



WELCOME TO WORSHIP

November 26, 2023

INTRODUCTION

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

Grace Lutheran Church

A congregation of the ELCA, La Crosse Area Synod

PRESERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Quiet to Prepare for Worship – Ringing of our Bell

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved.

C: Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Holy One,

C: we confess that we are not awake for you. We are not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings. We do not see your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.

P: Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through † Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

C: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: 855 Crown Him with Many Crowns vs. 1-3

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Read in unison)

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

READINGS

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

¹¹Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

²⁰Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²²I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

²³I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Psalm 95:1-7a (Read responsively)

¹Come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

²**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**

³For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.

⁴**In your hand are the caverns of the earth;
the heights of the hills are also yours.**

⁵The sea is yours, for you made it,
and your hands have molded the dry land.

⁶**Come, let us worship and bow down,**

let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

^{7a}For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Matthew 25:31-46

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave

you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: 679 For the Fruit of All Creation

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

PEACE

Please share a sign of peace with those around in whatever way you are most comfortable.

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

C: And also with you.

OFFERING

If you have brought your offering with you today, please place it in the basket in the back as you leave. You may send your giving to the church office or give through the link on our website.

P: Let us pray.

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

C: Amen.

HEALING

P: Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

P: Sisters and brothers, I invite you to come and receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of the triune God.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands, and the presiding minister continues.

P: Let us pray. Living God, through the laying on of hands [and anointing], grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

P: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN: 540 Go, Make Disciples (sing two times through)

Quiet pause for the ringing of our bell

BENEDICTION

P: Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



**Come Grow
in Grace**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers are given in memory of Thomas E. Mullins from Tom Dallmann

The sign-up chart to **sponsor flowers for worship** for 2024 is now hanging in the hallway. The cost to sponsor the flowers is \$30 and you may take the flowers home after the service.

The **poinsettia order forms** are on the table at the back of the church. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone this is your opportunity. You may take the poinsettia home after Christmas worship. Deadline to place orders is December 3rd.

Plan to attend the **Advent Breakfast**. Saturday, December 2nd at 10:00 am. The theme this year is: A Blessing Comes Down. Breakfast features egg bake, fresh fruit, and assorted breads. The program will help us enter the Advent Season with carols, prayer, and fellowship.

Parents' Night Out! Fundraiser for the Grace Luther League. Saturday, December 16th, 5:00-9:30 pm at Grace. Children ages 2-12 welcome. \$10 for initial child, \$5 for each additional sibling. To reserve

WE PRAY FOR: Holly Hinzpeter, Kandy Hagen, Suzanne Soltvedt, John Thompson, Dawn Ertel, Dorothy Klipstein, Ethel Mae Baldwin, John Miller, Hunter Clark, Hank Benthouser, Dean Burmaster, Bob Brod, Dennis Olson, and Megan Braund

Come Grow in Grace

Church office: 226 Erickson Street, Elroy, WI 53929;
email: grace013@centurytel.net; Phone: 608-462-5398 **Organist:** Heather Vlasak; **Synod Authorized Minister:** Kris Stauffacher; **Custodian:** Dave Clark and crew