Order of Worship for November 15, 2026 (updated with DS4)

Prelude

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

Opening Hymn: "*God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It"* – **Hymn #594**

Confession and Forgiveness page 203

Service of the Word

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!

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Hymn of Praise *(Gloria in Excelsis*) p. 204

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.

Alleluia and Verse p. 205

The Holy Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 25th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: Jesus said, "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.

Sermon Hymn: *"At the Name of Jesus"* **- Hymn #512**

Sermon: *"Faithful Watching and Waiting"* **- 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11**

It's almost Thanksgiving break, one of the busiest travel times of the year. Airports are crowded with people heading home for the holiday, and others gathering with family on an exotic vacation. Some are traveling to watch their favorite basketball teams play in a special matchup, like the Cyclone men playing in Las Vegas Thanksgiving week.

One of the constants of flying is delays. The travel season corresponds with the arrival of winter weather in many places, and weather delays compound. Adding on the aging infrastructure, fewer air traffic controllers, and the high cost of gasoline, and there are many reasons for delays. Ask Pastor Splett about his travel back from Florida last month!

One seminary professor noticed, though, that when flights are delayed, people divide into five groups. You've seen them, too, I'm sure.

First, there are the pushers. They push for information. They elbow their way up to the ticket counter demanding, "When is the plane going to arrive? I must have exact times and dates!"

Then there are the doubters. After a few minutes of waiting doubters announce, "This plane will never arrive. I'm not sitting here another minute. I'm renting a car and driving to my destination!"

Then there are the sleepers. In some cases, they snore. Others drop their jaws wide open. (Not a pretty picture!) And in the worst possible case, a complete stranger ends up using your shoulder as his pillow!

Then there are the players. Players say, “The plane’s delayed? Great! It’s time to go back down to the bar and have a few more drinks. Let’s party!”

And, finally, there are the soldiers. Soldiers? Yes soldiers. You know, the people who are alert, on their guard, ready at a moment’s notice to march onto that plane!

What kind of person are you when it comes to waiting for a plane to arrive? More importantly, what kind of person are you when it comes to waiting for Christ to arrive? Today we look at 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 with the theme “Faithful Watching and Waiting.”

Pushers, you may recall, need exact times and dates. The Seventh Day Adventist church in town has been in the news a bit, since their building is right on the intersection of Grand Ave and 13th, and is one of the properties the city is trying to acquire to fix that intersection. The Seventh Day Adventists were founded by a man named William Miller, who though he could calculate when Christ would return. He went through scripture and calculated that Jesus would return on October 22, 1844. When Jesus didn’t return that day, it was called the Great Disappointment. Some of Miller’s followers decided that Jesus had cleansed the heavenly sanctuary on that day, not Earth, and went on to form the Seventh Day Adventist church.

It’s much the same story for a man named Edgar Whisenant. Edgar was a NASA engineer who used his mathematical skills to set a date for Christ’s return. He wrote a book called, 88 Reasons why the Rapture Will take Place in 1988. Edgar was so certain that Jesus would return on September 10, 1988 that he said, “If I’m wrong then the scripture is mistaken.” Apparently, Edgar never heard what Jesus said last week at the end of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:13). No one knows, but amazingly, Edgar Whisenant said, “I know.” September 10, 1988 came and went. No one knows. That’s what Paul says, too. “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–2)

How does a thief come? He comes unexpectedly. He comes without warning. A thief doesn’t call ahead. Christ will come like a thief in the night so let’s not demand exact times and dates like the pushers.

“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3) Have you ever tried to just keep driving, ignoring a check engine light on your dashboard? The light can mean so many things that it’s hard to know what it says. Maybe it’s the gas tank cover not being closed all the way. Maybe it’s something worse. You can ignore it. You can cover it with a piece of black tape so you can’t see the light anymore. You can take it in and see what the error code means. Sooner or later, you’ll find out what the light means, whether you wanted to or not. Christ’s return is the same way. We can say, “Peace and safety” all we want. We can doubt reality all we want. We can ignore the blinking red light in the Bible all we want. But Christ has

died. Christ is risen. And Christ most certainly will come again. Please, please, don't join the doubters.

