

23rd Sunday After Pentecost
Adaptive Worship Service
November 8, 2020



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Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Amos 5:18-24

Introduction to the Lesson: *In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.*

Reader: 18 How terrible it will be for you who long for the day of the Lord! What good will that day do you? For you it will be a day of darkness and not of light. 19 It will be like someone who runs from a lion and meets a bear! Or like someone who comes home and puts his hand on the wall—only to be bitten by a snake! 20 The day of the Lord will bring darkness and not light; it will be a day of gloom, without any brightness.

21 The Lord says, “I hate your religious festivals; I cannot stand them! 22 When you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings. 23 Stop your noisy songs; I do not want to listen to your harps. 24 Instead, let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 25:1-13

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 25th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: “At that time the Kingdom of heaven will be like this. Once there were ten young women who took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and the other five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them, 4 while the wise ones took containers full of oil for their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was late in coming, so they began to nod and fall asleep.

6 “It was already midnight when the cry rang out, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come and meet him!’ 7 The ten young women woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 Then the foolish ones said to the wise ones, ‘Let us have some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ 9 ‘No, indeed,’ the wise ones answered, ‘there is not enough for you and for us. Go to the store and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 So the foolish ones went off to buy some oil; and while they were gone, the bridegroom arrived. The five who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was closed.

11 “Later the others arrived. ‘Sir, sir! Let us in!’ they cried out. 12 ‘Certainly not! I don't know you,’ the bridegroom answered.”

13 And Jesus concluded, “Watch out, then, because you do not know the day or the hour.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Invitation to Grace

The parable of the ten bridesmaids easily draws our attention to the differences in their levels of preparation. Some have enough oil to welcome the bridegroom; others do not. The ability of each bridesmaid to control her fate finds ready ears in a culture that favors independence and individual effort. Every day we see the consequences—good or bad—of our actions.

The early part of the parable speaks to a commonality among the bridesmaids. As they wait for the bridegroom, all of them become drowsy and fall asleep. Then comes the cry,

“Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” We might hear this as a command. We certainly have commands from God throughout Scripture. However, what if we heard the cry as an invitation?

God’s commands are a gift that invites us to live into the reality of the ever-present and ever-coming kingdom. God does not force or compel us to follow, to be obedient, or to love. It is always framed as an invitation. The psalmists invite us to praise God. God invites the people of Israel into covenantal relationship. Jesus invites all who are weary to come to him and find rest.

If the kingdom of heaven is close to us now, of course our actions will have consequences. Whether we choose to love or hate, share or hoard, work for peace or not—all of these choices impact the people around us. And yet, God’s command that we live into a way of love is not coercive, but rather an invitation to life.

In worship we gather around the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. Neither is forced; neither is required. Both are invitations to experience what Augustine called visible signs of God’s invisible grace, a gift given for each and every one of us.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

My Lord, What a Morning



My Lord, what a morn-ing; my Lord, what a morn - ing; oh,



my Lord. what a morn-ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.



- 1 You will hear the trum - pet sound,
- 2 You will hear the sin - ner cry, to wake the na-tions un - der - ground,
- 3 You will hear the Chris-tian shout,



look-ing to my God’s right hand, when the stars be-gin to fall.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship, even as we worship virtually or in isolation. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer, especially all of those involved in the Grace Fellowship for the Arts, both professional and amateur, paid and volunteer. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, the family and friends of of Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19, Hurricanes Laura, Sally and Delta, and Western wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 220,000+ people in the US & the 1.1 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

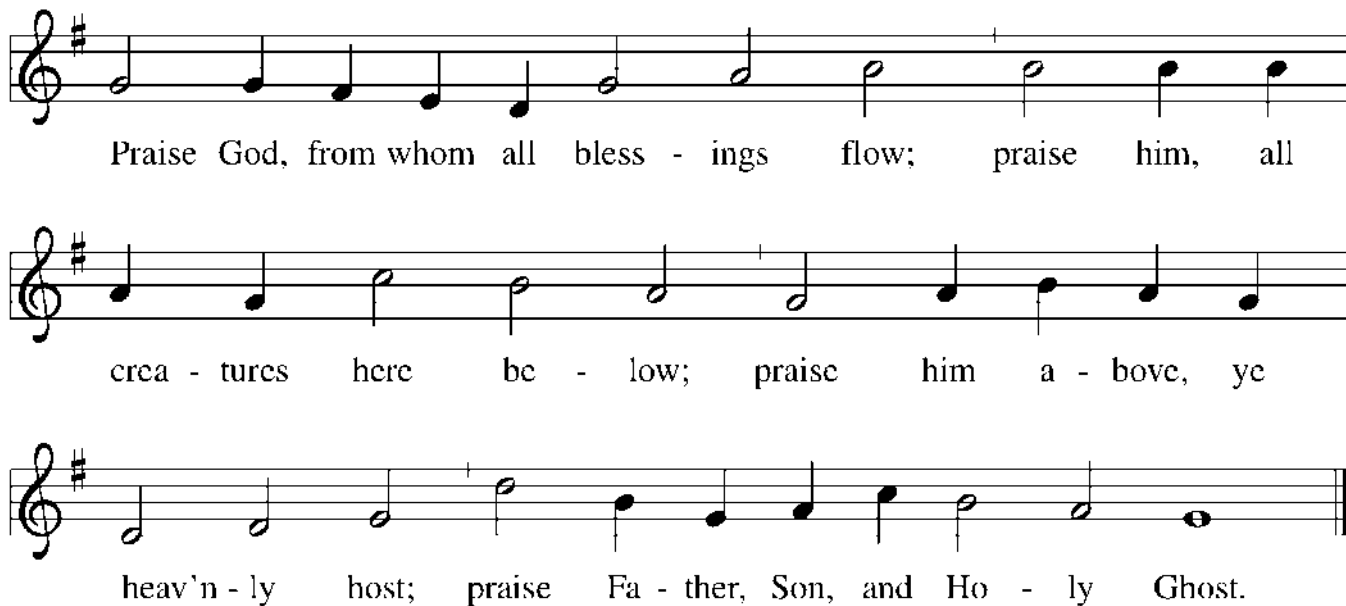
BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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