



Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

+ *Matthew 25:13*

THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 8, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The final weeks of the Church Year are a time for us to focus on the “last things”—teaching concerning the End of Days. Just an aside: We are and have been living in the End of Days/Last Days ever since Christ’s death and resurrection. When Holy Scripture speaks of the “rapture” and the “thousand year reign,” these are allegories and figurative speech, meant to emphasize what our Verse of the Day teaches clearly: “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour [of our Lord’s return]” (Matthew 25:13).

These “last things” are not always easy to hear. For instance, the Old Testament reading tells us that the Day of the Lord is “darkness, and not light” (Amos 5:18, 20) for all who trust in their own righteousness and piety. The Lord will not accept their “burnt offerings and grain offerings,” nor will He look upon their “peace offerings” (Amos 5:22). Instead, He desires a heart of faith that trusts in Him, which lets “justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24) in love for the neighbor. In order for the “lamps” of our lives to burn brightly with such love, we must be filled with the “oil” of forgiveness through faith in our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:1–4).

Therefore, as we await His coming, wisdom directs us “to the dealers” (Matt. 25:9), that is, to the ministers of His Gospel. Thus we wait upon the Lord, and we “encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18). Waking or sleeping, we are prepared to meet Him when He comes “with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God,” and “we will always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).



The Wise and Foolish Virgin by Jan Adam Kruseman, 1848, Public Domain

Yours in Christ Jesus, +Pastor Griebenaw

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Pastor’s email: pastor@gracelutheranelcentro.org

✠ DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING THREE ✠

HYMN OF INVOCATION: Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

LSB 516



1 "Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing," The watch - men on the
 2 Zi - on hears the watch - men sing - ing, And all her heart with
 3 Now let all the heav'ns a - dore Thee, Let saints and an - gels



heights are cry - ing; "A - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, a - rise!"
 joy is spring - ing; She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.
 sing be - fore Thee With harp and cym - bals' clear - est tone.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es And at the thrill - ing
 For her Lord comes down all - glo - rious, The strong in grace, in
 Of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal, Where, join - ing with the



cry re - joic - es: "Oh, where are ye, ye vir - gins wise?
 truth vic - to - rious; Her star is ris'n, her light is come.
 choir im - mor - tal, We gath - er round Thy ra - diant throne.



The Bride - groom comes, a - wake! Your lamps with glad - ness take!
 Now come, Thou Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son,
 No eye has seen the light, No ear has heard the might



Al - le - lu - ia! With brid - al care Your - selves pre - pare
 Hail! Ho - san - na! We en - ter all The wed - ding hall
 Of Thy glo - ry; There - fore will we E - ter - nal - ly



To meet the Bride - groom, who is near."
 To eat the Sup - per at Thy call.
 Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee!

Text and tune: Public Domain

Stand – The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 184

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father,
 beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

[Hebrews 10:22]

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 124:8

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Psalms 32:5

Kneel (or remain standing)

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C **O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

Mark 16:16; John 1:12

C **Amen.**

Stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTROIT

Psalm 84:1, 9–12; antiphon: v. 3

The pastor and congregation chant responsively. The antiphon is chanted by the pastor before and after the psalm.



(Antiphon) Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may | lay her young,*
at Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King | and my God.

¹ How lovely is Your | dwelling place,*
O | LORD of hosts!

⁹ Behold our shield, | O God;*
look on the face of Your a- | noointed!

¹⁰ For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand | elsewhere.*
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of | wickedness.

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and | honor.*
No good thing does He withhold from those who walk up- | rightly.

¹² O | LORD of hosts,*
blessèd is the one who | trusts in You!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

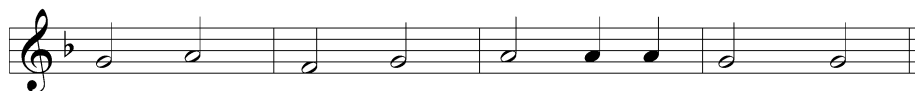
The antiphon is repeated.

KYRIE

Mark 10:47



☐ Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

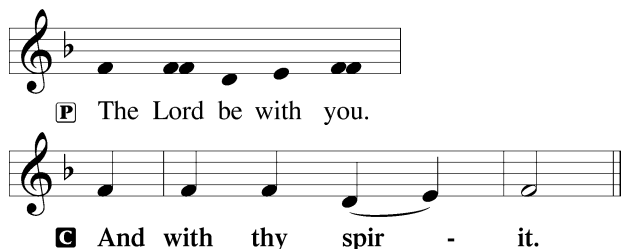
GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Luke 2:14; John 1:29



P Glory be to God on high: **C** and on earth peace, good - will toward
men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up-on us.
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up-
on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY



P The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spir - it.



P Let us pray.

P Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son to lead home His bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Sit

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Amos 5:18–24

P The Old Testament Reading is from Amos, chapter five.

¹⁸Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, ¹⁹as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. ²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹“I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²²Even though you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. ²³Take away from Me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. ²⁴But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

Revelation 7:14b; Psalm 84:5

The pastor and congregation chant responsively.



These are the ones coming out of the great tribu- | lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.

**Blessèd are those whose strength is | in You,*
in whose heart are the highways to | Zion.**

EPISTLE READING

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

P The Epistle is from First John, chapter three.

¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, 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 fallen asleep.

¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

ALLELUIA & VERSE



C Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Alleluia. Watch therefore,
for you know neither the day nor the hour. Alleluia.

Matthew 25:13



C Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 25:1-13

P The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.



C Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹“The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when 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, they all became drowsy and slept.

