

Second Sunday of Advent
“Images of God” ~ God the Potter
December 6, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

Today, the first Sunday of the month, we will celebrate Holy Communion. As we prepare to take part in this meal together from home, please gather bread (or a cracker) and wine (or juice).

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Welcome to Cross of Glory Lutheran Church on this second Sunday in Advent. Wherever you are and however you're taking part in today's worship, we're glad you are with us. This Advent season, we are exploring "Images of God." Throughout scripture, we find a rich abundance of different names for, or images of God—some of these images may be familiar to us, as they're already part of our liturgical vocabulary or our prayer life: father, rock, king, bread. But there are images of God found in the pages of our holy text that might be lesser-known, images we might even be less comfortable with: warrior, woman in labor, darkness, migrant, convict, chicken (yes, you read that correctly...see Luke 13:34).

During the season of Advent here at Cross of Glory, we're exploring three of the images of God that appear in our assigned lectionary texts from Isaiah. Last week, we read about God the shepherd. This week, we're exploring God the potter. Next week, Isaiah tells us about the God who clothes us, perhaps like a weaver or a quilter. All of these images prepare us for the final week of Advent, when we'll hear about God coming to us not just in an image but in flesh.

Exploring images of God in scripture reminds us that we have a God who's not just some distant deity floating above us, removed from our everyday lives, or a God who we have to wait around for until he's born on Christmas. These images invite us to notice the ways that God is among us already, showing up in the mundane stuff of our daily lives—in ways we may not expect, in people we may perhaps not desire, in places we may not predict.

But Advent is a season when we are to prepare ourselves for the unexpected, to brace for the undesirable, to be ready for the unpredictable. Today's Gospel text from Mark ends by saying "Keep awake!" (13:37) That's what Advent is all about—watching and waiting and keeping awake (figuratively and literally!). It's the season when we are to open our eyes to the God who not only *is to come*, but the God who *is come*: Emmanuel.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us confess our sins and hear the promise of God's mercy as we read together a prayer by Martin Luther...

Look, Lord, on us empty vessels that needs to be filled.
In faith we are weak, strengthen us.
In love we are cold, warm us and make us fervent,
So that our love may go out to our neighbor.
We doubt and we are unable to trust you completely.
Lord, strengthen our faith and trust in you.

**You are all the treasure we possess.
We are poor, you are rich,
And you came to have mercy on the poor.
We are sinners, you are goodness,
But we can give you nothing.
Therefore, we shall stay with you.
Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

MUSIC Bring Many Names

Bring many names
Beautiful and good,
Celebrate in parable and story.
Holiness in glory,
Living, loving God.
Hail and hosanna!
Bring many names.

God with us,
Christ, Emmanuel,
Soon a babe incarnate in a manger.
While we wait your coming,
be with us now.
Hail and hosanna!
Bring many names.

Great living God
Never fully known.
Joyful darkness,
far beyond our seeing.
Closer yet than breathing,
everlasting home.
Hail and hosanna!
Bring many names.

God who sends us forth
Into the world,
Help us see your image in each other.
Open us up to
seeing you a-new.
Hail and hosanna!
Bring many names.

PRAYER OF THE DAY The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Let us pray . . . **God the Potter, you shape us, you mold us, and you make us in your image.
Help us to see your image in ourselves and in our neighbor, that we might live as vessels
for your work in the world. In the name of the God of many names, Amen.**

READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.

⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POTTERY INTRODUCTION - Rev. Ali Tranvik

There is a Japanese pottery called "kintsugi," which translates literally to "golden repair." It is the art of repairing ceramic pots and vases that have been broken. Kintsugi uses a kind of glue to do so, but what makes this art form unique is that it's then mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. What this does, when the pieces of the pot are rejoined, is actually highlights the points of breakage. The cracks are not disguised or smoothed over but rather illuminated in shimmering (even gaudy?) gold. The cracks become a visible part of the object's history, part of its story, part of its beauty. Kintsugi reflects a broader Japanese philosophy, which embraces that which is damaged or flawed. It is an aesthetic of imperfection and incompleteness. It values marks of wear, it celebrates the damage of an object, the work it has done, the work it has yet to do.

Now, I don't want to be romantic or trite about it—damage is damage. "It's painful, it can take horrible forms, and the fact that sometimes we are able to bring beauty out of it doesn't excuse or ignore the damage or make it acceptable or worth the pain. When some kind of repair can take place (which doesn't mean making it look like it used to), that is a wonder. And if beauty becomes manifest in the repair, that is a wonder too, though not the main goal" (Richardson).

There is something, though, that people across the world are drawn to about kintsugi. Something that gives us hope in seeing broken things stuck together again. Something that perhaps reminds us of ourselves. Something that reminds us of our Potter God, who works with sharp and shattered stuff, reforming us again and again, painting us gold and making us of use for the world.

As we continue our Advent exploration today, looking at God the potter, we are excited to welcome Keith Williams, our choir director who doubles as a professional potter and professor of art history at Concordia University in St. Paul. We are grateful to Keith for sharing his gifts and insight with us from the wheel as we ponder God the potter.

