Order of Worship for August 3, 2025

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: "*Lord of All Hopefulness*" – **Hymn #738**

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.

Alleluia and Verse p.156

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12th 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: True Abundance - **Luke 12:13-21**

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 9th year. Last year, almost 133,000 pounds of furniture and housewares diverted from the landfill, and more than $ 62,300 was raised for local non-profit agencies who contributed volunteers. 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.

All of our lessons today point to that truth. As the Gospel lesson opens, we see the occasion for the parable. A man approaches Jesus and says; "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Unlike others who approach Jesus, this man does not ask Jesus to answer a question. He does not ask Jesus to help him discern the God-pleasing way to go about dividing an inheritance. Instead, he simply wants Jesus to enforce how he has already decided it should be. Whether he is relying on custom or established law, the man is trying to box Jesus in. There is an action he wants fulfilled and he is turning to Jesus only in order to bring about that action, that result. The way he looks at the world has changed the way he sees God. God is there

to enforce what this man knows needs to be done. God is there to guarantee that this man has the kind of life he desires.

It is interesting, is it not, that when people talk about idolatry, they act as if God is not around. That is, idolatry is seen as replacing God with something else. If money becomes your god, then God disappears. Money alone rules your life. But that is not the way it is. When you have an idol, God does not disappear. He is just demoted. He's not just a copilot as you drive. He's a servant. That's why Paul describes covetousness as idolatry.

When people have idols, God ends up becoming the power they turn to keep their idol going. God is present in their lives but not as Lord of all things. No, God is the one we turn towards to keep our idols going.

For this man, his idol was possessions. He believed that an abundance of possessions would bring fulfillment to his life. But that did not mean this man had no use for Jesus. It simply meant he knew what he wanted Jesus to do. He wanted Jesus to enforce the laws of inheritance in a way that would give him more possessions. Jesus had become a servant to this man's idol and a means to an end of having a life filled with an abundance of possessions.

But Jesus isn't content to leave the man in this web of deception. Jesus instead tells a parable, a story, to get the man who comes demanding for Jesus to give him what he wants to instead see what he really needs.

Into this dark realm of devilish deception, Jesus brings the light of God. He tells a parable. In the parable, we see a picture of an abundant life. It looks good. But looks can be deceiving. In the midst of all this abundance, there is a profound emptiness, a complete lack of knowledge or trust in the one true God. As the man's possessions grow and as the man's confidence in having achieved the purpose of life expands, suddenly, God comes out of the shadows in the figure of death. That night, the man's soul is required of him. That night, God, the giver of life, comes to take it back. All this man thought was life has faded away and, instead, he is confronted with his own emptiness in the presence of the One who has made and given all things.

Through this parable, Jesus invites us to meet God, the God who rules over all things. This God is not the great enforcer of the laws we believe will make our lives happy. This is not a God who exists to be a vending machine, dispensing happiness if we put in enough prayers or promises. No, this God is the Lord of Life, true life, life given as a gift to be enjoyed in this world and into eternity.

Earlier this year, Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson published a book titled, Abundance. In it, they argue the left should not shun "supply side" economics – that making more housing, more roads and runways, more cars, more shoes, – is good for society. In contrast to calls from the left for scarcity, to use less so that there is less climate change and more to share with every one of every minority group, they think that having a goal of abundance for all would be Using examples like that of the attempt to build high speed rail in California, where labor costs, environmental regulations, and local zoning ordinances have combined to make the project unfeasible.

In some ways, we do have a more abundant life than those who came before us did. Those who lived with choking pollution, legal discrimination against women and those of other races, one third (adjusted to real dollars) today's per capita income, no electronics, cars without seat belts, far higher rates of heart disease and cancer, being able to eat fresh fruit in February, would think we have abundant lives. Yet we often see not what we have, but what we lack.

Abundance of possessions isn't a guarantee of happiness. The Global Flourishing Study (GFS), a groundbreaking five-year longitudinal study of over 200,000 adults across 22 countries, has started publishing the results of their research. we find economically developed countries have high average scores for self-rated financial well-being, access to education, and life evaluation. Yet poorer countries have higher scores for positive emotions, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and social connection and relationships.

The researchers in this study wrote, "Some countries with the greatest wealth and longevity may have achieved these goods at the cost of a fulfilling life…. [The data] suggests that, for most people, flourishing is found above all in dense and overlapping networks of loving relationships."

The problem is with the farmer in the parable is his greed, and how it has isolated him. If we look at the pronouns in his monologue, 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. The man who comes demanding of Jesus is the same way, putting possessions over his relationship with his brother, stuff over his sibling.

Sin causes us to be curved inward. God calls us to look outward. God shows us love, shows us who He is, and calls us to look at the world as He does, with love, not greed.

Jesus came so that we could have a truly abundant life. That life does not come with a full barns or bank accounts. It is a greater abundance than any politician could promise or give. It comes with meaning and purpose. It comes with connection. It comes with forgiveness. It comes with the free gifts of God, giving us not always what we want, but always what we need.

Creed: First Article of the Creed, p 322.

Sharing His Ministry:

Offering & Voluntary:

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

P: We have been given so much, O God, yet we so often seek even more.
C: Help us to do away with the foolishness of greed.
P: We have stored up so much for ourselves, O God, yet we have stored up for ourselves those things that will never last.

C: Help us to store up for ourselves the treasures that will last in heaven.
P: We have congratulated ourselves for the work we have done, O God, yet we have so often forgotten to thank You for all that You have done for us.
C: Help us to glorify You in all that we do.
P: We have made plans for our lives on our own, O God, without consulting You.
C: Help us to involve You in our planning for the future and follow Your will always. Amen.

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: