



WELCOME TO WORSHIP

November 19, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.

Grace Lutheran Church

A ELCA congregation in the 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: #890 Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

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)

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

READINGS

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm."

¹³Their wealth 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.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, 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,

¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 90:1-8, 12 (Read responsively)

¹Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.

²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth
were born, from age to age you are God.**

³You turn us back to the dust and say,
"Turn back, O children of earth."

⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is**

past and like a watch in the night;
⁵you sweep them away like a dream,
they fade away suddenly like the grass:
**⁶in the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.**
⁷For we are consumed by your anger;
we are afraid because of your wrath.
**⁸Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.**
¹²**So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Matthew 25:14-30

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who

had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN SINGING

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: #688 Lord of Light

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.

HOLY COMMUNION

Communion at Grace Lutheran is open to all who believe in Jesus our Lord.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn by speaking:

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION (*In the night in which he was betrayed . . .*)

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

SHARING THE MEAL

COMMUNION HYMNS: #715 Christ, Be Our Light

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

C: 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: 815 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers are given in honor of Marshall Stowell's birthday.
Happy Birthday, Marshall!

The **coffee hour sign-up sheet** for November and December is in the back of the church. Please sign up to facilitate this fellowship activity.

Grace Lutheran needs to provide 2-3 **pies or pans of bars for the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service** on Wednesday evening, November 22 at the Methodist church here in Elroy. The service begins at 6 pm. Please let Kris know if you are willing to provide a pie or pan of bars.

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. Breakfast features egg bake, fresh fruit, and assorted breads. The program will help us enter into the Advent Season with carols, prayer, and fellowship.

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

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email: grace013@centurytel.net; Phone: 608-462-5398 **Organist:** Heather Vlasak;

Synod Authorized Minister: Kris Stauffacher; **Custodian:** Dave Clark and crew