

Christ the King Sunday Service

Messiah Lutheran Church, 11/22/20

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor: Introduction to Christ the King:

On this last Sunday of the church year we recognize and celebrate that Christ is our King. Just like the news networks and others look back at the previous calendar year and review it as December 31st approaches, a day like Christ the King Sunday gives us a very special opportunity to look back at all of the church year, throughout all of its seasons. It's hard to see the whole scope of the seasons of the church from any given day, so today we pan out to see the whole, to see how Christ is not only our King in all the seasons of the Church year, but also how Christ is our King through all the seasons of our lives.

Just as the church year has its times of celebration – Easter – and times of sorrow – Good Friday; times of wonder – Epiphany – and times of introspection – Lent; times of festival – Christmas – and just plain old ordinary times – like the “Green Sundays” in the summer and fall – so it is in our lives together: we have all of those times, too.

For each season you'll hear an introduction and a Scripture reading, and then we'll have a time of music. Some of the things we'll share today come from Laurence Stookey's book called *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*; but most of them come from our experiences of living through these seasons year after year and seeing how they intersect with the seasons of our lives. We begin with Advent.

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Advent

Beginning, anticipation

Prepare, Keep awake, Keep alert

Be ready

No one knows the hour but the Father

The deep blue of the night sky while the dawn is awaited

Dreams and visions

The Messiah is coming, prepare the way!

Christ will return, bring about the Kingdom!

John the Baptist points the way

Angels' messages, Mary's song: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

The end and the beginning, the fulfillment

Wreaths and calendars, the light growing and the time approaching

Repent and believe, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand

Advent is about waiting – waiting for the promised Messiah to arrive at Christmas; waiting for Christ's promised return at the end of time. The end does not only mean the completion, but also the goal and the purpose of God's will, and our part in it in the mean time. We trust in the promise of Christ's return because we know that God's promise of the Messiah was kept. Advent is about the already of Christ's coming and the not yet of Christ's return, and it reminds us to read the gospel story backwards: Christmas makes no sense without Easter, and the past makes no sense without God's future.

Our reading from Isaiah asks the question of what it will mean for the Messiah to come, for the King to arrive, for the Kingdom to be near. The answer: it will mean justice, equality, and awe at the King's reign, at such a King and such a Kingdom that is like no other on earth. The King has come and his reign has begun, and the King will come again, and the reign shall be completed.

Christ is King of our beginnings and endings, of our anticipation and waiting, of the high and the low, of just and unjust, of each of us who are lowly and whom God still blesses and lifts up to serve and to bring in the kingdom.

Christ is King of our Advents.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-5

Lector

A reading from Isaiah:

³A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Hymn: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" ELW 257, vv. 1-2

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Christmas

Nativities and newborns, Away in a Manger
Mary and Joseph, swaddling clothes
Homecomings and the House of David,
Mangers, Shepherds, Silent Night
Angels, hosts, do not be afraid, O Little Town of Bethlehem
Herod, jealous and frightened, flight and fear and wailing
The virgin birth, Emmanuel, God With Us
The Word made flesh, incarnation
White like the purity of a newborn babe
Glory and praise, Go Tell it On the Mountain
Lights in the sky, decorations adorning
Joy to the World; What Child Is This?

Christmas is about more than just the familiar stories of the nativity: it is about the Creator incarnate in a creature, divinity taking on humanity, God becoming like us so that we might become like God – God

accepting the death that comes with the flesh so that the world might then accept life. Luther called it the sweet exchange. The anticipation of Advent gives way to the celebration of Christmas, that God would restore through Jesus what had been marred by Adam. Because of the incarnation, because of our King walking among us and experiencing everything that goes along with this life that we live, we are assured that there is absolutely nothing in this life of ours that is foreign to Christ.

Our reading from John's Gospel speaks about the Word of God, the Word that God spoke at Creation: the light of the world. This Word became flesh and lived among us. Aside from the humble beginnings, the humble surrounding of mangers and shepherds and fragile flesh and bones, these words reveal the awesome wonder of what happened in that stable – that the Word was in the world. And yet the world did not know him all the same.

Christ is King of our births and arrivals, our kings and shepherds, our flesh and blood and angels, too, of songs and rejoicing, of anticipation and celebration, of exchange and transformation, of light and of life.

Christ is King of our Christmases.