⁶“But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

¹¹“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
 and ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of the Father.
 And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
 whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord and giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
 who spoke by the prophets.
 And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
 I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
 and I look for the resurrection of the dead
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sit

HYMN OF THE DAY: Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray

LSB 633



1 Rise, my soul, to watch and pray; From your sleep a - wak -
 2 Watch a - gainst the dev - il's snares Lest a - sleep he find
 3 Watch! Let not the wick - ed world With its lies de - feat
 4 Watch a - gainst your - self, my soul, Lest with grace you tri -
 5 But while watch - ing, al - so pray To the Lord un - ceas -



en! Be not by the e - vil day Un - a - wares o'er -
 you; For in - deed no pains he spares To de - ceive and
 you Lest with bold de - cep - tions hurled It be - tray and
 fle; Let not self your thoughts con - trol Nor God's mer - cy
 ing. God pro - tects you day by day, Strength and faith in -



tak - en; For the foe, Well we know, Is a
 blind you. Sa - tan's prey Oft are they Who se -
 cheat you. Watch and see Lest there be Faith - less
 sti - fle. Pride and sin Lurk with - in, All your
 creas - ing, So that still Mind and will Shall u -



har - vest reap - ing While the saints are sleep - ing.
 cure are sleep - ing And no watch are keep - ing.
 friends to charm you, Who but seek to harm you.
 hopes to shat - ter; Heed not when they flat - ter.
 nite to serve Him And for - ev - er love Him.

Text and tune: Public Domain

SERMON

Rev. Griebenaw

After the Sermon the pastor may say:

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
 keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C Amen.

Philippains 4:7

Stand

OFFERTORY

Psalm 51:10–12

C Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

Kneel (or remain standing)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(1 Timothy 2:1–4)

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For Matthew and Michael, for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For Donald, for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.
- P** For . . . [additional bids for prayer may be inserted here] . . . let us pray to the Lord:
C Lord, have mercy.

The prayers then continue:

- P** For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:
- C** **Alleluia.**
- P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for individual prayer may follow.

- P** Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord:
- C** **To You, O Lord.**

The live-stream service concludes with the following:

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9–13

- P** Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:
- C** **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.**

CONCLUDING COLLECT

- P** Let us pray.
O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Stand

BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24–26

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C A-men, a-men, a - men.

The Divine Service will continue with the Lord's Supper for those present at the church. Please sing and/or read aloud the closing hymn in your home and, if possible, please come by the church for Holy Communion between 10:30am and 11:30am, parking by the concrete ramp along Holt Avenue.

CLOSING HYMN: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

LSB 802

1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
3 To all life Thou giv - est— to both great and small—
4 Great Fa - ther of glo - ry, pure Fa - ther of light,
In light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
Nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, Thou rul - est in might;
In all life Thou liv - est, the true Life of all;
Thine an - gels a - dore Thee, all veil - ing their sight;
Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
Thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove
We blos - som and flour - ish as leaves on the tree
All laud we would ren - der: O help us to see
Al - might - y, vic - to - rious, Thy great name we praise.
Thy clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
And with - er and per - ish— but naught chang - es Thee.
'Tis on - ly the splen - dor of light that hides Thee.

Text and tune: Public Domain

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠
(TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY)

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR

Brothers and sisters,

Outside of Armageddon—when the forces of Heaven and Hell will be pitched in the epic final battle of all things—there is one war that begins anew this week. This conflict began years ago and it will rage for years to come. It is a battle between dark and light, between good and great! No two forces have been so diametrically opposed as these have been. There is no room for compromise or reconciliation. And to be clear, I'm not talking about politics (that was last week's news!)

This week brings the release of the new Playstation 5 (Yay!) . . . and the new Xbox Series X (Boo!). And you can guess which camp I support, eh? I have a Playstation 4 (which I adore) but I can't help but salivate for the latest and greatest gaming system. The new Playstation is 5.7 times faster and can output graphics up to 8K (four times the resolution of my current TV and 16 times the resolution of my PS4)!



Now before some of you “tune-out” because you're not video game players (I know it isn't everyone's cup of tea), let me tell you my conundrum: when would I find the time to do the new PS5 justice in terms of playing time? I have responsibilities to which I must attend (as husband and father and pastor). Even now, I find it will be several days (sometimes weeks) between gaming sessions.

That is the challenge, right? To find that balance between responsibility and recreation? Perhaps you're familiar with the old proverb “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Of course, the corollary is “All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.”

So the moral of today's letter (aside from some much-needed levity) is “Don't forget to make time to do something that brings you excitement and joy; but also do not neglect your God-given vocations.” And when I type it out, it sounds so simple . . . if only it was as easy in practice, right?

One vocation common to us all is that of “Christian” and a big part of that is the Third Commandment, that “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.” So please join me on **Tuesday at Noon (ending by 1:00pm)** for our **Study of the Psalms** on “Zoom.” We socialize for the first 15 minutes and work through the psalm from 12:15pm to 12:45pm, finishing by 1:00pm. This week we study Psalm 29.

- To join the study on your computer, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7603525715>
- To join by phone, call either “669-900-9128” or “346-248-7799” and enter 7603525715#

And tune-in to Facebook **each Wednesday at 7:00pm** for a short **service of prayer and meditation** on the psalm. The service folder is on our website (www.GraceLutheranElCentro.org) and the live-stream is on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranElCentro).

Lastly, please continue to mail your tithes and offerings to the church's post office box:

- Grace Evangelical-Lutheran Church
PO Box 1530
El Centro, CA 92244-1530.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw