

## Order of Worship for November 12, 2023

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Opening Hymn: *"Lord of All Good"* - Hymn #786

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### Old Testament Reading – Amos 5:18-24

R: Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God**

P: We face pressures that cause us to make choices apart from God and those pressures can lead us away from God. We compromise the truth of God for what seems to work for us. We need to examine our lives and see how our priorities get mixed up.

**C: Lord God, we get involved in so many things that forget about You and what is really important in our lives. We "major" in the "minors" of how many things we can have in life, how we can make ourselves look better than others, and in how we live for our own pleasures. Our priorities are so messed up that we are helpless. So we go to You seeking Your mercy.**

P: God in His love made you and me His priority. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to take away the sin that mixes up our priorities. In the name of Jesus and by His command I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### Entrance Psalm:

P: Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,

**C: at Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.**

P: How lovely is Your dwelling place,

**C: O LORD of hosts!**

P: Behold our shield, O God;

**C: look on the face of Your anointed!**

P: For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

**C: I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

P: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.

**C: No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

P: O LORD of hosts,

**C: blessed is the one who trusts in You!**

**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: Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,

**C: at Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.**

### **Collect of the Day**

P: Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son to lead home His bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever..

**C: Amen**

### **Epistle Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18**

R: But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Holy Gospel – Matthew 25:1-13**

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

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

P: Jesus said, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him. Then all those

virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

**PK through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Song: (8:30)**

**Children’s Message: (8:30)**

**Sermon Hymn: “The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us” – Hymn #514**

**Sermon: “Emptied and Filled” - Matthew 25:1-13**

We gained an hour last weekend, and needed it after a night homecoming game at Jack Trice, but we’ve lost sunlight. It now gets dark early, and the days will only get shorter for the next month or so. While we hear more about it in January, this can be a time when people are affected by seasonal affective disorder, struggling with depression as we experience less and less light.

It’s easy for us to forget how much darkness there has been in the world. We live in a world where light can be summoned by flipping a switch, pressing a button, or even just clapping your hands. Lights from watches and cell phones give us ready sources of light, even if we don’t carry a flashlight in our pockets or on our key-chains. In his book *At Home*, author Bill Bryson reminds us that by the simple act of opening a refrigerator door, we create more light than the total amount in most houses in the eighteenth century. Light comes easily to us.

In today’s parable, we’re reminded of how hard it was to keep the light on for most of history. Ten bridesmaids are waiting for the bridegroom to return. They all have lamps, they all have oil, and they’re all supposed to be ready for when the bridegroom comes. It’s a time of joyful expectation. Yet the bridegroom is late in coming, and so all of the bridesmaids fall asleep. They all fail to keep watch. They all fail to keep awake. They all let their lamps go out and the light fade.

But half of them, five of them, have extra oil. They were prepared to wait. They were prepared for the bridegroom to suddenly appear. They were prepared even if they fell asleep. The foolish ones had to run and try to find some more in a hurry, late at night after all of the stores had closed, and they ended up missing the party.

When Jesus tells this parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids, He’s talking to his disciples, alone, as the time draws near for him to head to the cross. Knowing that he’s going to leave

them soon, he gives them final encouragement, final words of advice. He tells them this parable so they will keep watch, and stay ready.

How do we explain the actions of the five wise bridesmaids who are unwilling to share their oil? Especially on stewardship Sunday, when we're reminded of all we have been given by God and how we are called to use all we have for God's purposes, not our own?

One way that's helpful to think about it is to think about riding in an airplane. One of the safety briefings before takeoff always reminds passengers, in the event that the cabin loses pressure and the oxygen masks deploy, that they are to put on their own mask first before helping someone else put their mask on. That may seem selfish, but you're no good to anyone if you can't breathe.

The wise ones act the same way. In the context of the parable, if they shared their oil, no one would have enough for their lamps. Then there would be no light at all, which would be worse than only half the light there was supposed to be.

As we wait for Jesus to return, we need to be ready. We ourselves need to be ready. No one else can be ready for us. While there's debate over exactly what the oil in the parable represents, whether it's the Holy Spirit or the Word of God or faith or something else entirely, we know it's something that cannot be shared, cannot be passed on, cannot be taken from someone else.

The words of this parable continue to inspire and confuse. The earliest Christians didn't think they had long to wait. They thought that Jesus would return soon, within the lifetime of those first disciples. As they watched and waited, they wondered why they were kept waiting. They wondered why Jesus the bridegroom continued to delay returning to bring his bride, the church, home.

We don't know when Jesus will return. We don't know when we will go to see Jesus. We don't know if it will be when Jesus returns, or if it will be when we are called home. We don't know when we will join those who have gone before us in the faith, those we remember as we celebrate All Saints Day. We just know that those who have gone before us in the faith have kept their lamps trimmed and burning, and helped us to do the same.

But while we wait for Jesus to return, as disciples of Jesus, we wait with hope. We wait full of joy. We wait and hope as members of the waiting and hoping church, but the church cannot hope and be ready for us, any more than the church can believe or love for us.

The patience that Christians are commanded to live out is based on the patience of God. The endurance of God, the long-suffering of God, the willingness to stick with things of God. We see that throughout the Old Testament. God is continually patient and long suffering in regards to the people of Israel. No matter how many times they stray away, no matter how many times that they go to worship other gods, God is always there giving them a second, third, fourth chance. God promises judgment and wrath, but delays it so that there is a chance for repentance. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, but is patient with

you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). That’s why the bridegroom delays his return. That’s why we’re still waiting. That’s why we are called to keep our lamps of faith burning, shining into the dark parts of the world.

When God fills the empty, He often does so using others. That’s where stewardship comes in. We may not be able to share “oil” when Jesus returns, but we can share all that we’ve been given until then. We can share the hope we have that Jesus will return. We can share what has been entrusted to us, to fill the empty around us. We can let God’s love and blessings fill us to overflowing, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

Because of God’s patience, because of what Jesus patiently endured for us on the cross, we too can wait patiently. We are given the strength to endure through our own times of doubt and despair, of trial and temptation, of emptiness and out of fuel feelings. We are given the oil to keep our lamps burning. We can endure the hardships that come our way. We can wait for God with brightly shining lamps of faith to light the way in this dark world.

Catechism – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> petitions of Lord’s Prayer and Explanation – p324

**Prayers:**

**Stewardship Message:**

**Sharing Our Ministry:**

**8:30 Service**

**Choir Anthem:**

**Closing Prayer:**

P: Almighty God, all that we possess is from Your loving hand. Give us grace that we may honor You with all we have, always remembering the account we must one day give to Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing:** (Pastor)

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** *“We Give Thee But Thine Own”* - **Hymn #781**

## 11: 00 Service

**Offering:**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

**The Lord's Prayer:**

**The Words of Our Lord:**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

**Distribution Hymn:** *"This Is My Father's World"* – Devon Rees, violin solo  
*"Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings"* - Hymn #782  
*"Praise and Thanksgiving"* - Hymn #789

**Dismissal:**

**Closing Prayer:**

P: Almighty God, all that we possess is from Your loving hand. Give us grace that we may honor You with all we have, always remembering the account we must one day give to Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

**Blessing:** (Pastor)

C: Amen.

**Closing Hymn:** *"We Give Thee But Thine Own"* - Hymn #781

