to "become what we receive", namely, the Body of Christ for the sake of the life of the world. As we are gathered, fed, and then sent back out in mission, God empowers us to be bearers of blessing and vessels of grace, commissioning us to intentionally live out the reign of God throughout the course of our weekly living.*

## This Week at St. John's

Today, November 15 @ 8:30am	Pastor's Class
Today, November 15 @ 10:00am	Worship
Tuesday, November 17 @ 11:00am	Project Pack-a-Lunch
Wednesday, November 18 @ 12:15pm	Word, Silence, and Prayer - Online ( <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88615339651">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88615339651</a> )

*Please see our online calendar at [www.stjohnssa.org](http://www.stjohnssa.org) for other events.  
For prayer requests, please contact the church office  
(210) 223-2611 or [info@StJohnsSA.org](mailto:info@StJohnsSA.org)*

## Announcements

**Project Pack-a-Lunch** is serving the community by distributing 1,200 lunches a week, and they need help! (Operation Sandwich is now complete!) Refer to the list below to see how you can contribute by making a lunch. Drop off pre-made lunches on November 17, and for more information about this ministry, please contact Bea Imken at 210-878-7874.

- Brown Bag size #8
- Something Salty (i.e., chips or crackers)
- Something Sweet (i.e., honey bun, cookies)
- Something Extra (i.e., granola bar, candy)
- You are welcome to write a word of encouragement on the bag!

**Annual Cookie Walk** is cancelled this year. We look forward to this annual tradition being held next year.



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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