



## MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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October 18, 2020

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20th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind

Paul Manz

### GATHERING

Sing to the Lord a new song!

**What song shall we sing?**

Give to God that which belongs to God,

**Our songs, our praise, our hope for Love to prevail!**

Give to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar!

**We pay taxes, we follow the laws of the lands, we vote!**

How do we sing joy in these days of earthly confusion?

**We trust in the Lord, we seek to follow the path of peace.**

Jesus said, Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

**In this, we love our neighbor as ourselves; we love God first, always.**

Sing to the Lord a new song!

**We come to worship God in all our ways!**

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✚ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

# God Is Here!

1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer  
2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long  
3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's  
4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of

The first system of music consists of a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a bass line on a bass clef staff. The vocal line begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. The lyrics are aligned with the notes, with some words spanning across bar lines. The bass line provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure  
need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;  
flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en,  
change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;

The second system of music continues the vocal and bass lines. The lyrics are aligned with the notes, with some words spanning across bar lines. The musical notation includes various note values and rests, with the bass line providing a steady accompaniment.

what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the  
here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -  
Christ sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants  
help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's

The third system of music concludes the piece. The vocal line ends with a final note and a fermata. The bass line provides a final accompaniment. The lyrics are aligned with the notes, with some words spanning across bar lines. The musical notation includes various note values and rests, with the bass line providing a steady accompaniment.

world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts  
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,  
 of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore  
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;

wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.  
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.  
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.  
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000  
 Music: ABBOT'S LEIGH, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907–1991  
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## GREETING

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

# KYRIE

## *Refrain*



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, ev-'ry day.



- 1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
- 2 That we may live out your im-passioned re-sponse to the
- 3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . . for
- 4 For your Spir-it to guide; that you cen-ter our lives in the



u-ni-ty of all; for  
hun-gry and the poor; that  
friends and fam-i-ly; for  
wa-ter and the word; that you



this ho-ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,  
we may live out . . . . . truth and jus-tice and grace,  
life and for love, . . . . . for our work and our play,  
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod-y and blood,



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

## *Refrain*

# Canticle of Praise

*Refrain*



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and



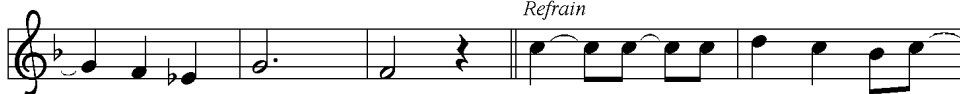
peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you



for your glo - ry. *Refrain* Glo - ry to God in the high-



est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the



right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

*Refrain*



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and



peace to God's peo - ple on earth. 3 For you a -



lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.



A - men. A - men. A - men.

*Final refrain*



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and peace to God's



peo - ple on earth. Glo - ry to God in the high -



est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

## Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, **raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

*The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the LORD has anointed to end Israel's exile. The LORD makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this LORD as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the LORD claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.*

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed: <sup>2</sup>I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. <sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me. <sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, <sup>6</sup>so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. <sup>7</sup>I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the LORD do all these things.

Holy Scripture, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God!**

## Psalm: Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]

*Ascribe to the LORD honor and power. (Ps. 96:7)*

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup>**Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD; proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

<sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.

<sup>4</sup>**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.**

<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup>**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

<sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

<sup>8</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;**

**bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

<sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!**

**The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

<sup>12</sup>**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming,**

**O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

<sup>13</sup>You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

## Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

*Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.*

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. <sup>2</sup>We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. <sup>9</sup>For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Holy Scripture, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God!**

## Gospel Acclamation.



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

*After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.*

<sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. <sup>16</sup>So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in



accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. <sup>17</sup>Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" <sup>18</sup>But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup>Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup>Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" <sup>21</sup>They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>22</sup>When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

This is the Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ!**

## SERMON

### Hymn of the Day

## God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind

1 God of tem - pest, God of whirl-wind, as on Pen - te -  
 2 God of blaz - ing, God of burn - ing, all that blocks your  
 3 God of earth - quake, God of thun - der, shake us loose from  
 4 God of pas - sion, God un - sleep - ing, stir in us love's

cost de - scend! Drive us out from shel - tered com - fort;  
 pur - pose, purge! Through your church, Christ's liv - ing Bod - y,  
 leth - ar - gy! Break the chains of sin a - sun - der,  
 rest - less - ness! Where the peo - ple cry in an - guish,

past these walls your peo - ple send! Sweep us in - to cost - ly ser-vice,  
 let your flam - ing Spir - it surge! Where de - ceit con - ceals in - jus - tice,  
 for earth's heal - ing set us free! Crum - ble walls that still di - vide us;  
 may we share your heart's dis - tress. Rouse us from con - tent with e - vil;

there with Christ to bear the cross,      there with Christ to bear the cross!  
 kin - dle us to speak your truth,      kin - dle us to speak your truth!  
 make us one in Christ our Lord,      make us one in Christ our Lord!  
 claim us for your king - dom's work,      claim us for your king - dom's work!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923  
 Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932  
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## Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His 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 into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall 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 life everlasting.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, you call us by name and invite us to share your good news. Send your Holy Spirit among preachers, missionaries, and evangelists. We give thanks for the witness of your servant Luke, the evangelist, whom the church commemorates today. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of praise, the heavens and all creation declare your salvation. From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the whole universe show forth your goodness. Raise up devoted stewards of all that you have made.

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of all, may your word of justice sound forth in every place. Restore divided nations and communities with reconciling truth. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of light, we pray for those living with pain, illness, isolation, grief, anger, or doubt (*especially*). Join their voices in a new song, assuring them that you call them each by name. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of truth, you show no partiality. May your spirit guide the work of justices, magistrates, court officials, and all vocations of the law, that your promise of restoration may be known. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Living God, as you raised Jesus from the dead, so raise up those who have died in you (*especially*). We give thanks for their witness, confident of your rescuing welcome for all. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

**OFFERING**

**Offering Prayer**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING**

Mothering God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

# Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service



- 1 Lord, whose love in hum-ble ser - vice bore the weight of hu - man need,
- 2 Still your chil - dren wan - der home - less; still the hun - gry cry for bread;
- 3 As we wor - ship, grant us vi - sion, till your love's re - veal - ing light
- 4 Called by wor - ship to your ser - vice, forth in your dear name we go,



who up - on the cross, for - sak - en, worked your mer - cy's per - fect deed:  
still the cap - tives long for free - dom; still in grief we mourn our dead.  
in its height and depth and great - ness dawns up - on our quick - ened sight,  
to the child, the youth, the a - ged, love in liv - ing deeds to show;



we, your ser - vants, bring the wor - ship not of voice a - lone, but heart;  
As you, Lord, in deep com - pas - sion healed the sick and freed the soul,  
mak - ing known the needs and bur - dens your com - pas - sion bids us bear,  
hope and health, good - will and com - fort, coun - sel, aid, and peace we give,



con - se - crat - ing to your pur - pose ev - 'ry gift which you im - part.  
by your Spir - it send your pow - er to our world to make it whole.  
stir - ring us to ar - dent ser - vice, your a - bun - dant life to share.  
that your ser - vants, Lord, in free - dom may your mer - cy know and live.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984

Music: BEACH SPRING, *The Sacred Harp*, Philadelphia, 1844; arr. *Selected Hymns*, 1985

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## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor. **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now

Georg Böhm

Messiah Lutheran Church  
9/30/2020

	Actual Sep 20	Actual Jan – Sep 20	Budget Jan – Sep 20
Revenue	\$11,759.25	\$123,389.55	\$111,195.00
Expenses	<u>11,407.81</u>	<u>117,556.03</u>	<u>123,672.72</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	<u>\$351.44</u>	<u>\$5,833.52</u>	<u>-\$12,477.72</u>
Reserve Balance	<u>\$76,131.62</u>		

**Members, Friends, and Family for Whom We Pray**

**Members of Messiah:**

Rolland Christenson, Har Shogren, Donna Forsberg, Walli Ellis, Betty Peterson, Gloria and Gene Holdsworth, we hold in prayer family and friends of Louise Benson

**Friends of Messiah**

Donna Stejksal	Daniels' friend	Karla Goewert	Friend of Kirsten Bruce
Denise	Pari Ford's mother	Orin Shogren	Har's brother
Bill Stephenson	Joy Janis's brother	Danielle	Robbie Peterson's
Dawn	Sharon Hoffman's Daughter	VanDeVyvere	granddaughter
Chip Brock	Bill and Caroline Brock's son	Krista Bahler	Betty Peterson's Niece
Dorothy Carmichael	Friend of Messiah	Betty Finney	Sharon Hoffman's friend
Erin Erb	Friend of Sherry Peterson	Meghan Presley	John & Margaret Presley's daughter
Stephani White	Betty Holcombe's daughter		

**Serving the U.S.A.**

Alex Klapp	Betty Russin's grandson	Vicki Charboneau	Elaine Eller's granddaughter
Ben Youngquist	S Hoffman's nephew	Jeremy Guy	Hensley's son-in-law
Luke Hammontree	Daniel's grandson	T.J. Paulsen	Barb Malm's child

**Serving the U.S.A. Overseas**

Daniel & Miranda Norland Randy/Gretchen's son & wife

**Seminary**

Kaylie Ines

**Bethany Church Members:**

Anita Nelson	Maridene Lundstrom	Eralene Johnson
Lou Swenson	Jolene Reese	Elly Ostlind
Gladys Anderson	Jim Attleson	Allyn & Sue Gillberg
Jane Brunsell	Rev. Elwin Bergstraesser	Heath Harris
Joan Hopp	Dolores & Walter Pelz	Betty Finney
Keo O'Rourke	Mija Stockman	Marilyn Cooper

Lois Howe	Mary Parker	Isaiah Ruble
Clarice Eckstrom	Toni & Lloyd Haukom	Dave & Beth Crouse
Clifford Carlson	Mary Swenson	Marvin Anderson
Fred & Elly Briggs	Mark Dahlsten	Harry & Ann Ylander

Jim Bridges had a stent put into a vessel near the heart on 10/14. Please keep him and Karen in your prayers. This current condition has caused him to resign as interim pastor at FBC Belleville.

**Please pray for all affected by Covid-19:** Healthcare workers/administration/staff, residential staff and residents, those who seem unaffected and those who are currently aware they are infected and are fighting the virus. Also, we pray for all who are being negatively affected by the virus and it's social disruption.

**Birthdays This Week:**

Jeanette Shogren	10/21	Gary Mattas	10/23
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**WIDER CHURCH NEWS: BY JEANNE AHLERS**

As election day draws nearer, we are all preoccupied with voting for the candidates who best represent our values. This is natural, but do we stop to think about what government means? It's easy to get hung up on individual issues, but an election involves many aspects of life that perhaps we take too much for granted.

The ELCA has issued a social message on "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy." It isn't possible to do justice to the whole report in this short space, but a few points might be brought up here. Government *of* the people has been viewed as distant and oppressive; government *by* the people as increasingly controlled by a small minority of elites; and government *for* the people as unjust in who benefits and who pays.

Yet government remains God's gift because it should do what churches, families, individuals and businesses cannot do on their own: protect and coordinate the well-being of these entities. It's true that there is ambiguity in civil government, and that it can be a force for good or for evil, or -- most accurately -- *both* in some combination. All residents of the United States have a responsibility, according to the ELCA, to make government function well -- not to abandon our democracy but to engage it in a spirit of robust civic duty

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Reformation Sunday Drive by lunch on October 25, 11am to 1pm at Messiah Lutheran Church. On this most Lutheran of Days you are invited to our second drive by lunch. You will be greeted by Martin Luther welcoming you to a stupendous meal. The menu is grilled bratwurst, German roasted potatoes, slaw salad and ice cold Root Beer Floats. Come one-come all. Free will offering. Meal delivery available. Call 785-227-3977 to reserve your meal.

Please **pray for Bethany College, the students, faculty, administrators, and staff**, that all remain healthy and mindful of best health practices, that learning be deep and strong, and that all might live into their vocation.

Please pray for **USD 400 and all teachers, students, administrators, and staff**, that they might remain healthy and mindful of best health practices, that learning be deep and strong, and the all might benefit from the community of learning.

**KICK (Kids in Christ's Kingdom)** will be on hold for the fall until we see how the virus remains contained or spreads. If you have innovative ideas about how our congregation might engage our youth or any other population in the community or congregation, please talk with Rachel Ann Atkinson or leave a message at the office. Ideas about how we are to be Church in this time are welcome, even as we see people being Church to one another through small actions and thoughtful gestures.

**Dala Pantry** – Remember that Messiah Lutheran members are asked to provide the following items for the Dala Pantry donations – canned chicken, tuna, pickles, vienna sausages, peanut butter & jelly; Bethany is asked to bring single serving macaroni and cheese, ravioli, applesauce, fruit cups and canned tuna.

**The Dala Pantry** has gained a few new volunteers but is still looking for people to be of assistance from time to time. Please let Logan know if you are interested! [daweslm@bethanylb.edu](mailto:daweslm@bethanylb.edu).



**OCTOBER 18, 2020**  
**TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER**  
**PENTECOST**



*God does great things through people.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Matthew 22:15-22</b>	<b>The question of paying taxes</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Isaiah 45:1-7</b>	<b>Cyrus serves the Lord</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1 Thessalonians 1:1-10</b>	<b>The example of faith</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Exodus 33:12-23</b>	<b>Moses' intercession</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Psalms 99</b>	<b>Our Lord is king</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Isaiah 42:1-9</b>	<b>The Lord's servant</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalms 96:1-13</b>	<b>Sing a new song</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Matthew 22:34-46</b>	<b>Loving God and neighbor</b>

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1

**Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Dear God, use our gifts, our faith, our hope in you, to do labors of love for the sake of Jesus Christ and his reign on earth. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we thank you for how you provide for us and for the hands that have brought this food to us today. Amen.

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God who has chosen you in love, give you grace and peace. (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 4)

## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Open Your Ears, O Faithful People*

## WEEKLY MILESTONES CARING CONVERSATIONS

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you have accomplished and are proud of?
- How can God use your efforts—your deeds—for others?
- Is it a surprise that God can use your efforts to accomplish God's will on earth? Explain.

## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Isaiah 45:1-7.

Cyrus is a Persian king. He is not part of God's chosen people through Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Cyrus doesn't even know the God of Israel, and yet Cyrus does God's will by setting God's people free to return home from exile in Babylon. Isaiah lifts up the supreme power and authority of God's rule throughout the world. Besides the LORD, there is no god (v. 5). All that is, is God's. It is easy for us to forget that God can use others outside of the body of Christ to do God's will on earth. No wonder Psalm 96 commands all the earth to sing to the LORD (v. 1). In the midst of the tragedies that happen all too often around us, it is important to remember that we are a people of hope and trust in the God who holds all things together. The Apostle Paul wrote with thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). As a chosen people, Paul gladly affirms that they do God's work of love on earth through their "work of faith" and "steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 3). How does God's rule on earth give you hope and encourage you to act with love and faith?

*Pray:* **God of power and might, we thank you for your glory that breathes hope and love into all corners of the earth through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SERVICE

God is the ruler of all of creation and we, God's servants, have responsibility to care for all that God has created. One of the greatest concerns for our world today is to care for the earth that is suffering under the weight of carbon emissions, overflowing landfills and polluted air and water. What can you do to reduce the waste that harms the earth?

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalm 96 is a song of praise to God. It tells of the sea roaring, the creatures and fields rejoicing, and the trees singing. In what ways do you praise God through sounds and music? Sing a favorite Christian hymn. Think about what the words say about God. Then say: **Sing a new song to the Lord! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord, sing and praise his name.**

(vv.1-2a)

In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)