

**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Service of Lessons and Music**  
**November 22, 2020**  
**Cross of Glory Lutheran Church**  
**Brooklyn Center, MN**

**PRELUDE**                      **Beautiful Savior**

**WELCOME**

**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 given to us by Christ our King. **Amen.**

**MUSIC**                      **You Are My King**

I'm forgiven	Amazing love	Amazing Grace
Because You were forsaken	How can it be	How Sweet the sound
I'm accepted	That You my King	That saved a
You were condemned	Would die for me	wretch like me.
I'm alive and well	Amazing love	I once was lost
Your Spirit is within me	I know it's true	But now am found,
Because You died	It's my joy to honor You	Was blind
And rose again	In all I do I honor You	But now I see.

You are my King, You are my King  
Jesus You are my King, Jesus You are my King

**FIRST LESSON: Ezekiel 34:11-16**

<sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>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 watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good 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. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says 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, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and

the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup>I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

<sup>23</sup>I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

**MUSIC #789 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us verses 1, 3 and 4**

- 1** Savior, like a shepherd lead us;  
much we need your tender care.  
In your pleasant pastures feed us,  
for our use your fold prepare.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have bought us; we are yours.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have bought us; we are yours.
- 3** You have promised to receive us,  
poor and sinful though we be;  
you have mercy to relieve us,  
grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
early let us turn to you.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
early let us turn to you.
- 4** Early let us seek your favor,  
early let us do your will;  
blessed Lord and only Savior,  
with your love our spirits fill.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have loved us, love us still.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have loved us, love us still.

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

*Let us pray . . .* **O God, giver of all blessings, you bless us abundantly even though we do not deserve it. Equip us to live into the freedom of this blessing, that we might serve the least and the lowly with grateful hearts. In the name of Christ the king, we pray. Amen.**

**PSALM 95:1-7a (sung responsively)**

- <sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing | to the LORD;  
let us shout for joy to the rock of | our salvation.
- <sup>2</sup>**Let us come before God's presence | with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to the | LORD with psalms.**
- <sup>3</sup>For you, LORD, | are a great God,  
and a great ruler a- | bove all gods.
- <sup>4</sup>**In your hand are the caverns | of the earth;  
the heights of the hills are | also yours.**
- <sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, | for you made it,  
and your hands have molded | the dry land.
- <sup>6</sup>**Come, let us worship | and bow down,  
let us kneel before the | LORD our maker.**
- <sup>7a</sup>For the LORD | is our God,  
and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep | of God's hand.

## MUSIC Sing for Joy

If we call to Him, He will answer us;  
If we run to Him, He will run to us.  
If we lift our hands, He will lift us up;  
Come now praise His name all you saints of God.

O sing for joy to God our strength;  
O sing for joy to God our strength, strength.

Draw near to Him, he is here with us;  
Give Him your love, He's in love with us.  
He will heal our hearts, He will cleanse our hands;  
If we rend our hearts He will heal our land.

O sing for joy to God our strength;  
O sing for joy to God our strength, strength.

If we call to Him, He will answer us;  
If we run to Him, He will run to us.  
If we lift our hands, He will lift us up;  
Come now praise His name  
all you saints of God.

Draw near to Him, he is here with us;  
Give Him your love, He's in love with us.  
He will heal our hearts,  
He will cleanse our hands;  
If we rend our hearts He will heal our land.

O sing for joy to God  
our strength... our strength.

## EPISTLE LESSON: Ephesians 1:15-23

<sup>5</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## MUSIC #434 Jesus Shall Reign

**1** Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
does its successive journeys run;  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

## verses 1, 2, 4 and 5

**2** To him shall endless prayer be made,  
and praises throng to crown his head;  
his name like sweet perfume shall rise  
with ev'ry morning sacrifice.

**4** Blessings abound where'er he reigns:  
the pris'ners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest,  
and all who suffer want are blest.

**5** Let ev'ry creature rise and bring  
peculiar honors to our king;  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.

## GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>31</sup>"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. <sup>32</sup>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, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then 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; <sup>35</sup>for 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, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup>Then 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?’ <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’ <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup>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.’ <sup>41</sup>Then 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; <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>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.’ <sup>44</sup>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?’ <sup>45</sup>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.’ <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

## REFLECTION **Pastor Ali Tranvik**

Throughout the season of Advent, which starts next week, we’ll be exploring some of the images and metaphors for God that we find in scripture. We haven’t begun Advent yet, but today our lectionary gives us a head start by inviting us to consider one of these biblical metaphors for God: Christ the king.

