



Christ Lutheran

CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso,
Indiana 46385 • (219) 462-6660
clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



October 22, 2023

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

At Christ Lutheran people of all backgrounds and experiences gather to worship because we all share a common hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals (“ELW”) in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, the yellow cards in the seatback holders have a place for them; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God’s people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child’s life. There’s some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God’s love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men’s and women’s restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored, and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. The **COMMON CUP** is available for anyone who wishes. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that a pastor can bring communion to you.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Blessed Jesus, We are Here

J.S. Bach

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be ✝ God,
the one who forms us,
Jesus who bears the cross,
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.
Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God,
you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you.
We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering.
We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others.
For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us.
For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us.
For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us.
Lead us back to you and set us on the right path;
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Beloved in Christ,
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.
God's compassion is beyond compare.
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.
Amen.

GREETING

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

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

KYRIE

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
 2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
 3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;

yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.
 yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.
 yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.

Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;
 Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;
 Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;

ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.

Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;

yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God of servant rule,
 your kingdom breaks our tangled webs
 where state and church collude
 to worship power and trade on fear:
 grant us the wit and will
 to give you what is your own,
 no more nor less
 than all the world and time;
 through Jesus Christ, whose kingdom comes.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children come forward for a time together.

READING: Isaiah 45: 1-7

The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the LORD has anointed to end Israel's exile. The LORD makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this LORD as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the LORD claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

¹Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him —
and the gates shall not be closed:

²I will go before you
and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,

³I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.

⁵I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.

I arm you, though you do not know me,
⁶so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

⁷I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 96:1–9

The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.

Refrain



Psalm Tone



Sing to the LORD | a new song;

sing to the LORD, | all the earth.

²**Sing to the LORD, bless the name | of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from | day to day.**

³Declare God's glory a- | mong the nations
and God's wonders a- | mong all peoples.

⁴**For great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised,
more to be feared | than all gods. R**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have | made the heavens.

⁶**Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;
power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD hon- | or and power.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the | holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts | of the LORD. R**

⁹Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, | all the earth.

READING: 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

²We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

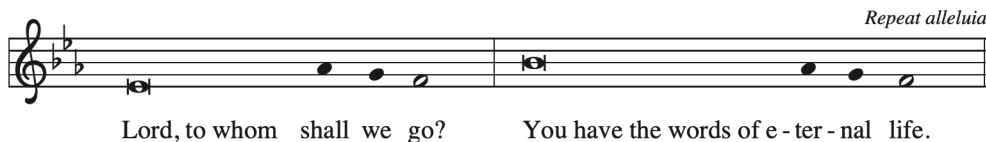
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Leader:



HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 22: 15-22

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" ²¹They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.



HYMN OF THE DAY ACS #1094

Bring Many Names

The assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.



1 Bring man - y names, beau - ti - ful and good,
 2 Strong moth - er God, work - ing night and day,
 3 Warm fa - ther God, hug - ging ev - 'ry child,
 4 Old, ach - ing God, gray with end - less care,
 5 Young, grow - ing God, ea - ger, on the move,
 6 Great, liv - ing God, nev - er ful - ly known,



cel - e - brate, in par - a - ble and sto - ry, ho - li - ness in
 plan - ning all the won - ders of cre - a - tion, set - ting each e -
 feel - ing all the strains of hu - man liv - ing, car - ing and for -
 calm - ly pierc - ing e - vil's new dis - guis - es, glad of good sur -
 say - ing no to false - hood and un - kind - ness, cry - ing out for
 joy - ful dark - ness far be - yond our see - ing, clos - er yet than



glo - ry, liv - ing, lov - ing God. Hail and ho -
 qua - tion, gen - i - us at play: Hail and ho -
 giv - ing till we're rec - on - ciled: Hail and ho -
 pris - es, wis - er than de - spair: Hail and ho -
 jus - tice, giv - ing all you have: Hail and ho -
 breath - ing, ev - er - last - ing home: Hail and ho -



san - na! Bring man - y names!
 san - na, strong moth - er God!
 san - na, warm fa - ther God!
 san - na, old, ach - ing God!
 san - na, young, grow - ing God!
 san - na,

6 great, liv - ing God!

Text: Brian Wren, b. 1936

Music: WESTCHASE, Carlton R. Young, b. 1926

Text and music © 1989 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

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.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, your Spirit animates the church throughout the world and binds believers near and far into the body of Christ. Equip us for the work of faith, and enlarge our hearts for the labor of love. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Creating God, the seas roar, the earth rejoices, and the heavens are glad at the wonder of all you have made. Bless the work of ecologists and conservationists and all those who safeguard the riches of creation. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Sovereign God, your rule and authority is over the cosmos. As you once worked through the ruler Cyrus for the good of your people, accomplish your purposes through the work of elected leaders and public servants. Guide them with your wisdom and compassion.

Accompany the people and churches in all the countries of the Caribbean with your strength and mercy. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Caring God, your arms enfold all who are lonely, oppressed, despairing, sick, and suffering. Pour out your abundant mercy on all whom this world has neglected, abandoned, and forgotten, that they may know your joy. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Almighty God, all our life belongs to you. When earthly idols threaten to lead your church astray, remind us that you alone are the source of our eternal hope. Direct the work of church treasurers, councils, and all who manage financial matters. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Everlasting God, the saints of every age have sung your praise and shared your word. We remember today James, Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, Paul Gerhardt, Simon, and Jude. We give you thanks for their witness and pray that we may join them as citizens of your unending kingdom. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshiping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Lutheran World Relief** www.lwr.org and **ELCA World Hunger/Disaster Response** www.elca.org/hunger and www.elca.org/disaster*



If you wish to give electronically, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).

OFFERTORY

Allegretto
(from Sonata for Glass Harmonica)

Naumann

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

God of power, God of plenty,
all things belong to you.

**We bring your gifts to the table
that all might be fed.**

**Form us into the body of your Beloved,
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

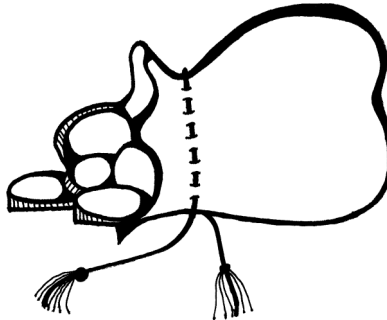
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.



The pastor continues the prayer then all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is the one.")

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated.

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored, and GRAPE JUICE is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. The COMMON CUP is available for anyone who wishes. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that pastor can bring communion to you.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the

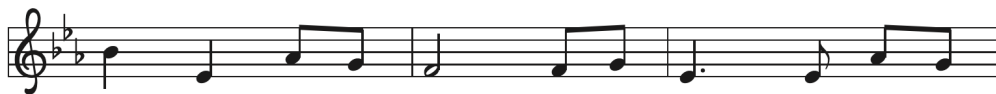


world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION MUSIC ACS #966 *Loaves Were Broken, Words Were Spoken*



1 Loaves were bro - ken, words were spo - ken by the
 2 Loaves were bro - ken, words were spo - ken in a
 3 Loaves are bro - ken, words are spo - ken, as in
 4 By the loaves you break and give us, send us



Gal - i - le - an shore. Je - sus, Bread of life from
 qui - et room one night. In the bread and wine you
 faith we gath - er here. Je - sus speaks a - cross the
 in your name to share bread for which the mil - lions

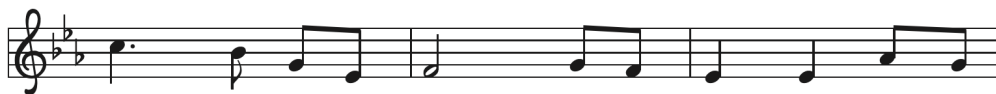


heav - en, was their food for - ev - er - more.
 gave them, Christ, you came as Light from Light.
 a - ges: "I am with you; do not fear!"
 hun - ger, words that tell your love and care.

Refrain



By your bod - y bro - ken for us, by your



wine of life out - poured, Je - sus, feed a - gain your



peo - ple. Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 1923–2007

Music: JOYOUS LIGHT, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Music © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

ELW #709 *When Our Song Says Peace*



1 When our song says peace and the world says war, we will
2 When our song says free and the world says bound, we will
3 When our song says home and the world says lost, we will



sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,
sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,
sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,



who breaks the spear and sword and stills the storm of war.
who o - pens pris - on doors and sets the cap - tives free.
who brings us home at last, and gives a song to all.

Text: Richard Leach, b. 1953

Music: JENKINS, Thomas Pavlechko, b. 1962

Text © 1997 Selah Publishing Co., Inc. www.selahpub.com. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Music © 2003 Augsburg Fortress.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

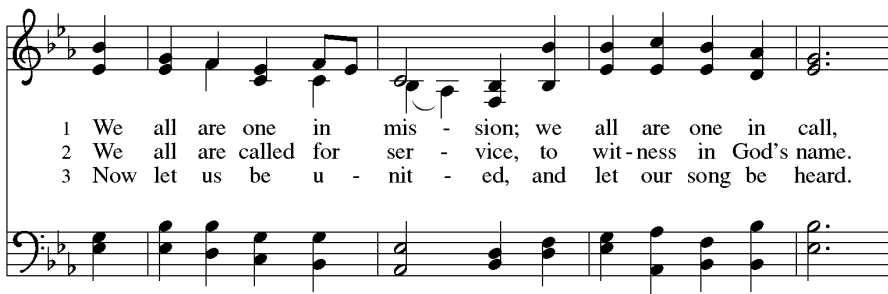
Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

The God of glory, ✚ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

Amen.