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Lay Assistant

A reading from John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Hymn: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ELW 283, vv. 1-2

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

- 2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Epiphany

We Three Kings, the wise men, the Magi
The star in the East to guide
Homage and gifts, gold, frankincense, myrrh
Light and revelation, the green of growth and life
From the river bottom to the mountain top

Jesus is baptized, the clouds are parted
The Spirit like a dove descends
The voice declares, "This is my Son, the Beloved"

Signs and wonders
Teaching and healing
The disciples are called and they follow

Jesus is transfigured, radiant white
On the mountain, Moses and Elijah
The voice declares, "This is my Son, Listen to Him"

Epiphany is about who Christ is – now that he has been born, what does it mean? Epiphany begins with the kings from the East paying homage, recognizing him as the King of the Jews. The rest of the season is bookended by Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, and at both events we hear God's approval voiced from above. Pay attention! And Jesus' ministry begins with miracles and healings and teaching, with calling the disciples. The question spreads: "Who is this?" And the answer spreads just as quickly: "This is the Son of God, the beloved one – Listen to Him!" An epiphany is an appearance or a manifestation, an "a-ha" moment like that cartoon light bulb clicking on over our heads. Like that light bulb, an epiphany is a sudden inspiration, a light that is cast so that we may see: a star, the clouds opening, our King shining in brilliant light.

Our reading from Isaiah seems to foreshadow the visit the Magi make to the baby Jesus; but overall this passage is about how God's shining light is reflected in His people. We follow the light just as the wise men did, and we follow Jesus just like the disciples did, all to God's glory.

Christ is King of our paths and journeys, our new ventures and destinations, our gifts and our receiving, our rivers' lows and our mountains' highs, of signs and wonders, of dark and light, of our identities and our inspirations.

Christ is King of our Epiphanies.

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6

Lector

A reading from Isaiah:

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,

the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Just as the Wise Men brought their gifts, so we too now offer our own.
During this time we collect our offering.

Hymn: “As with Gladness Men of Old” ELW 302, vv.1 & 4

- 1 As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led by thee.
- 4 Holy Jesus, ev'ry day
keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Lent

Ashes imposed
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return
Fasting and wilderness temptation
The road to Jerusalem
Pick up your cross and follow
The dusky purple of approaching night
Absent are the alleluias
Reflection and renewal, preparation
The wages of sin is death
Living water from the well
For God so loved the world
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live

During Lent we are confronted with our human condition – sin, death, and brokenness, especially in the stark Ash Wednesday service. As the season continues, we are always being led down the road to the gates of Jerusalem, towards Holy Week, to the verge of Jesus' Passion, to Good Friday and, eventually, Easter. Along the way we are confronted and we turn to self-examination and self-denial in light of Jesus' journey, now that we know who he is. But we are also confronted with the new opportunities that Christ offers: opportunities for repentance, for turning, for re-turning our ways to align ourselves with God's way. Lent highlights the contradiction – and the price – of the sweet exchange: in Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, we find light, hope, healing, and peace. In the symbol of death we find life. God through Christ transforms our human condition and gives us hope for a life beyond it.

Our reading from Mark's Gospel shows Jesus' preparation – his teaching and his acceptance of God's purpose and will. Peter demonstrates our own resistance and lack of understanding – this is not how it should go for our Lord and King. We set our minds not on divine things but on human things, and we fail to look past our own condition. To follow *this* King, we need to pick up our cross and follow.

Christ is King of our frailties and failings, our dark and somber times and wildernesses, our burdens and responsibilities, our hope when all seems lost, of our crosses and our dying, of our hopes and our living, of our lean and meager times and our opportunities for change.

Christ is King of our Lents.

Scripture: Mark 8:31-38

Lay Assistant

A reading from Mark's Gospel:

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,

will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Hymn: "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" ELW 324, vv. 1 & 4

- 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Holy Week

Palms and crowds, processions and Hosannas
A King has arrived in the city – rejoice!
Last suppers, farewell addresses
This is my body, this is my blood, do this in the remembrance of me
No longer servants but friends, a new commandment I give to you
Love one another as I have loved you
A garden, a kiss, a betrayal bought
Remove this cup from me if it be thy will
Jesus given into their hands

What wrong has he done?
Crucify him!
Denial
I find no fault with him
Crucify him!
Flogging
I wash my hands of this
Crucify him!
Humiliation

The place of the skull
Why have you forsaken me?
He breathed his last
Black, the color of darkness, and a curtain rent in two
Sealed in the borrowed tomb
Locked inside the upper room
Darkness. Despair. Disbelief.