Today is Christ the King Sunday, but today’s passage in Matthew 25 makes it clear that we’re dealing with a different kind of king. We typically associate kings with power and prestige, royalty and riches, but *Christ* the king associates with the “least” and the “lowly.” Whatever you do to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, Jesus says in this passage, you do to *me*.

On the one hand, thanks be to God, right!? Cause if I’m being honest, I know that I am the “least” and the “lowly.” I know what a sinner I am—how spiritually hungry and thirsty and sick and imprisoned I am. And that means that God is a king for me, a king that I desperately need.

But on the other hand, there are many in this world who literally don’t have enough to eat or drink, who are estranged, without warm clothes, battling disease, and sitting in prison cells. And that’s *not* me. I have enough—indeed, more than enough—to meet my most basic materials needs. So yes, God is for me, for those of us who are in need spiritually, *and* today’s text reminds us that God is also for those who are in need materially. This text reminds us that Christ the king came to us in a body, a body that had the same material needs as the rest of us, and that we are called to love and serve this king who continues to show up in the hungry, thirsty, undocumented, sick, imprisoned bodies around us today.

This passage, one of the most quoted in all of scripture, makes clear our calling as Christians—but I have to admit, I can’t help but squirm a bit when I read it. If this is the real, concrete, practical checklist of things to do to be a “good Christian,” I’ve got some work to do (to put it lightly). I fail to feed the hungry: at a red light, I pretend to look at my phone instead of giving the man standing outside my window something to eat. I fail to clothe the naked: I have 17 (17!?) different sweaters in my closet while my neighbor struggles to keep warm as the weather gets colder. I fail to visit the imprisoned: and what’s more, I’ve got my whole life set up so that I don’t ever have to even *drive by* a prison, let alone visit those who live there, keeping the incarcerated entirely out of site and out of mind.

If eternal life depends on my righteousness, on my actions toward the Christ in these people, then according to this passage, I am most certainly a goat, not a sheep. I am not good enough. And frankly, as much work as I do to take of my neighbor’s material needs will *never* be good enough. There is simply too much need and I am simply one person. Even if I were to give away all of my material possessions, well, then someone else would need to give to me, right? “Come on!” I want to say to Matthew—to Jesus. “That’s just not how things work!” That’s good in theory but not in practice.

Perhaps that's why it's so tempting to reduce the Gospel to a spiritual message, to divorce Jesus' words from the very real, pressing, material, bodily concerns that he's talking about here. It's easy to forgo the work of addressing our neighbors' material needs because there simply no way I can ever do enough. There's no way I can ever be good enough.

But what if this is a text not about the things we must do to "be good enough." What if this text is about the things we do *in response* to the fact that—while we are not enough, and while we'll never do enough—we are loved madly by God anyway? I say that because there's this one part of the goats and sheep story that in my whole life, I've never noticed before (which leads me to suspect that it was secretly added this week without me noticing). Here's the part that was clearly added recently: Jesus calls those who clothed and fed and welcomed and visited those in need – he calls them "blessed by the Father." Verse 34 says the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom" and this week I started to wonder if maybe that blessing came first in their lives and that is what made them righteous (Bolz-Weber). Maybe they were blessed not because *they* were good but because *God* is good.

Our Lutheran faith is founded in this radical turn. Martin Luther argued that good works don't save us, but rather that we do good works—necessarily, joyfully—because we've already been saved. "God doesn't need your good works," Luther once said, "...but your neighbor does!"

Luther calls this the "Freedom of a Christian." Freed from having to earn God's blessing, freed from having to "be good enough" for God, our whole lives can be reoriented to our neighbors—to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned. We bless our neighbors because we are already blessed. And our neighbors bless us in return because they're already blessed too. None of us are blessed because we've earned it or deserve it, but because it's given anyway.

Knowing that we are already blessed and that our blessing comes to us in spite of ourselves *changes* the way we love our neighbors. It changes the ways we work to meet their material needs. We do it not out of duty or obligation, or for the sake of our own "faith resumes." We do it out of freedom, out of joy, out of, we might say: gratitude.

As we head into this Thanksgiving week, let us live in the gratitude of this blessing. Let us give thanks to our God, a very different kind of king, who calls us blessed and beloved not because we are good, but because God is good. Amen!

