

## Order of Service for 11/15/2020 Recording

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn:** “*Now Thank We All Our God*” – Hymn 895

**Confession and Absolution:** page 203

### Entrance Psalm:

P: Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

**C: In Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness!**

P: Enter not into judgment with Your servant,

**C: for no one living is righteous before You.**

P: I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done;

**C: I ponder the work of Your hands.**

P: I stretch out my hands to You;

**C: my soul thirsts for You like a parched land.**

P: Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God!

**C: Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground!**

P: For Your name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life!

**C: In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

**C: In Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness!**

**The Kyrie** (*Lord, Have Mercy*) – page 204

**Gloria in Excelsis** (*Glory to God in the Highest*) – page 204

### Salutation

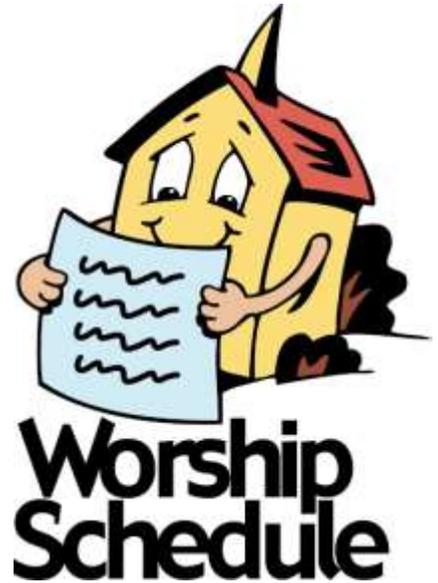
P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through Jesus



Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

**Old Testament Lesson:** Zephaniah 1:7-16

R: Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated His guests. And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice— "I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire. On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud. On that day," declares the LORD, "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills. Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!

For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will He do ill.' Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them." The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle Lesson:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

R: Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

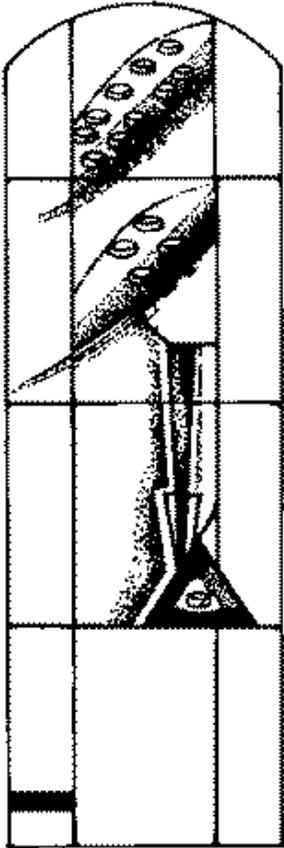
**C: Thanks be to God.**

**The Holy Gospel** *Matthew 25:14-30*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: "For it [the kingdom of heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who



has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Nicene Creed:**

**Sermon Hymn:** *"Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way"* - **Hymn 857**

**Sermon:** *"Here to Serve"* – **Psalm 105**

Why did you come to church this morning? Are you trying to set a good example for your family? Are you trying to develop this into a good habit? Did you come to meet a friend here? Are you here because you were brought up this way? Are you here to be forgiven? While we are asking about being here, then why are we anywhere on earth if we await eternal life with God in heaven? Why shouldn't we just die now and go to heaven?

(Why are you listening to this service? Are you trying to set a good example for your family? Are you doing it because you were raised to go to church, but with Covid-19 you can't? If we are asking about why you are listening, then why are we still here on earth when we could be in heaven with God? Why shouldn't we just die now and go to heaven?)

A man named C.F.W. Walther, who helped to found the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, wrote this over 150 years ago:

Another major duty of a Synod that wants to be and remains an Evangelical Lutheran Synod is that it not seek its own glory, but only the glory of God, being intent not so much on its own growth, but rather the growth of Christ's kingdom and the salvation of souls. You see, dear brothers and sisters, we are assembled here not for our own sake. We are in the faith, and by this faith we hope to be saved! But there are still many millions who have no faith! This is why we are here—so that we might bring salvation to as many people as we possibly can, so that the sad situation in Christendom and the corruption of the poor, blind heathen might be remedied. Only for this reason does our gracious God allow Christians to live on earth, that they might bring others to the saving faith. Otherwise God would immediately take a Christian to heaven as soon as he is converted.

In Psalm 105 the Psalmist says, "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; make known among the nations what He has done." Our stewardship theme this year is about giving thanks to God despite all that has happened this year. We are here this morning, here on earth to serve God by sharing His love with others.