REFLECTION I

Keith Williams

MUSIC #801 Change My Heart, O God

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.
You are the potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

REFLECTION II

Keith Williams

MUSIC Have Thine Own Way (Less of Me)

All: Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Thou art the Potter I am the clay
Mold me and make me after Thy will
While I am waiting yielded and still

All: Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Wounded and weary help me I pray
Power all power surely is Thine
Touch me and heal me Savior divine

Solo: You are the Potter I am the clay
Whatever it takes Lord
Have Thine own way

Solo: Less of me and more of You
I surrender Lord my life to You
You are the Potter I am the clay
Whatever it takes Lord
Have Thine own way

Solo: Less of me and more of You
I surrender Lord my life to You
You are the Potter I am the clay
Whatever it takes Lord
Have Thine own way

All: Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Hold o'er my being absolute sway
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only always living in me

CONFESSION OF FAITH 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 of the PEOPLE

"We are the clay and you are the potter." Let us pray now for the church, the world, and all those in need...

God who molds us, like a potter, you make us in your image. Inspire in us the gift of creativity, that we might take part in the work that you are doing in the world around us. And like a clay vessel, open us to the holy possibilities you have in store, and fill us with your goodness and your love. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God who creates, as Isaiah reminds us, "we are all the work of your hands." We give you thanks for the creativity of your creation. For the creatures that fly in the air and swim in the sea and crawl on the earth. For mountains and forests, meadows and streams. For trees that give breath and water that gives life. Help us to see your fingerprints all of creation, and to care for it with the care you have first shown us. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God who gathers us up, we are cracked and shattered like dry clay. We pray for all those who feel particularly broken today: for families in conflict, for communities enduring violence, for nations at war. For minds that battle disease, for bodies aching, for hearts grieving. Gather us up, O God, and glue us together. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God who consoles, our hearts are heavy today as we bear in mind and in heart all those who are sick and suffering on this day. Fill them with your Holy Spirit, that they may know your peace, which passes all understanding, and your love, which reaches into the depths of our pain. We pray especially for Gil Hartlage, Terry Stejskal, Vicky Jacobson, Jeannie Kuzmich, John and Barb Thomson, Arlene Finke, for Kim and Gary Jacobsen as Gary's brother continues to battle Covid-19, for the Balzer family at the Covid diagnosis of Lori's nephew and sister, and for Nancy and Dave Hengel at the recently surgery of their daughter. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.** For the prayers we've lifted up today and for those that remain in the silence of our hearts, we pray in the name of God the Potter, in whose image we are all lovingly crafted. **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In 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 for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered together as one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us...

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

The body of Christ is given for you. The blood of Christ is shed for you.

You are invited to partake in this holy meal at home with a form of bread and either wine or juice, trusting that God is present in it, and that it draws us together as one body, even while we are apart.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

ART REFLECTION

BLESSING

As we prepare for God incarnate to come into our world this Advent season, may the God who is already with us, Emmanuel, surprise you with his presence and as you go forth. **Amen**

MUSIC **The Potter's Hand**

Beautiful Lord wonderful Savior
I know for sure all of my days are
Held in Your hand crafted into
Your perfect plan

I'm captured by Your holy calling
Set me apart I know You're drawing
Me to Yourself
Lead me Lord I pray

You gently call me into Your presence
Guiding me by Your Holy Spirit
Teach me dear Lord to live all of my life
Through Your eyes

Take me mold me, Use me fill me
I give my life to the Potter's hand
Call me guide me, Lead me, walk beside me
I give my life to the Potter's hand

DISMISSAL

Go in peace in the name of our Potter God.
Thanks be to God.

The Order of Service is from Evangelical Lutheran Worship which is commended for use in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
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We invite you to make an offering by sending a check to the church or by visiting our new, secure online giving page which can be found at the bottom of our home page: www.crossofglory.us Thanks for your support!

<p>Congregational Support as of 11/30/2020 Annual Budget: \$225,000.00 Year to Date Budgeted: \$204,741.67 Year to Date Received: \$206,347.29 Difference: \$1,605.62</p>
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Community Announcements

- Thanks to Keith Williams for proclaiming the Word from the potter's wheel today! If you're interested in learning more about how faith informs Keith's work as an potter, check out this video of Keith at the wheel: <https://tinyurl.com/y49hklju>.
- Following today's Zoom worship service, we will gather for "Virtual Coffee Hour," a short time of small-group fellowship. Whether you're calling in by phone or watching on video, join us as you're able!
- If you haven't yet had the chance to mail back your 2021 pledge card, please do so and remember to hand-write your name on the front or back of the card or return envelope. Additionally, if you'd like a copy of your fourth quarter giving statement or have any questions about your 2020 giving, please reach out to Sue in the office. Thank you for your continued generosity in support God's work here at Cross of Glory.
- The December issue of the Glory Banner, our monthly newsletter, was sent out this week. If you did not receive it or would like to change your communications preferences, please let Sue know (svukelich@crossofglory.us).
- Bible Study will gather this Tuesday morning at 9:30 am on Zoom. Join us by phone, tablet, or computer as we explore the texts for the upcoming week.
- Pastor Ali is available for pastoral care and prayer. Reach out to her anytime at atranvik@crossofglory.us or 763-533-8602.
- Although the pandemic has prevented in-person choral concerts this year, Lutheran colleges throughout the area (including St. Olaf, Gustavus, Augsburg, Luther, and Concordia) invite you to take part in their virtual Advent and Christmas concerts throughout the month of December. Concerts are free, open to the public, and may require registering in advance. For more information, visit <https://mpls-synod.org/news/this-advent-season-art-wins/>.