Lent's journey climaxes with Jesus' Passion, and Holy Week begins on the day with two names: Palm Sunday – Passion Sunday. How quickly the cries of acclamation turn to shouts for blood, mocking, and derision. We are both crowds. It is no coincidence that the ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday traditionally are made from the previous year's palms. Then Maundy Thursday, with the Last Supper and the New Commandment to love each other as Jesus loved us, the washing of the feet, Jesus giving himself to us just before he is given into the hands of his enemies. Then Good Friday, the day of the crucifixion, a day that can only be called good in hindsight. It is the next-to-last piece of the sweet exchange begun at Christmas, Jesus dying for our sin – becoming sin – so that we might be free from it and become, in turn, more Christ-like. And then Saturday, the Vigil of Easter, waiting through the long day, remembering stories of God's prior acts of deliverance and salvation, wondering what will happen next, hiding in fear. And yet through it all, the bottom line remains the same: God is still in control, despite all evidence to the contrary.

Our reading from Romans is a reminder of our need for Christ to be our King – for we are too often still members of the murderous crowd, enemies of God, or hiding behind locked doors. Yet we are also reconciled, saved, and given new life, even if we can't see it or understand it yet – at least, not until Sunday...

Christ is King of our welcomes and farewells, our denials and betrayals, our darkest hours, our fears, our deaths, our parades and crosses, our shame and our hope, our upper rooms and lonely hills, our palms and our passions.

Christ is King of our Holy Weeks.

Scripture: Romans 5:6-11

A reading from Romans:

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Hymn: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” ELW 351, vv. 1 & 3

- 1 O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.
- 3 What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.

At this time, after Holy Week, we offer up our prayers, knowing that in our hours of need, God's promises are sure and God's hope is ever near. Each petition ends: “Hear us, O God.” Please respond by saying, “Your mercy is great.”

The Prayers

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all social ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bring peace to every place where conflict rages (*especially*). Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in your reign of unity and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Heal the sinful divisions we erect between us and release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Pour out the gifts of your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work in children's ministry, youth ministry, and campus ministry as they nurture the gifts of young people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as they face the challenges of coronavirus. We pray for those who grieve the loss of loved ones, for the sick and their families, for those fearful of an unknown future. We pray for the millions of unemployed, for children and others at home - that they be safe from abuse. We pray for those who are alone and isolated during this time that they may feel your loving presence. We pray for all the hospital and health care workers, and all first responders, that they receive needed supplies and be kept protected in the work they do. We pray for those making decisions about how to live into the future and when that will happen. Keep us all in your care as we wait for a new day. Hear us, O God

Your mercy is great.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Deagle, Deere and DeGraff families. For the talents and good things You have given each of them. Keep them united and faithful to You and each other. Guide them, protect them and equip them to do Your will Hear us, O God

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

Amen.

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Easter

Christ is risen – he is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Death has lost its sting
The tomb is empty!
Do not doubt, but believe
Touch my hands
Put your hand in my side
The gold and white of exuberant exultation!
Trumpets blast the good news!
Go – make disciples
Feed my sheep
I am with you always
Ascended into heaven
Seated at God's right hand
The Lamb who was slain has begun his reign
I am the way and the truth and the life
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Without Good Friday, Easter Sunday has no meaning; without Easter, Good Friday is nothing but a cruel joke. We cannot fully celebrate the resurrection without the death, and we cannot fully celebrate our new life without first seeing the need for Good Friday in the first place. Easter is both God's ultimate promise fulfilled and God's ultimate promise made. Christ is King over sin, death, and the devil through his triumphant victory over the grave. The sweet exchange is complete, and throughout the year each Sunday is a little Easter, and each Easter is the greatest of Sundays. We are freed from the power of sin and the drive to prove

ourselves worthy, and freed for going out to live new lives of love and service in the name of Christ, luxuriously clothed in God's grace.

Our reading from Luke's Gospel, on the road to Emmaus, once more shows that we cannot understand the story of Jesus, the story of God's salvation for us, without reading the story backwards, through the lens of the resurrection. We see that Jesus walks with us and opens our eyes and our hearts, and that he can be recognized in the breaking of the bread – a reminder that our King leads by example: sacrifice, generosity, and love for the other.

