



November 22, 2020

Christ the King

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Bring Love's Pure Light into your home this year.

In a typical year at St. Paul, we begin our Advent worship services with members singing and lighting the wreath. We will be doing that again this year, but since we are not meeting in person, we want to invite and encourage you to bring the Advent Wreath and the lighting ceremony into your domestic church (home). We are so excited to make available to you an Advent/Christmas prayer bag so you can participate more fully, whether you are watching one of our services on line or leading a service for those gathered in your home.

The bags will contain: a metal Advent wreath base, three purple and one pink taper candles, a tri-fold that includes our sung refrain during worship - Love's Pure Light, an Advent calendar with scripture and daily activity suggestions, 2 copies of a guide for a simple lighting ceremony you can use anytime, Christmas Silent Night candles and holders for each member of your household, a foldable box to collect offerings of change for HACAP, and sticker sheets corresponding to the Infancy Narrative in Luke's Gospel. Each week, something in the bag can be used in conjunction with our recorded service.

In order to acquire your Prayer Bag, members are asked to contact the church office at 462-4841, stpaulanamosa@gmail.com, or cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com, because we have a limited number of wreaths. The bags will be prepared for your household and available for pick up during regular office hours.

BTW: we encourage you to place some greenery on the Advent wreath. This tradition comes from the practice that during the winter, people would hang their wooden wagon wheels inside and cover them with evergreen boughs to remind them to stay hopeful for the greening of springtime when the wheels would once again be employed for ploughing

and visiting neighbors. Similarly, our preparing for the birth at Christmas points us to the new life found in Easter. ●

Free Indeed Prison Ministry

This link will take you to the sermon offered by Free Indeed Prison Ministry Pastor Dirk Stadlander on this Christ the King Sunday during St. Paul service. <https://vimeo.com/479024486>

We encourage you to tune in to get an update on the situation inside the Anamosa State Penitentiary and to receive an invitation for future ministry at the prison.

Free Indeed Links mentioned in sermon: synod—<https://seiasynod.org/ministries/prisonministry>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/freeindeedprisonministry>

In-person worship looks unlikely this winter, but we still want to honor Sunday as the Lord's day.

Following worship online, join with others to discuss and learn about the Infancy Narratives concerning Jesus from Matthew and Luke's gospels. Who were the Magi? What do we know about Mary and Joseph? What did a manger look like in first century Palestine? Why are the gospel stories so different and what were they intending to reveal?

We will meet via Zoom to entertain these and a host of other questions on Sunday's Dec. 6, 13 & 20, from 10:30 a.m. - noon. Part of the time will be spent in smaller conversation groups through Zoom breakout rooms. Please contact Pastor Rodney by Dec. 1 if you would like to participate so the online materials can be gotten to you ahead of time. blumlwa@gmail.com

Please Pray for the Following People

(Why people want prayers isn't important, the prayers are!)

Karen Kleppe, Steph Hart, Chris Holtz and Lynn Rickels, and for all facing challenges from the corona virus and natural disasters.

Christmas Giving Tree is displayed in the CE entryway. Stop by during regular business hours to pick up a gift tag. See details next Pulse or watch your email.

Readers: If you would like to usher or read at one of our Wednesday taped services please call or email Barb Kleis to get on the schedule. (319) 480-1196 kleis.barb@gmail.com

GriefShare is on hold until COVID numbers are down. If you would like to attend once we are meeting again please call Nancy Douglas at 319-551-3358.

Jones County Food Bank: To donate money, make checks payable to Jones County Community Food Bank and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. For appointment to drop off/pick up call 462-4343. They are in need of green beans, pork & beans, canned tomatoes.

Special notice from Lutheran World Relief LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE WITH THE QUILT AND KIT AFFINITY PIN

Pre-order yours now!

This year marks 75 years since the first LWR Mission Quilts reached families in war-torn Europe. For three generations you've extended God's mercy through the warmth of 27 million Mission Quilts and countless kits of care. Each quilt sewn and each kit packed is a statement of faith, hope, and love.

To celebrate this milestone and thank you for your love and generosity, we're partnering with fabric artist and dedicated LWR quilter Trish Williams to bring you the Quilt and Kit Affinity Pin.

Please complete the on-line form found at lwr.org/qkpin. (or Google quilt and kit affinity pin) You can also pre-order by phone at **800-597-5972**.

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.

