

Old Testament Reading:
Amos 5:18–24

¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why would you have the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, and not light,
¹⁹ as 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.

²⁰ Is 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.

²² Even though you offer me your burnt
offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the peace offerings of your
fatted animals,
I will not look upon them.

²³ Take away from me the noise of your
songs;
to the melody of your harps I will
not listen.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an
ever-flowing stream."

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

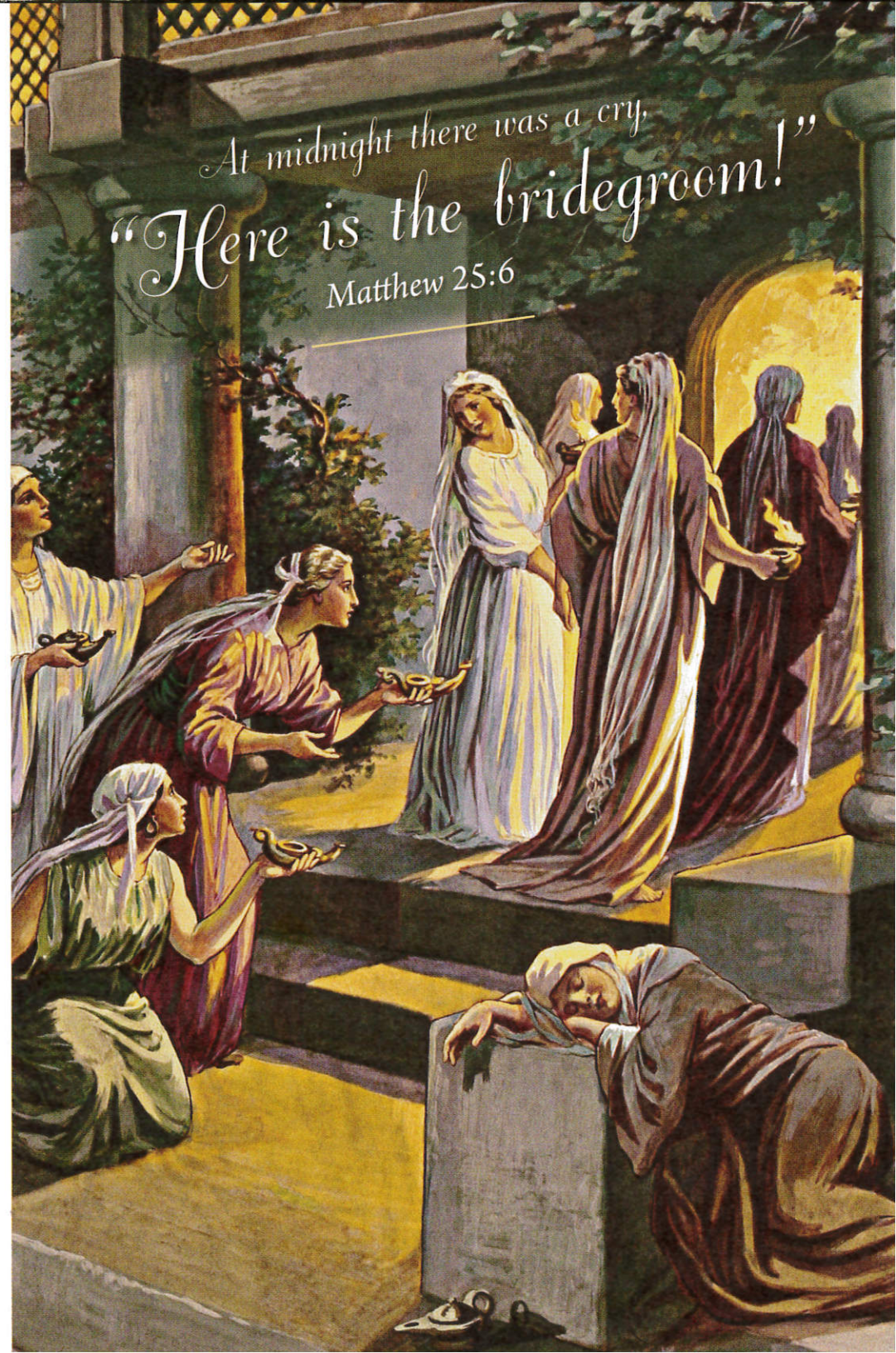
¹³ But we do not want you to be unin-
formed, brothers, about those who are
asleep, that you may not grieve as oth-
ers do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we
believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so, through Jesus, God will bring
with him those who have fallen asleep.
¹⁵ For this we declare to 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. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself
will descend from heaven with a cry of
command, with the voice of an arch-
angel, and with the sound of the trum-
pet of God. And the dead in Christ will
rise first. ¹⁷ Then 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. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another
with these words.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 25:1–13

¹ [Jesus said:] "The kingdom of heaven
will be like ten virgins who took their
lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.
² Five of them were foolish, and five were
wise. ³ For when the foolish took their
lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but
the wise took flasks of oil with their
lamps. ⁵ As 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.'
⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed
their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to
the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for
our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise
answered, saying, 'Since there will not be
enough for us and for you, go rather to
the dealers and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And
while they were going to buy, the bride-
groom 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.' ¹² But he answered,
'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'
¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither
the day nor the hour."

About the Cover: The bridegroom is here! Five were prepared with oil in their lamps, but another five were unprepared and left in the dark. Christ's parable of the ten virgins is a call to vigilance for the Lord's return. We do not know the hour when He will come back again. However, in our Lord's Word, we have everything we need to be ready for that day. His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (see Psalm 119:105). Jesus, the Church's Bridegroom, has died, risen, and is coming back again for His Church.



St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254

309-949-2516

November 12, 2023 Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Service of Prayer and Preaching (Lutheran Service Book, p. 260)

Hymn of Invocation 514 The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us

Opening Versicles (Common, p. 260)

Psalm 70

(in place of Old Testament Cantic)

¹Make haste, O God, to deliver me!

O LORD, make haste to help me!

²**Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life! Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire my hurt!**

³Let them turn back because of their shame
who say, "Aha, Aha!"

⁴**May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!"**

⁵But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay!

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

Readings (on back of bulletin)

Responsory (Common, p. 263)

Catechism (p. 264)

Ten Commandments

The Apostles' Creed

Lord's Prayer

The Table of Duties: To Workers/ To Employers (see insert)

Sermon

Office Hymn 516 Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

Presentation of the Offering

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P ...one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect of the Day (p. 265)

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.

C Amen.

Collect for the Word

Morning Prayer (p. 266)

Blessing (p. 267)

Hymn to Depart 661 The Son of God Goes Forth to War

Silent Prayer

Luther's Small Catechism

Section 3

Table of Duties

Certain Passages of Scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities

To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.
Ephesians 6:5-8

To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.
Ephesians 6:9

Luther's Small Catechism

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ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org
Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org
<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo>

**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

Rev. Timothy Nerud **Pastor**
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Carl Freeman

Organist:

Greeter: Janet Bertso

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

WE PRAY: Lord Jesus, Bridegroom of the church, know that we are waiting and watchful for Your coming, for we would be guests at the eternal wedding feast; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)
(Tuesday— Friday) please call ahead

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES - use this website (www.lhm.org) to have daily devotions sent to your email or phone. You never have to be without God's word.

All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school— Adult Bible Class— Worship—

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday	\$
Weekly income needed per 2023 Budget	\$4,212.60
Dollar for Missions for October	\$ 104.00

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship
Tuesday	6:00 pm	Council meeting
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation class
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Youth group

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

MATTHEW 25:4 – **"But the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps."** Why did they take flasks of oil with them? Because they listened to the Bridegroom's words and believed what He said. Our actions always start with and flow from our beliefs. What do your actions in the realm of stewardship say about what you believe?

ATTENDANCE BOOK—We ask everyone attending this morning to sign the red attendance book found at the end of each pew, then pass it back.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS—We are asking the congregation to bring pantry items for the baskets (ex: cereal, Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels, soups, crackers, cookies, fruit juice, pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned fruits/vegetables, peanut butter, snack items, canned meats, etc.). Place them in the box in front of the Office no later than November 19th. Monetary gifts are also accepted. Please give them to Terri Hock (checks made out to St. John's, memo line-Thanksgiving Baskets). A Thrivent Action Plan has been obtained to provide fresh items for the baskets.

FOUND— A bracelet was found in the sanctuary near the Altar. Please talk to Terri Hock if you think this is yours.

UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION—Please review the model directory found on the table next to the coat room. Make any corrections or additions to your contact information and that of family members not regularly attending. We appreciate addresses, land line phone numbers, cell numbers, and emails. Also if there are changes to the people in the household please note that as well.

LOST AND FOUND— Our box of items is full. Please check if anything might be yours. Thank You!

CHRISTIAN LIVING—Matthew 25:1-13: Are you prepared? You might respond, “It depends on what I’m preparing for.” Since God promises to dwell among us to make His home among us in His new heaven and new earth, isn’t all of life a preparation for our homecoming? Unfortunately, we find ourselves preparing for everything but that, thinking that we will prepare for “that” when “that time” comes. God’s Word tells us that the time to prepare is always “NOW!” We are to encourage one another all the more as the Day approaches even nearer. We have a WORD to share with the world that literally unpacks our bags and wants us to stay a while rather than helps us prepare for the blessings of our homecoming. The world makes us “unprepared” by draining us of the oil we need to be prepared by taking from us the one thing needful: Jesus Christ! Boldly share Christ with the world, for when they have Him and Him alone, they are prepared for the Day when He returns for His bride, His Church.

2024 Wall Calendars—Hillcrest Home would be very happy to receive your extra 2024 wall calendars to hang in their patients' rooms. Please place them in the tray on the table by the coat room. Thank you!

DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS: A Dollar for Missions gathers many small gifts – one dollar at a time! – to add up to a big impact for the spread of the saving Gospel of Christ. The current Dollars for Missions Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024.

ALTAR FLOWERS—The 2023 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms. Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. Please sign up for a Sunday.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Give thanks as you pray:

MISSION—*Thank God that He delivers us from evil.* Rejoice that Jesus has won the victory over sin, death and the power of the devil.

ST JOHN’S—Mr. & Mrs. Preston Smith—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Preston, Sabrina and Vivian and ask Your blessings upon them.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Wanda Rahn
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Drew Schillinger
Jim Dahl	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Jessica Johnson	Aaron Raschke	Carolyn Werner

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

Bruce & Debbie Bley (sister & brother-in-law of Cathy Schillinger)

Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

Mike Erdman (nephew of Bob Erdman)

Shandel Loenser (wife of Gabe Loenser)

Paul Werner (brother of Dan Werner)

Jim DeFauw (son of Joyce DeFauw)

Scott Wilson (Great nephew of Darla Johns)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

Rylie Hallendorff (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“What could be more joyful and rewarding than to share with everyone the best news they will ever hear: Jesus has saved you from sin and death and won eternal life for you as a free gift of His love. Let’s roll up our sleeves and begin today with the prayer, ‘Lord, help me be an eager worker in Your kingdom.’”
Daily Devotions, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Michigan – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org



Enchilada Sale Fundraiser! \$20 per dozen

2 Flavors: Chicken or Beef

SATURDAY DECEMBER 9TH, 2023

PICK UP ORDERS: 1-2PM

LOCATION:

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH

1301 19TH ST. EAST MOLINE, IL

50 dozens available - Order by 11/30/23

Jose Nunez (309) 373-1788

Proceeds will go towards
Christ the King Lutheran Church

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 12, 2023

Text: Matthew 25:1-13 (Gospel Reading)

Other Texts: Amos 5:18-24 (Old Testament Reading); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (Epistle)

“Not Foolish, But Wise”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Beginning today and for the next couple weeks, we bring the church year to a close and, accordingly, the appointed readings put our focus on this whole creation coming to a close on the Last Day, the Day of the Lord. In view then of this ultimate truth and reality, let us consider our Lord’s Parable of the Ten Virgins.

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.”ⁱ

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus spoke numerous parables dealing with the kingdom of heaven. In many cases, that terminology referred to Christ’s current reign here in the kingdom of grace, the church on earth, such as the Parables of the Weeds, the Mustard Seed, and Leaven,ⁱⁱ for in those He says, “the kingdom of heaven *is* like.” But here He says, “*Then* the kingdom of heaven *will be* like,” meaning this concerns the kingdom of heaven in the future, which is what His teachings directly preceding this parable were already dealing with. He spoke of knowing the signs of the world’s certain and imminent end and His glorious return, even as He made clear that *no one* will know the day or the hour it will occur. Consequently, He exhorts His disciples to remain spiritually awake so *they are ready for Him at any time*.