The news is still dominated by the pandemic now that the election is over. It isn't just the issue of wearing masks, social distancing, and testing for Covid-19. Our economy has been hard hit and so many have lost jobs. There is so much debt to pay for those who could not be productive because of the disease. Who knows the long term effects this will have on children who were both out of school and still only getting limited class time. The solution to this seems to be that we will have to work longer hours for more years and with fewer breaks. Students will have to study harder to get the degrees and grades they need for a decent job. Our children will do well in school only if they are kept busy in activities so they don't spend all their times playing video games or talking on the cell phone. The result of all of this is so little time left over. Where is there time to serve? If God wanted us to serve, then why did He give us stomach that need to be filled, bodies that need at least six hours of sleep, and families that require so much to take care of?

We hear stories and maybe even know people who have gone to places like California or Texas and Louisiana to help with to help with the recovery after the fires and hurricanes. These people have to provide their own transportation, pay their expenses, live in a trailer or tents, and do hard physical labor. They certainly seem to be here to serve. But they also are often independently wealthy or are supported by their work place. They are able to take time off from work and family responsibilities and help with the recovery. But what about the rest of us?

The Psalmist was an Israelite. He belonged to a people who were placed here on earth to serve. Long ago their father Abraham was told by God, “I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse, and through you I will bless all nations.” God wanted to bless the world through them. As the Psalmist says they were to “Tell of God’s wonderful acts.”

So often they did not. Was it because they were too busy? More often it was because they forgot. Other people saw them worshipping other gods. Or if they thought of God it was to complain to Him and blame Him for their problems.

What do others know of God through us? Yes, we can be busy. But do we remember what God has done for us? Is that important in our everyday lives?

The Psalmist says, “Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles and the judgments He has pronounced.” Then the Psalmist goes on to describe in detail the history of how God called Abraham to be their father, how He guided Abraham’s son Isaac and grandson Jacob, and how He rescued Jacob’s family from famine through what He did through Jacob’s son Joseph. The people went to Egypt and became slaves. But God sent Moses to lead them out of slavery. Their existence as a nation was all the result of God’s action. But all of that happened hundreds of years earlier.

“Remember the wonders He has done.” As Christians God calls us to see our history—to see how He sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross and rise on Easter. We see that our existence as a Church is all the result of God’s action. But Jesus lived 2,000 years ago. Do we remember that?

“Remember the wonders He has done.” Remember does not mean “call to mind” or “set aside a day to think about it.” It means much more. It means living it. To use an analogy from football, “remember” is not what you do from the sidelines, but what we do on the playing field. When the Psalmist says, “Remember His wonders,” it meant, “experience them.” It does for us as well. How do we “experience” what God did for us in Jesus 2,000 years ago? In Baptism we were “buried” of what Jesus did on the cross. In Baptism we were nailed to the cross, buried in the tomb, and raised to new life in Easter.

So why are we here? Are we biding our time as a student until we get out of college and get a job? Are we just taking care of our families? Are we just preparing for retirement or trying to enjoy it? Again Walther said, “This is why we are here—that we can bring salvation to as many people as we possibly can. Only for this reason does our gracious God allow Christians to live on earth that they might bring others to the saving faith.”

How do we serve? We pray on Sundays for people like our friend Kebede in Ethiopia who share God’s love with people in other lands. Though the pandemic has limited our contact with internationals to mostly online classes, we are involved with people from such countries as China, Korea, Africa, and the Middle East who don’t know Jesus. But there is more than that.

We do not have a “spiritual” life, a part of our lives where we do “church” things. Instead we have lives that are to be lived spiritually. God invites us to approach our careers in His calling. “Make known among the nations what He has done.” That involves our whole lives. Without that calling we will simply race through schedules, build portfolios, climb corporate ladders, and optimize our retirement plans for little more than economic benefit. We need those who are artists to be artists, thinking and living out their lives as Christians as artists. The same is true of those in sales, marketing, engineering, teaching, or real estate. When we remember, live in, and experience what God has done and continues to do for us, then that fuels us to be God’s people among other people. That changes the fabric of daily life and challenges those we interact with every day. And when we find ourselves in places and situations not of our own choosing, God will give us strength let Him influence those around us through us. We’re here to serve.

**Hymn of Reflection:** “*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*” – **Hymn 873**

**Prayer of the Church:**

P: Lord, in Your mercy...

C: **Hear our prayer.**

**Lord's Prayer:**

**Closing Prayer:**

P: Almighty and everlasting God, so rule our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that, being ever mindful of the end of all things and your just judgment, we may be stirred up to live lives that reflect our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: **Amen.**

**Blessing (Pastor)**

C: **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** “*From All That Dwell Below the Skies*” – **Hymn 816**

**Postlude**

