

## Order of Worship for July 31, 2022

### Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Opening Hymn: “*Lord of All Hopefulness*” – Hymn #738

### The Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Cameron Alexander MacKenzie

### Confession and Absolution p.151

### Service of the Word

### Entrance Psalm:

P: Hear this, all peoples!

**C: Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,**

P: both low and high,

**C: rich and poor together!**

P: Truly no man can ransom another,

**C: or give to God the price of his life,**

P: for the ransom of their life is costly

**C: and can never suffice.**

P: This is the path of those who have foolish confidence;

**C: yet after them people approve of their boasts.**

P: Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;

**C: death shall be their shepherd.**

P: But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,

**C: for He will receive me.**

**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 this, all peoples!

**C: Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,**

P: both low and high,

**C: rich and poor together!**

### Kyrie (“Lord, Have mercy”): p.152

### Hymn of Praise: “*This Is the Feast*” - p.155

### Salutation p. 156

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: O Lord, grant us wisdom to recognize the treasures You have stored up for us in heaven, that we may never despair but always rejoice and be thankful for the riches of Your grace; 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: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12–14; 2:18–26**

R: Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ... I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. ... I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from Him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases Him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner He has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

**Epistle Lesson: Colossians 3:1–11**

R: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

**Holy Gospel: Luke 12:13-21**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)**

P: Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” And He said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)**

**Sermon Hymn: “God of Grace and God of Glory” - Hymn #850**

**Sermon: “Rich Fools” - Luke 12:13-21**

There’s nothing like moving to discover how much stuff you have. Just having to clear out my office for the new carpeting to go in led me to go through piles of papers that had grown for a while, and sort through other valuable materials I’d accumulated over the years.

That’s especially visible to us today. Those of us who’ve lived here for a while are familiar with what this time of year brings. Almost all of the apartment leases in Ames end July 31 and begin August 1, and so the streets are full of U-Hauls, pick-up trucks, and livestock trailers as people move from one apartment to another. The thrift stores in town are overflowing with donations, and the city is even holding their own rummage rampage sale with donated furniture over at the big parking facility on the other side of Campustown, now in its 6th year. Last year, more than 90,000 pounds of furniture and housewares diverted from the landfill, and more than \$40,000 was raised for local non-profit agencies. If there’s any time of year aside from Christmas that shows how much stuff we have in our lives, and how much we value the stuff we have in our lives, this is it.

The problem, though, isn’t how much stuff we have. The problem is what that stuff represents. What the stuff means. The problem comes when our stuff becomes more important than the people in our lives. The problem comes when we put our trust in our possessions, in our wealth, in anything other than God. That’s what makes us rich fools.

This makes today’s Gospel lesson both very timely and very challenging for us. In the so-called Parable of the Rich Fool, we see a man consumed by his possessions. At first glance, he seems

to be a good, industrious worker. He has a profitable year, and decides that he needs new storage space for all of the harvest. That doesn't sound like a bad thing. In fact, it sounds like something that should be encouraged. Yet Jesus calls him a fool.

The problem here isn't just that this man is rich. The problem is his greed, and how it has isolated him. If we look at the pronouns in the monologue of the farmer, we see that it's all about him. My crops. My barns. My grain and goods. My self. The problem with the rich man is not that he was rich. The problem is that he was selfish. Greedy. And alone. No family or friends in this picture to be consulted. No neighbors to help join in raising the new barn, or to rejoice with him at his success. No mention of those who helped gather in this bumper crop. And no mention of God. No sign of gratitude to the One who makes the rain fall and the seeds grow. No thought of wondering how he can use this great harvest for the greater good. Not even a thought of using the riches for a big showy donation to the temple. Just a conversation with himself, about himself.

Luther once described sin as being curved inward. Navel-gazing, belly-gazing. So focused on one's self that no one else was seen. This rich man had that in abundance. He spent all of his time thinking about himself, and not about others. He spent all of his time accumulating wealth, and none in building relationships with others, none in finding others to share in his successes. His greed had consumed him. He was alone. He was, as Charles Dickens described Ebenezer Scrooge, a rich fool cut out of the same mold, "secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster." The rich man's stuff had isolated him. Instead of building a barn, maybe we should picture him building a money vault like Scrooge McDuck has, large enough to swim in the piles of coins and riches. A rich fool, with eyes only for his wealth and riches.

This rich man, perhaps grown apathetic to the needs of others because of the insulation his wealth provides, has no concern beyond the contentment of his own soul. He has no empathy for others; no sense of the needs of his neighbors; no sense of how his blessing could be a blessing to others; no sense of connection to anyone. In this sense, he is a fool, locked in his own little world and oblivious to the presence, humanity, and need of all others. And so, when judgment comes, he finds that his wealth can't protect him from the wages of sin and death.