Sources:

- Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520), *The Luther Study Edition*, trans. Mark Tranvik, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 31-96.
- Nadia Bolz-Weber, "A Sermon on Sheep and Goats," *Patheos*, November 26, 2014.

## **MUSIC**                      **What a Beautiful Name**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1</b> You were the Word at the beginning<br>One with God the Lord Most High<br>Your hidden glory in creation<br>Now revealed in You our Christ      | <b>Chorus 1</b> What a beautiful Name it is<br>What a beautiful Name it is<br>The Name of Jesus Christ my King<br>What a beautiful Name it is<br>Nothing compares to this<br>What a beautiful Name it is<br>The Name of Jesus |
| <b>2</b> You didn't want heaven without us<br>So Jesus You brought heaven down<br>My sin was great Your love was greater<br>What could separate us now | <b>Chorus 2</b> What a wonderful Name it is<br>What a wonderful Name it is<br>The Name of Jesus Christ my King<br>What a wonderful Name it is   |

Nothing compares to this  
What a wonderful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus  
What a wonderful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus

Death could not hold You  
The veil tore before You  
You silence the boast of sin and grave  
The heavens are roaring  
The praise of Your glory  
For You are raised to life again

You have no rival  
You have no equal  
Now and forever God You reign  
Yours is the kingdom  
Yours is the glory  
Yours is the Name above all names

What a powerful Name it is  
What a powerful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus Christ my King  
What a powerful Name it is  
Nothing can stand against  
What a powerful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus

What a powerful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus  
What a powerful Name it is  
The Name of Jesus

#### **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                  (sung) ~ Holden Evening Prayer**

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

*Leader: In peace, in peace, we pray to you:*

**All: God of mercy, Hold us in love.**

*Leader: For peace and salvation, we pray to you:*

**All: God of mercy, Hold us in love.**

*Leader: For peace between nations, For peace between peoples:*

**All: God of mercy, Hold us in love.**

*Leader: For us who are gathered to worship and praise you:*

**All: God of mercy, Hold us in love.**

*Leader: For all of your servants who live out your gospel:*

**All: God of mercy, Hold us in love.**

*Leader: For all those who govern, that justice might guide them:*

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

**Leader:** For all those who labor In service to others:

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

**Leader:** Grant weather that nourishes All of creation:

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

**Leader:** Keep watch on our loved ones And keep us from danger:

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

**Leader:** For all the beloved Who rest in your mercy:

**All:** God of mercy, Hold us in love.

**Leader:** Help us, comfort us, All of our days:

**All:** Keep us, hold us, Gracious God.

## LORD'S PRAYER

*Gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as 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.**

## MUSIC #537 On Our Way Rejoicing

**1** On our way rejoicing  
gladly let us go.  
Christ our Lord has conquered;  
vanquished is the foe.  
Christ without, our safety;  
Christ within, our joy;  
who, if we be faithful,  
can our hope destroy?

### **Refrain**

On our way rejoicing;  
as we forward move,  
hearken to our praises,  
O blest God of love!

**2** Unto God the Father  
joyful songs we sing;  
unto God the Savior  
thankful hearts we bring;  
unto God the Spirit  
bow we and adore,  
on our way rejoicing  
now and evermore. *Refrain*

## BLESSING

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, and who empowers us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad!  
The blessing of Christ the King ☩ be with you today and always. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve this very different kind of king.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE      Cry of My Heart

***A special thanks to Allan Mahnke who is joining us on organ today. We are so grateful to him, and to Mark Trease and Keith Williams, for leading today's beautiful music!***

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<p><b>Congregational Support as of 10/31/2020</b> <b>Annual Budget: \$225,000.00</b> <b>Year to Date Budgeted: \$186,483.34</b> <b>Year to Date Received: \$183,069.29</b> <b>Difference: \$-3,414.05</b></p>
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## Community Announcements

- Following today's Zoom worship service, grab a cup of coffee and join us for Virtual Coffee Hour, a brief time of small-group fellowship.
- 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. Thank you for your prayerful discernment and generosity!
- Bible Study will not gather Thanksgiving week (Tuesday, Nov 24). We will reconvene on Tuesday, Dec 1 at 9:30 am on Zoom.
- This month's "Table Talks," our new Adult Ed series, will take place after Zoom worship on Sunday, Nov 29. November's topic is Faith + Gratitude. All are welcome!
- Pastor Ali is available for pastoral care and prayer. Reach out to her anytime at [atranvik@crossofglory.us](mailto:atranvik@crossofglory.us) or 763-533-8602.