Christ is King of our new beginnings, our new lives, our doubts relieved and our faith bolstered, our risings and our liberations, our light and our acclaim, our promises and triumphs, our opened eyes and our burning hearts, our new days, our mission, our hopes.

Christ is King of our Easters.

Scripture: Luke 24:13-16, 28-35

Lector

A reading from Luke's Gospel:

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him...

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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

**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

Hymn: "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" ELW 365, vv. 1-2

- 1 Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!
- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Pentecost

A sound like a violent rushing wind
Divided tongues as of fire
Resting on each head
Driven out of the upper room
To the people
Each hearing in the native language of each
These are not drunk as you suppose

The Spirit's power
The Spirit's empowerment
The red of the Spirit's fire
Gifts given, guidance to use them
The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ
The Advocate, the Counselor, the Comforter
The dove, the wind over the waters, the breath of life
Always moving
Intercedes for us
With sighs too deep
For words to express

The Day of Pentecost summarizes what Easter means, and also what Easter does: it frees us from captivity and sends us out with good news to share for those who need to hear it. It is said that Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church; but by no means is it the first instance of God's activity. The Church is beyond just an institution – it is Christ's body in the world, Christ's hands and feet, while He remains our head, our King. Each of us has been joined to Christ's death and resurrection through our baptisms, and each of us has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit, and we are to go out and use them in service to our King. Not only do we know who Jesus is and what he does, but with Pentecost we know who we are, and what we are to do.

There are many, many weeks that follow the Day of Pentecost, the “Green Sundays” – sometimes they're called “Ordinary Time.” The Church is about more than just the high holy days – the majority of the Christian life is lived in ordinary time, and these Sundays are filled with stories of Jesus' teaching and words, his healing and miracles, his daily ministry, parables both challenging and comforting, equipping and enabling us to use the gifts that the Spirit has given us, helping us to grow ever deeper in the faith.

Our reading from Acts is not just about speaking in other tongues; more importantly, it tells of the tongues of fire, the spark of the Spirit lighting a fire in the disciples and in us. This story is about movement, out from the upper room and across the world, and throughout the rest of the book of Acts the Christian movement spreads and spreads.

Christ is King of our gifts and abilities, our missions and tasks, our movement and our stillness, our festivals and our ordinary times, of all peoples and voices, all languages and tongues, all time and space, our church and our world and all their intersections, our prayers and testimonies, of those with good news to share and those who need to hear it.

Christ is King of our Pentecosts.

Scripture: Acts 2:1-4

Lay Assistant

A reading from Acts:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Hymn: "Spirit of Gentleness" ELW 396, vv. 3-4

Refrain

*Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow through the wilderness calling and free;
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.*

3 You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

Refrain

4 You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes.
From the bondage of sorrow all the captives dream dreams;
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes.
With bold new decisions your people arise. *Refrain*

[Paraments and stole are changed.]

Christ the King

There are many things, many responsibilities, many people, many ideas that vie for the place of top priority in our lives. But God's first commandment was this: "You shall have no other gods." Our God is a jealous God. But God also gave us Christ Jesus, our Savior, Lord, and King, a King not like earthly rulers who can fall short or succumb to tyranny. Rather he is a King of sacrifice who died for us and who was raised from the dead. He is a King of empowerment who gives us our identity and our purpose, our calling and our mission. He is a King whose promises are sure and who promises to return to finish what has been started. He is a King who asks us to serve him by serving others, by putting others first, especially the least of these. He is a King who equips and teaches and guides us all along the way. Our King is simultaneously a shepherd and a cosmic ruler and judge, as we see in our final reading from Revelation.

Christ is King of our beginning and our end, through all the seasons of the church, yes, but more importantly through all the seasons of our lives.

Rejoice that Christ is our King!

Scripture: Revelation 1:4b-8

Lector

A reading from Revelation:

^{4b}Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷Look! He is coming with the clouds;

every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

⁸I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Hymn: "Soon and Very Soon" ELW 439 (all verses)

Verse 1

Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King

Verse 2

No more crying there
We are going to see the King
No more crying there
We are going to see the King
No more crying there
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King

Verse 3

No more dying there
We are going to see the King
No more dying there
We are going to see the King
No more dying there
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King

Verse 4

Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King

Dismissal:

Go in peace. Christ is our King. **Thanks be to God.**

Lay Assistant

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Here are Pastor Ryan's office hours for Thanksgiving week (posted below)! Pastor Ryan is also available via phone and email, which are: messiahmechpr@gmail.com and 507-360-7276.

Pastor Ryan Thanksgiving week hours – Monday 10am-3pm, Wednesday 9am-2pm

RETURNING TO PARKING LOT WORSHIP

At this past Tuesday's council meeting we discussed how to proceed with our Sunday worship format. Based on a recommendation from the Synod Office, following the state's new restrictions, we'll be going back to drive-in only services for the foreseeable future. The Church Council will continue to monitor the situation and attend to further updates from the Synod and the state, and keep everyone up to date. Thank you for your faithfulness and flexibility.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting for Messiah Lutheran Church will be held drive-in style in the parking lot following our worship service on Sunday, December 6th. We will be voting on the 2021 budget and electing council members.

CORNUCOPIA OF PRAYERS

If you would like your name to be a part of this year's (virtual) Cornucopia of Prayers, please let the church office know as soon as possible. We'll let you know who you get to pray for in the year to come, and someone will be praying for you, too.

MIDWEEK MESSAGES

Pastor Ryan will be taking a pause on the Prayer class for the midweek messages so that we can share a Thanksgiving service and some Advent-themed messages through the end of the year. We'll wrap up the Prayer class's last three installments in January. For Advent: please email in your "Faith Ponderings" to Pastor Ryan. A Faith Pondering is any question or wonderment or curiosity you have about the Church, the Bible, Lutheranism, or faith in general. Your questions will be the basis of the Midweek Messages in Advent. Thanks in advance!

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Beginning March 8th, we began providing a summary of the financial well-being of our congregation. Here is this week's information:

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$2,814 through November 15, 2020 (slightly up from \$2,797 on November 8).
- We are \$27,149.00 behind the year-to-date budget needs (decreasing slightly from \$27,299.00 behind the budget the week prior).
- Weekly budget need is \$3404.00.

FUNRAISER FOR MCEF

The third Monday of each month from 4 to 8 p.m. at Chicken Salad Chick, mention that you support MCEF and 10% of sale will be donated to MCEF. It is located at 6575 Mechanicsville Turnpike, Brandy Creek Commons. Available for drive-through, carry out, curbside pick-up or eat in. A large variety of chicken salads and more on the menu.

FOSTER CHILDREN CHRISTMAS GIFTS

It is time to think of our Foster Children and Christmas gifts. This year is going to be different. After polling the families, they are asking for things they can do at home. The Social Ministry team decided that gift cards, which the families have suggested, are the best gifts. They will be able to purchase whatever they want or need. They are requesting cards from Walmart, Target, Amazon, Kroger or Food Lion. The cards need to be in the amount of \$25 each, in order for them to be distributed equally. If it is difficult for you to get to a store, you can give any amount of money to a Social Ministry member and we can add to or just purchase the card. Please drop them off during the month of November, the latest being Nov. 29th. There will be a decorated box, for the cards, at the door of the Fellowship Hall, where we will be worshipping. Also you can drop them off at the church office during the week. If you have any questions please call Sharon Addair, 543-9709. Other Social Ministry members are, Diane Absher, Marilyn Gunn, Sheila Whirley, and Debbie Walker. Thank you, for your generosity!

PASTOR WALTONEN MEMORIAL DONATION

Church Council would like to offer the opportunity for members to help Messiah honor Pastor Waltonen by making contributions to a designated fund in his name. Monies given to this fund will be sent by Messiah to the Lewy Body Dementia Association in honor of Pastor Tim. It is such a privilege for Messiah to honor this gentle giant of a man who was among us for 2 years (prior to Pastor Lou) as an interim pastor. When donating, please make any checks payable to Messiah and then designate your contribution to the "Pastor Waltonen Fund" and put it in the weekly offering plate by December 1, 2020.

SMALL GROUPS

If you'd like to have a small group or committee meeting at the church, please check out the Small Group Meetings and Cleaning Protocols. You can contact Davina when wanting to schedule a time for your group to meet and get the latest protocols. The only areas open at this time include the Fellowship Hall, the hallway to the restrooms, and the restrooms. All other parts of the building remain 'closed' for now. There are also copies of the forms at church on the kitchen counter for you to use at your meeting along with necessary cleaning supplies. Davina will maintain the completed forms in her office. Thanks for all you do! Stay well everyone!

NO ROOM AT THE INN

Experience A Thrill of Hope In this year of fear and struggle we need the hope and joy of Christmas. Our 13th annual No Room at the Inn will be a virtual event with a live online Preview Gala on Friday December 4th, 2020. The virtual Nativity Exhibit will be available online through Christmas. Funds raised will be shared with My Path Forward, MCEF's emergency housing assistance program, and AFAL in Haiti building modest homes for their neediest families. Visit churchredeemer.org/no-room or call 730-7980 for details. Like and Share us on Facebook by searching for us on Facebook at No Room at the Inn Mechanicsville VA.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: HURRICANES AND CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Following the devastation caused by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, as well as the impact of wildfires across California and the Northwest, Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) is responding. You can help LDR as they assist the communities who have been impacted by these natural disasters, through prayer and giving through Lutheran Disaster Relief. Your gifts designated for "Hurricane Response" or "U.S. Wildfires" will be used entirely (100%) for direct response until it is complete. Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes or wildfires.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT – COMING BACK

We're continuing the getting-back-together process. Small groups have already been meeting, and now we're making the first go and worshipping inside together again. As we come back together in person, we also encourage you, prayerfully and as you are able, to come back in your giving, too. Thank you for the generosity you have already shown through these difficult times! Please mail in your offering to the church office, 8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, or use on-line giving through Vanco which is available on the church website. See messiahmech.com for more details. Thanks!

UPDATED: REBUILD RVA GRANT PROGRAM

On October 28, the Governor's Office released information about an expansion of the Rebuild Virginia Grants. The grants are available to small businesses and non-profits. Unlike the last time round of Rebuild Virginia grants, the expansion specifically says that an organization can receive funding even if the organization received CARES Act Funding. Qualified recipients can receive a grant of up to three months' worth of expenses to help with salaries, mortgage, utilities, etc. The FAQs aren't as entirely clear, but when you combine the FAQs with the application guide (pg 4 in particular addresses what is excluded for those with CARES Act funding), it appears that most organizations in Virginia are eligible. This funding may prove particularly helpful for child care and preschool ministries that had issues with part-time employees and PPP Loan calculations. One potential hurdle for an application is the requirement for a DUNS number. The DUNS numbers appear to be standard practice in the for-profit world and almost unheard of in the non-profit world. It is possible for a church or non-profit to apply for a DUNS number, but the online process to get the number can be confusing.

VIRGINIA RENT AND MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAM (RMRP)

The Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic. Depending on availability of funds and household need, the RMRP may provide financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments for eligible households. This includes financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments past due beginning April 1, 2020 and onward. Financial assistance is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funding and the household's need for additional assistance and continued eligibility. For more information please visit: Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp.

SMILE! MESSIAH RECEIVES .5% DONATION WHEN YOU SHOP ON AMAZON!

This holiday season, online holiday shopping is expected to increase over 33% more than last year. More people will be browsing Amazon this year more than ever. With the shopping season among us, the Stewardship team would like to remind everyone to sign up for Amazon Smile! Signing up is easy and does not interfere with Prime Membership benefits. Amazon donates .5% of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

Step 1: visit smile.amazon.com

Step 2: sign in with your amazon account credentials

Step 3: Search for "Messiah Lutheran Church Mechanicsville"

Step 4: Start SHOPPING! *please remember to bookmark smile.amazon.com for easy access every time you shop. You must add the "smile" for this program.

Thank you all and happy shopping!

GLOBAL BARNYARD PROJECT CONTINUES!

As you might remember, during last year's Sunday School, we were collecting money for Global Barnyard through the ELCA. Since the project was halted in March due to the virus, we'd like to finish what we started! Your role is to find those 'Piggy Banks' you were filling up, continue to add to them, and then bring them to church by Dec. 20. There are still some banks left if you want to get one some Sunday when you're at church (we can have an usher bring one to you). Also, between now and Dec. 20 be on the lookout for a short survey from Survey Monkey that will be used to help decide what will be bought with our collection. You should expect to see the survey in the next week or so. Right now, there is \$175.79 in our Global Barnyard Fund. Let's see how merry we can make someone's Christmas in another part of the world! Thank you for your participation in completing what we started! If you have any questions, please contact Donna Shaw, dmschow70@gmail.com, 804-205-2943.