Our challenge with this parable is that, even as greed is known as one of the seven deadly sins, it doesn't seem to be discouraged. Instead, it seems to be encouraged. Our common culture wants you to believe you don't have enough. Scarcity is not just a mindset, it's a marketing tool, and one of the modern difficulties with the notion of scarcity is that in a virtual world, our barns have no limits. The cloud has endless capacity. Our electronic bank accounts can hold as many zeros as needed. And there's always a reason for a sale. Did you buy a lot during Amazon Prime Day a few weeks ago? Are you waiting for the tax free day to buy your school supplies and new school outfits? Are you looking ahead to the Labor Day sales, or checking your physical mailbox or your virtual email box for the next round of Christmas sales?

Luther also knew the dangers present in this temptation. Writing in the Large Catechism about the last two commandments, the ones about coveting, he wrote that "Everyone tries to

accumulate as much as he or she can, and lets others look out for themselves. Yet we all consider ourselves upright people, and put up a fine front to conceal our villainy. We hunt for and think up clever tricks and shrewd tactics—better and better ones are being devised daily—under the guise of justice. We brazenly dare to boast of it and defiantly insist that it should not be called rascality but shrewdness and foresight. In this we are abetted by jurists and lawyers who twist and stretch the law to suit their purpose, straining words and using them for pretexts, without regard for equity or for our neighbor’s plight. In short, whoever is sharpest and shrewdest in such matters gets most advantage out of the law, for as the saying has it, “The law favors the vigilant.” This last commandment, therefore, is not addressed to those whom the world considers wicked rogues, but precisely to the most upright—to people who wish to be commended as honest and virtuous because they have not offended against the preceding commandments.” Those words were true almost 500 years ago, and are still true today.

Greed causes you to turn a blind eye to others in need. It’s so dangerous that John’s Gospel describes greed as the reason Judas betrays Jesus, since we’re told Judas is the treasurer of the disciples and he used to skim some money out of the moneybag for his personal gain. Greed is so dangerous because it makes us think that we will be content if only we have enough, but we don’t realize that we’ll never have enough. Greed creates a hole that can never be filled.

That’s why Jesus came; to fill the emptiness we try to fill with so many other things that can only be filled by God. Jesus came not to condemn the rich, but to show us what we can truly depend on. Jesus was the Son of God and Creator of the universe, but he gave all that up to come down and wander the earth as a homeless, itinerant preacher. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Then Jesus journeyed to the cross, where even his clothing was taken away from him, leaving him utterly destitute and completely poor. He died as a criminal between two thieves. But the blood he shed on the cross was more costly than all the gold and silver and jewels in the world. Jesus died to forgive our sins and remove the idols from our hearts. Money could never buy what Jesus freely gives. Yet just because forgiveness is free doesn’t make it cheap. Our salvation cost God the death of his only-begotten Son, the most priceless gift the world has ever seen.

It’s easy for us to put our trust in our riches and resources, in our savings and stuff, to be rich fools. But Jesus promises something more, something that will never let us down. He gives us himself, he gives us forgiveness, he gives us eternal life. Not that we’ve earned it, but because Jesus earned it for us. That’s a promise we can trust.

**Creed:** First Article of the Creed, p 322.

**Sharing His Ministry:**

**Offering & Voluntary:**

**Offertory:** “*What Shall I Render to the Lord*” page 159-60

**Prayer of the Church** (P: Lord, in Your mercy; **C: Hear our prayer.**)

### **Service of the Sacrament**

**Preface:** page 160

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You have given us riches far greater than anything on this earth in sending Your Son, Christ Jesus, into our world to open the way to everlasting life for us. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing. . .

**Sanctus** (Holy, Holy, Holy) p 161

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

P: We give thanks to You Lord God, creator of the universe for making us rich fools through Your Son Christ Jesus, for what we may lack in this world, we more than have in the new life Christ has given to us. Send Your Holy Spirit to us now as we come to the precious meal Jesus offers to us trusting that by it our sins are forgiven. Hear us as we pray the words He taught us to pray. . .

**The Lord's Prayer and Words of the Lord** page 162

**Pax Domini** (Peace of the Lord) and **Agnus Dei** (Lamb of God) 163

### **Distribution:**

*"Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness"* - **Hymn # 788**

*"Take My Life and Let It Be"* - **Hymn # 783**

### **Dismissal**

**Song after Communion:** *"Thank the Lord."* page 164

### **Prayer after Communion:**

P: Almighty God, judge of us all, You have placed in our hands the wealth we call our own. Give us such wisdom by Your Spirit that our possessions may not be a curse in our lives, but an instrument of blessing, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Benediction:** page 165

**Closing Hymn:** *"Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings"* - **Hymn # 782**

### **Postlude:**