

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

November 8, 2020 (Real Church Virtual)



Stewardship Temple Talk (Pr. Paul)

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.

Blessed Assurance

Verse 1

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Chorus

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long, this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Verse 2

Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight, angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Chorus

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long, this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Verse 3

Perfect submission al is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest, watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

Chorus

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long, this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

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

A: Let us pray together,

C: O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalmody: Psalm 70

¹Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.

²**Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded; let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.**

³Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back because of their shame.

⁴**Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation say forever, "Great is the Lord!"**

⁵But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God. You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry.

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

Jesus said to the disciples: ¹"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they

took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'⁹But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'¹²But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.'¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Paul

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of Heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace

Lord's Prayer

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.

Final 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.

Dismissal

A: 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.**

Even So Come

Verse 1

All of creation, all of the earth make straight a highway, a path for the Lord; Jesus is coming soon.

Verse 2

Call back the sinner, wake up the saint, let ev'ry nation shout of Your fame; Jesus is coming soon.

Chorus 1

Like a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a Church ready for You. Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing; even so, come, Lord Jesus come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.

Verse 3

There will be justice, all will be new. Your name forever, faithful and true; Jesus is coming soon.

Chorus 1

Like a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a Church ready for You. Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing; even so, come, Lord Jesus come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.

Bridge 1

So we wait, we wait for You. God we wait, You're coming soon.

Chorus 2

Like a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a Church ready for You. Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.

Bridge 2

God, we wait, we wait for You. God, we wait, You're coming soon.

God, we wait, we wait for You. Yes, we wait, You're coming soon.

Chorus 2

Like a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a Church ready for You. Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus come.



Bethlehem

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November 8, 2020

Stewardship Encouragement 2021 is On the Way! Greetings Fellow Bethlehemites! We are in the fall season again, and it is time for us to look forward to Bethlehem's ministry in the coming year. We thank you for the way you have given your support to Bethlehem with your time, your talents and you treasure in 2020. It has been a very difficult year for many. However, we hope and pray that you will find many new blessings in 2021. Our emphasis on financial stewardship will be rolled out very soon. Please be mindful of all the ways you can contribute in ways big and small (including automatic giving), as we invite you to start now to pray and think about how you can generously support your church and its ministry as it does the will of our Lord Jesus. *Your BLC Stewardship Committee*

Today is our WELCA Thankoffering Sunday – please see informational flyer at the end of this bulletin.

"2.0" is here! We are excited to announce that a new experience is now here for our online worship, and we're calling it "2.0"! On **Wednesday Nights**, join Pastor Paul and others for an online **Holden Evening Prayer or Taize service**, as we begin melding some of our typical "Celebrate!" content, along with footage from outdoor communion and other gatherings into a new Wednesday experience. We may also look to YOU for help with readings if you are willing/able!

The NOVEMBER issue of the STAR is ready! The STAR is no longer being subsidized by anonymous donors. We thank them for the generosity for 3 months and their hard work in preparing it for mailing. (There is even a rolling pin involved!!!) They are continuing to complete the lion's share of the work after it is printed, collated, and stapled, but now the cost of postage is being taken from the membership budget. If you read the STAR on line and have not told us, please make certain you contact the office or tell the Sunday greeter or hospitality team so we are not sending out copies needlessly. Printed STARs will also be available in the "Shooting Star box" outside the church entry later this week. Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser"** at BLC is now full with several paper publications, including the November STAR. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for Oct, Nov, Dec have arrived. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

If you did not pick up your individual giving statements from your mailbox, they have now been mailed out.

The statement covers giving from January through September 2020. Thank you for your generous support for the programs and ministries of your church even during these uncertain times. *Your Bookkeeper*

Altar flowers have returned to our worship services. If you would like to sign up for a particular weekend, you can call Sharon at 231-947-9880 or email her at admin@bethlehemtc.org – the cost is \$40 per week.

Today's altar flowers are donated by: *by the Congregation in thanks for all of God's blessings.*

The daughter of one of our members, Kathi Ivany-Mort, is in need of a vehicle. She is a single parent of three children, two of which have special needs. She has limited funds but would be open to a fair price and/or payment plan if desired. If you have a vehicle that would seat five people and possibly AWD or 4WD, please contact Kathi on her cell at 231-313-1647 or Kathi's husband, Jef Mort, at their home phone 231-929-4911.

"Help the Children School Supplies Project": So far, we have been able to send school supplies to Traverse City High School and Blair Elementary, along with gift cards to two families at Silver Lake Elementary so they could purchase fall/winter clothing for their children. And we have added monies to send school supplies to Traverse Heights Elementary. We thank our Bethlehem family for the support of this important project.

Share your name please! It can be hard to think of someone's name when you do not see the entire face because of a mask and when someone is wearing glasses. Please retrieve your name tag from your mailbox. Even though we are mainly at a distance of 6 feet, it is still nice to hear you own name especially when you come forward for communion.

Need some help recognizing those new people behind the masks? There are photo sheets for you to take home showing the new members WITHOUT masks and also giving their contact information. It's the perfect size to stick in the front or back of your church directory. Just pick up the sheet on the table where you can pick up and return your nametag. If you are someone who does not come into the church and would like one, leave a message with the church office or email cmonroe@chartermi.net. We will plan to include one in a future mailing of the STAR.

The BLC book club will be meeting by ZOOM on Tuesday Nov. 24 at 5:30. We will discuss *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. If you are not already on the list to receive the ZOOM link just send an email to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net. Also contact her if you would like to borrow a book. We have the Book club bag checked out from the library and there are some extra copies available.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to *Pastor Paul* at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or *Sharon* at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!



WELCA THANKOFFERING SUNDAY

THANKOFFERINGS are a long-standing custom among Lutheran women. We give in thanksgiving for blessings received - and we do receive so many blessings, don't we? And we are so grateful. That's why we give Thankofferings.

The founders of Women of the ELCA decided back in 1988 that Thankofferings are to support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization. Our founders would be amazed to see what that covers these days. Our ongoing ministries include our many online and printed communications channels (including our website), our justice and advocacy work, training and development for elected leaders throughout the women's organization, our constant work in support of congregational and synodical women's organizations, the administration of our grants and scholarship programs, all that goes into our triennial convention business meeting, and so much more.

Many women set aside small amounts at home throughout the year and then bring their gifts together with those of the other women in their circles or local groups at the end of the year. Others organize a Thankoffering service with the whole congregation, celebrating the ministries of women in a bold, exciting way. Of course, this year is quite different from past years because of the pandemic. We will not be having our regular Thankoffering service with the women of Bethlehem holding most of the positions during the services nor will we see the beautiful quilts the quilting groups have sewn throughout the year. We will miss them all BUT we can be ever thankful that God is still with us in the midst of this because 'nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ'.

If you feel called to contribute to our Thankoffering, please use the blue WELCA envelope which was included with your bulletin and place it with the regular church offering. If you wish to make a donation by check, please make the check out to Women of the ELCA and put Thankoffering on the memo line.

It has been shown time and again that gratitude is good for us - spiritually, mentally and even physically. Making a Thankoffering is gratitude in action. And Women of the ELCA is grateful to you for taking that action. Remember, together we can do more than we could ever do apart. Thank you!