1 We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,
 2 We all are called for ser - vice, to wit - ness in God's name.
 3 Now let us be u - nit - ed, and let our song be heard.



our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.
 Our min - is - tries are dif - f'rent; our pur - pose is the same:
 Now let us be a ves - sel for God's re - deem - ing Word.



A sin - gle great com - mis - sion com - pels us from a - bove
 to touch the lives of oth - ers with God's sur - pris - ing grace,
 We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,



to plan and work to - geth - er that all may know Christ's love.
 so ev - 'ry folk and na - tion may feel God's warm em - brace.
 our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: KUORTANE, Finnish folk tune; arr. hymnal version

Text © 1986 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Fughetta in A

Mendelssohn

As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.



Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Lena Gibson	Lynx Vittitoe
Lector	Paul Conover	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Heather Olson	Karen Hernes
Communion Assistants	Barbara Clements Kathy Sutherland	Phil Hahn Sara Long
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Luke Venstrom	Jonathan Bull Maya and Jay Bull
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Tony Reinhold
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Communion Baker	Candace Jacques	

Stewardship Snippet

“I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.”

Isaiah 45:3

We share God’s abundance through our hands and work, but is still the abundance of God, who loves us and desires good for all creation. How might your hands sharing God’s abundance help point others to Jesus?

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of the **Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.**

We are thankful for:

- the natural beauty, climate, and distinctive cultural practices of these islands
- how churches have responded to disasters and served all in need
- how liberation from colonialism and oppression has been pursued through music, words and actions
- the leaders of the ecumenical movement who have come from this region.

We pray for:

- those devastated by disasters, that their lives, communities and eco-systems might be rebuilt
- the strengthening of all who faithfully witness through word and deed to the gospel
- all those affected by crime and addictions

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of October 22

October 23

James of Jerusalem, martyr, died around 62

One of three early-church leaders named James, this man is identified in the New Testament and by a historian of the time as a brother of Jesus. Scholars are uncertain whether this means a blood brother. He was a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

October 26

Philipp Nicolai, died 1608; Johann Heermann, died 1647; Paul Gerhardt, died 1676; hymnwriters

These great hymnwriters all worked in seventeenth-century Germany in times of war and plague. Nicolai, a pastor, lost 1,300 parishioners to plague, 170 in one week. He wrote “O Morning Star, how fair and bright” and “Wake, awake, for night is flying.” Heermann’s hymns, including “Ah, holy Jesus,” often express the emotions of faith. Gerhardt, perhaps the greatest Lutheran hymnwriter, was a pastor in Berlin.

October 28

Simon and Jude, Apostles

We know little about these apostles. Simon is listed as “the zealot” or Cananean in New Testament lists. Jude, also called Thaddeus, asked Jesus at the last supper why he had revealed himself to the disciples but not to the world.

Coins and Foreheads

It sure would be nice if Jesus had said his followers don't have to pay taxes. It would be wonderful to be able to say when taxes come due, "Gosh, I wanted to pay my taxes, but Jesus said I don't have to, so . . ." Of course, Jesus didn't say that, so we're not off the hook!

But Jesus says a lot more here than just "Pay your taxes." He encourages people to rethink their relationship with money and government in light of their relationship with God. He uses a coin of the Roman Empire to make a point. The coin bears the image of the emperor. So, if the emperor wants his coins back, go ahead and give them to him.

But then Jesus puts a limit on how much allegiance and loyalty to pay to the emperor: "Give . . . to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Like so many coins that bear the images of great leaders, we are told in Genesis that we each bear the image of God. Give to God what is God's! Give yourself, your heart, your soul, your mind, your will to God! Don't give any of that to those who demand you pay taxes. God has a claim on you, not those in power.

At times we might feel a dilemma when it comes to balancing our loyalties among our government and civil obligations, and our loyalty to God. But the message is clear: We belong to God. God claims each of us as beloved, as valuable, as worth more than coins or gold or dollars.

In baptism we are marked with the cross of Christ on our foreheads. We bear the image of the Crucified One who claims us by grace. At the table we are fed and nourished, welcomed and loved, because of the one who tells us our lives have great worth.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129. Stewardship Toolkit, Copyright © 2021, Rev. Robert Blezard. Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.