"So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled." (1 Thessalonians 5:6) It's easy to become indifferent and apathetic to Christ's Second Coming. Waiting is hard work! That's why we become spiritual sleepers. Last week we heard about the wise and foolish virgins who all fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom to come. Our pet sins give us some Advil PM, put on some soft music, and before we know it, we're sound asleep. Some are in spiritual comas; others are spiritual Rip Van Winkles! Paul says, "Be alert and self-controlled!" Don't be a sleeper.

"… and those who get drunk, get drunk at night." (1 Thess 5:7) Abraham Lincoln died. So did Woodrow Wilson and Babe Ruth. John Kennedy died and so did Princess Diana. We all die. In our world, two people die every second, more than 155,000 people die a day and about 57 million people die every year. Woody Allen, speaks for a lot of us when he says, "It's not that I'm afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens!" Players deny that time is running out. Players ignore biblical warnings. Players have a great time. "Let's party!"

Let's not. Instead, let's go to Alaska and meet Carl McCunn. Carl McCunn prepared for an Alaskan adventure that still has people talking. In March of 1981, Carl was dropped into a remote place near the Coleen River, seventy miles northeast of Ft. Yukon. He had two rifles, a shotgun, fourteen hundred pounds of supplies, and five hundred rolls of film. Carl began his adventure, completely unaware of one detail that would cost him his life. He made no arrangements for anyone to pick him up. In August of that year Carl wrote in his diary an understatement the size of Mt. McKinley. "I should have planned for my departure." In late November of 1981, trapped with no exit plan, he died in the Alaskan wilderness. Carl McCunn forgot this basic truth: Every trip must come to an end.

Every trip must come to an end. So will yours. So will mine. So, what is our exit strategy? How will we get out? How will we make it from this life to the life of the world to come? For years that was one of the questions asked by people going door to door making evangelism calls. Do you know where you will go when you die? What's your exit plan?

Well, Paul says not to join the pushers, doubters, sleepers or players. On the other hand, Paul does encourage us to be one of the soldiers.

Remember? Soldiers stand at attention. Soldiers are alert. Soldiers are prepared at a moment's notice. "But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." (1 Thessalonians 5:8)

When it comes to Christ's return there's a battle going on for my heart and for my head! The enemy wants to harden my heart and he wants to mess with my mind. The enemy's goal is to take away my Christmas gift; tell me it's not that important; get me to exchange it for something else.

You do know about the best Christmas gift. Right? It needs no batteries. It will never break. There are no shipping costs. In fact, there are no costs at all. This gift is exactly what we need; and please, don't ever exchange it. This Gift is Jesus. Jesus. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus. The King of Kings, who destroys death and the devil. Jesus. The Lord of Lords, who is coming again to make all things new, even you!

Fellow soldiers! Put on your breastplate of faith and hope and your helmet of salvation. Guard your heart and your head. Fight tooth and nail to hold on to the gift of Christ Jesus all the days of your life. Why is that? What's the big deal? What's at stake? Everything. You are not destined for wrath, but for salvation through Jesus. That's good news. That's great news! That's worth fighting for. That's worth holding on to.

Because Jesus bore our sins to the cross and took the punishment we deserve, we will not be destroyed in that day. Joyfully, we "wait for [God's] Son from heaven…, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Thanks be to God! His coming will be like a thief in the night, so get ready, repent, and put your trust in Christ, for the Day is surely drawing near.

Creed: Nicene

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord, in Your mercy…

C: Hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering and Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus *(Holy, Holy, Holy)* p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving (p 209)

P: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord, Pax Domini *(Peace of the Lord)* p. 209

Agnus Dei *(Lamb of God)* p. 210

Distribution of Holy Communion:

"Adagio and Allegro" by George P. Telemann (Violin Quartet–8:30)
"*I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"* **- Hymn #699**
"Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray" **- Hymn #663**

Nunc Dimittis *(Now Let Us Depart)* p. 211

Prayer After Communion: (p 212)

P: **C: Amen.**

Benedicamus and Benediction p. 212

Closing Hymn: *"Now Thank We All Our God"* **- Hymn #895**

Postlude