Jesus the Christ, King of the Universe

The Feast of Christ the King was added to the liturgical calendar by Pope Pius XI in 1925, a very recent feast. Some may remember celebrating it in October and beginning Advent seven weeks before Christmas, but when the bishops revised the liturgical calendar following Vatican II (1968), they moved the feast to the last weekend of the liturgical year. Having spent the past three weeks contemplating the nature of the "end times," this feast serves as an exclamation point on the Church Year. We end our yearly journey by praising Jesus as the Messiah-King of the Universe. This year, we encounter him as the Good Shepherd King who protects his sheep from the chaotic influences of the goats while leading all to a closer encounter with Creator.

First Reading: Book of the Prophet Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 NIV

This reading sets us up to consider what kind of leader we most need. Ezekiel was writing about the situation that existed in Jerusalem around 590 BCE. Babylon had come to power in the Middle East, and sacked Jerusalem in 597 BCE. The priest Ezekiel and several thousand leaders were exiled to Babylon from where he continued to prophesy and write. Meanwhile, Zedekiah was set up as the regent-king of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Because of some bad counsel, Zedekiah was thinking about rebelling against the Babylonians with the help of pagan Egypt. Ezekiel's voice of caution against this decision joined that of the prophet Jeremiah who was often sought out in Jerusalem by the unsure Zedekiah. Most often, the advice of the prophets was ignored.

Ezekiel tried to point out that the lack of deference to Yahweh was what caused many of the sheep (Israelites) to be injured, scattered, and lost already. The exile was divine correction for kings who placed personal gain above living out the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Ezekiel knew of Zedekiah's pondering and pronounced a harsh sentence against him. Using imagery that was familiar to the ancient people because sheep and goat herding had been such an important industry, Ezekiel painted a picture in which the present shepherd-king who was guilty of misleading the sheep would be replaced by the one, true shepherd, Yahweh. The power (not necessarily the person) of the current "sleek" king would be destroyed by the Babylonians acting on behalf of Yahweh to bring about divine judgment. Yahweh would once again restore unity to what the bad shepherd kings had fragmented. Yahweh would gather up his scattered sheep in order to deliver them back to their homeland.

Ezekiel believed that Yahweh was in charge and that the leadership of Israel needed to be more concerned about the wishes of Yahweh than about political clout or maintaining honor among the pagan nations. He also believed that Israel would eventually be restored under the guidance of a true shepherd king in the line of David's descendants.

Ezekiel was not hinting at the coming of the future Jesus of Nazareth as much as he was expressing his desire for the Messiah to arrive in his own lifetime.

Unfortunately for the inhabitants of Judea (southern Israel), Zedekiah and his supporters did attempt to carry out the rebellion. Subsequently, the entire region was wiped out by the Babylonians. The cities from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River were razed, fields were salted so they wouldn't produce grain, thousands of people were killed, many were carried off to Babylon where they remained in exile for almost fifty years, and the remaining population scattered throughout the known world, from Africa to Europe to Persia. These are the Jewish communities the Apostles and Paul will encounter when they go on their missionary journeys 600 years later.

Psalm 95:1-7a

Second Reading: The Letter to the Ephesians 1:15-23 NIV

The author of this letter is praying for the readers/hearers. It is a simple prayer which is offered to communicate three things: the hope of God's call for all who believe in Christ, the riches of God's glory found in the lives of those who have a personal relationship with God's Holy Spirit, and the greatness of God's power manifest on earth.

The author is moved to praise as he recounts the manifestation of God's power in Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Both events crushed death, and now Jesus sits at God's right hand as co-regent over the entire universe. Principalities, authorities, powers, and dominions are celestial beings now subject to Christ. Subsequently, the Church now shares in this reign because Holy Spirit overcomes sin/separation by bringing the power of Christ's love to those who are open to it. The idea that Christ is over all powers becomes significant to the Christians in Ephesus (Turkey) because they were being asked to revere Caesar, and when they refused to bow before his image, they were often mistreated, penalized, and even beaten. This letter helps reinforce the believers in their refusal to worship any powers other than God manifest in the person of Jesus.

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46 NIV

Put all of your preconceived notions of salvation and heaven aside while listening to this Gospel teaching. According to this story, who will get to experience the kingdom prepared by the Father since the beginning of time? Who will experience eternal life? Christians? Catholics? Druids? Jews? Devotees of Hinduism? Taoists? Agnostics? After hearing this gospel, our answer could very well be "Yes."

This is a teaching about judgment, and an invitation to stop playing God. As creatures of God, born into relationship as God's images in this world, we are asked to express that relationship through corporal works of mercy (including burying the dead.) No one is excluded from the possibility of living out this relationship of goodness and love, whether an Australian Aborigine, Icelandic Eskimo, Japanese Shintoist, or American Christian. God wills salvation for all people.

As Christians, we have the supreme advantage of living and worshipping in a community who has not only been charged with carrying on the mission of its leader, but actually through its faith ritual becomes the Body of Christ. We have this marvelous vehicle to direct our longings for God and energy for life. We know goodness, not because the Bible tells us so, but because we have been formed in

Taped services are found on St. Paul website, St. Paul YouTube page or St. Paul Facebook page.

Sunday, November 22

* 9:00am Worship **ON HOLD**

Monday, November 23

* 2:30pm Wisdom Pattern Book Study

Tuesday, November 24

* 1:30pm Scripture study LL CE or Zoom

* 6:00pm Grief Support—**ON HOLD**

* 8:00pm AA—**ON HOLD**

Wednesday, November 25

* 6:00pm Worship **ON HOLD**

* 6:00pm WD4 **ON HOLD**

Thursday, November 26

* Happy Thanksgiving Office Closed today and Friday.

Thank You from Jones County Family Council: Virginia & members of St. Paul, my sincerest apologies for this note being so delayed, but I wanted to thank you for your donation and partnering with us for the Jones County School Supply Drive. Together we helped kiddos get a great start to this crazy school year. Thanks again, Sherri Hunt.

If you have not picked up your 2019 St. Paul Directory, they are available inside the front door of the CE Building. When you pick up your directory, please cross off your name on the list on the clipboard. Thank You.

If you are not receiving e-mails from St. Paul please call Lois at the office to check out a few possibilities. We like to stay connected. Thank You

St. Paul Scheduled Office Hours

Lois: M-9-2; T 9-1:30; W&Th 9-2; F- 9-noon.
Kaileen: M, Tue, Th 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (or by phone)
Call for an appointment: Pastor Rodney, Nancy, or Brie.

St Paul Staff Emails and Phone Numbers

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Lois Ocenosak	stpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(319) 721-9893

Please call us if we can be of assistance. PLEASE leave a message if we cannot answer. We will return your call ASAP.

an attitude of generosity and care. The Church suffers most when we try to replace God with the religious vehicle.

Now to the symbolism in the story: the king, who sits on a throne of honor, separates the honorable people from the dishonorable people. Sheep were considered by the Middle Eastern people to be honorable animals. Our ancestors in faith noticed that sheep suffer in silence and so sheep were associated with being a “real man” and later with the suffering servant, Jesus. Sheep symbolized strength, virility, and honor. {Consider: the male sheep, a ram, was associated with the Greek gods Zeus and Apollo.} In contrast, goats were noted to be lust-filled animals. Male goats will take a run at anything, and even allow other goats to have access to their females. Goats symbolize shameful behavior. {Goats were associated with the Greek gods Bacchus and Pan because of their unrestrained erotic behavior.}

Upon what is this separation of the in-group (sheep) from the out-group (goats) based? Hospitality! In Matthew’s culture, men extended hospitality. If it was to another member of his village or clan, it was considered steadfast love (normal responsibility). If it was to a stranger, then it was hospitality, and was considered more honorable. According to Matthew, the Israelites were expected to extend hospitality to early Christian missionaries (“the least brothers of mine” who traveled without money or food. They relied completely on the kindness of others). Many of the Jews did not extend hospitality to the followers of “The Way” and so Matthew was pointing out that they acted shamefully, like goats. This would have been a stinging insult, but clearly shows that the members of Matthew’s community saw themselves as the new in-group, living the covenant in a renewed way through Jesus the messianic lamb king. Christians extended hospitality out of love for Christ; it took the form of these corporal works of mercy and like the Good Shepherd spoken about in the first reading, reversed the affects of the bad shepherds. When Christians act as Christ commanded, then the recipients experience the loving touch of God and an invitation to know this life-saving relationship.

Taking it to the Nations

Describe a time you fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave drink to the thirsty, sheltered the homeless, visited the sick, visited the imprisoned, or buried the dead.

Describe a time you chose not to respond to someone who was lonely, imprisoned, ill, naked, hungry.....
Can you say Yes the next time an opportunity arises?

Write down the names of several leaders who effect your life: political, religious, educational, etc. Which ones strike you as “sleek and strong”? Which ones are good shepherds and why?

How can the U.S. raise up more good shepherds? Could faith be a little more obvious in our leaders?

Discuss whether or not you agree with the commentary on this gospel above.

TEENS: do you see yourself more as a goat or a sheep? What kind of role model for leadership are you? When you follow, do you choose good leaders? How do you know when you’re being led astray?

Mindfulness (set aside five minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images and feelings emerge in your imagination?) “What is saving my life now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experiences of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them. My life depends on ignoring all touted distinctions between the secular and the sacred, the physical and the spiritual, the body and the soul. What is saving my life now is becoming more fully human, trusting that there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world.” — Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*

“In this second half of life, one has less and less need or interest in eliminating the negative or fearful, making again those old rash judgments, holding on to old hurts, or feeling any need to punish other people. Your superiority complexes have gradually departed in all directions. You do not fight these things anymore; they have just shown themselves too many times to be useless, ego based, counterproductive, and often entirely wrong. You learn to positively ignore and withdraw your energy from evil or stupid things rather than fight them directly.” — Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the reformation begun by Martin Luther.

Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist, is a declaration of the consensus achieved by Lutherans and Catholics as the result of ecumenical dialogue between the two communions between 1965 and 2015.

III. AGREEMENTS IN THE LUTHERAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUES— ELABORATED AND DOCUMENTED

B. Ministry

Introduction: Lutherans and Catholics find that questions concerning ministry pose especially formidable obstacles in the way toward growth in communion, as they have frequently in ecumenical relationships.²⁴ Ecclesiological and eucharistic differences often become evident in relationship to ministry. Without movement on these questions, therefore, agreements in other areas cannot fully bear their fruit in shared worship and witness. Yet it is important to recognize how theological dialogues between Catholics and Lutherans have allowed agreements to be claimed for many questions concerning ministry. What once seemed to be long-standing sharply defined contrasting positions have yielded to insights from shared historical inquiry, theological reexaminations within each tradition, and more accurate knowledge of one another's practices. This ecumenical progress has allowed measured and nuanced understandings to emerge on crucial topics surrounding the mutual recognition of ministry. This trajectory from opposition to growing convergence appeared early in recommendations regarding ministry. Thus, the second phase of international dialogue (1981) focused on questions of ministry identified by the Malta Report in 1972, while the U.S. dialogue had moved from *The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (1967) to a

substantial and forward-looking examination of Eucharist and Ministry in 1979. More recently, the U.S. statement *The Church as Koinonia of Salvation* and the international study document *Apostolicity of the Church* addressed many questions regarding ministry. Together, these dialogue reports identify a number of ways in which Lutherans and Catholics can take specific steps toward a mutual recognition of ministry. Agreement between Lutherans and Catholics on the doctrine of justification helped give new impetus for further attention to the dividing issues of ministry. Already the Malta Report had indicated how the topics could be linked:

The question of the office of the ministry in the church, its origin, its position and correct understanding represents one of the most important open questions between Lutherans and Catholics. It is here that the question of the position of the gospel in and over the church becomes concrete. What, in other words, are the consequences of the doctrine of justification for the understanding of the ministerial office (§ 47)?

The 2010 Finnish-Swedish regional report, *Justification in the Life of the Church*, was shaped throughout by the dialogue's guiding question, "What is the place of justification in the life of our respective churches?" Thus, the church's ministry was considered as it is "in the service of justification." To see it in this way was a response to the final paragraph of the Joint Declaration:

Our consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification must come to influence the life and teachings of our churches. Here it must prove itself. In this respect, there are still questions of varying importance which need further clarification ...

[including] ministry.... We are convinced that the consensus we have reached offers a solid basis for this clarification. The Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church will continue to strive together to deepen this common understanding of justification and to make it bear fruit in the life and teaching of the churches (§ 43).

December Birthdays

Gabriel Goodyear	12/1	Adelynn Tjaden	12/10	Cade Folken	12/26
Rodney Bluml	12/1	Don Hardersen	12/10	Nicholas Lehrman	12/28
Paul Pinney	12/2	Charlotte Hoover	12/11	Emily Meyer	12/30
Kenneth Humpal	12/2	Ernest Ulferts	12/14	Kyle Vavricek	12/30
Linda Kenny	12/3	Deb Zumbach	12/14		
Dennie Hinrichs	12/4	Ella Snider	12/18		
Faith Ewing	12/5	Sammie Joens	12/18		
Pat Plueger	12/6	Barb Wilson	12/19		
Arlie Willems	12/6	Langley Miller	12/19		
Dan Lambertsen	12/6	Steven Dornbusch	12/20		
Daniel Paulsen	12/6	Sam von Sprecken	12/21		
Ralph Andresen	12/7	Connor Paulsen	12/22		
Bing Postel	12/8	Lance Toenjes	12/23		
Janice Kurtz	12/9	Mariah Farr	12/23		
Phyllis Kula	12/10	Angie Keller	12/25		



If your birthday was omitted from this list, we do not have the date in our records! If you would like your birthday listed in our newsletter, please call Lois at 462-4841 or email her at stpaulanamosa@gmail.com and she would be happy to include it.