So continuing His sermon, Jesus uses the illustration of ten virgins who were to go out and meet the Bridegroom when He came in order to both honor Him as well as join with Him in entering the joy of the marriage feast. Now the first thing we must ask is “Who are the virgins?” As the lit lamp with oil being what was required to enter the festival, we rightly recognize that all of them originally had such lit lamps. Thus these virgins are *Christians*, a truth St. Paul reflects in his second letter to the Corinthians, “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you *as a pure virgin* to Christ.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Thus this parable is not contrasting open, manifest sinners and flagrant unbelievers who never repented and believed the Gospel with faithful Christians. No, all of these virgins were Christians with the number ten representing completeness, indicating that the full church on earth is symbolized by them. Yet, some are wise and so enter the feast and some were foolish and so were locked out. What made the difference? How is it that some Christians do *not* enter glory?

Knowing that just a bit before our text, Jesus exhorted His disciples to “stay awake,”^{iv} we might at first wonder if it was their falling asleep. And perhaps on a certain level, the dozing should be considered wrong, being a reminder that all of us have a sinful nature which, much to our shame, readily makes us lazy in spiritual, eternal matters. So away with such slothfulness! Yet, as the

wise virgins also fell asleep and were still admitted into the feast, clearly the dozing itself cannot be the difference between wisdom and foolishness. So what is it then?

Dear Christians, it is actually a topic that is regularly addressed in Scripture. It contrasts those who come to faith but then fall away and those who persevere in faith until the end. A perseverance *that is necessary* because, as Jesus said, the Bridegroom was delayed, which is a clear reference to the fact that He, after His ascension, would not immediately return.

Now we often hear that many of the early Christians believed that the Lord would return in their lifetime. And that might well be the case just as many other believers have thought the same thing throughout the Church's history. And it is true that the fact Jesus has not yet returned almost 2,000 years later has encouraged unbelievers to mock the Bible's teaching. Actually, this began already in the first century as St. Peter records scoffers saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."^v Yet, understand that this in no way puts Jesus' return into question since *He Himself made clear there would be a delay*. Yes, there will remain scoffers who will continue scoffing, finally only being silenced by the terrifying sight of His return and their certain condemnation to follow. May we not become such scoffers in any way, but instead be as those wise virgins. But what is such wisdom then? Jesus continues,

"But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And 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. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'"^{vi}

The Bridegroom was long delayed, the imagery of coming at midnight being utilized to show a late and unexpected time, things we have already commented on. But the cry of His coming finally happens just as St. Paul writes, "For 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."^{vii} Now the folly of the foolish virgins is revealed even as the wisdom of the wise is as well. For as the lamps are out, the wise use the extra oil that they brought and their lamps begin to shine brightly again, even as the foolish have no extra oil.

How do we understand Jesus rightly? As all were virgins, all were part of the Christian church. They all had the lamp of God's divine worship. They all had the oil of the Father's grace, the presence of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit in the Word and the precious sacraments of Baptism and the Communion of Jesus' body and blood. We know that they had these for the flame of faith and a new life in Christ were present. Yet, for the foolish, though the lamp remained, at some point the flame had gone out as the oil had dried up, and there was no more with which to replace it. Two things become clear here. First, while the faith of others, such as parents, spouse, friends, is truly a great encourager, it can never save another. Everyone must believe for themselves. Second, at Christ's return, it will be too late to get grace and faith, for the day of grace will be over and sight will replace faith. Don't push off repenting!

So the foolish are those who quit letting their light shine because their faith was no more, just head knowledge, facts remembered, but no longer believed as evidenced by the truths of Scripture no longer impacting their life. Here we think of the Parable of the Sower, where a true living faith died because of either trials and suffering being faced or because of getting caught up in the joys and entertainments of this life, perhaps sinful, but not necessarily. Just good things which became more important than He who IS good, God, as was revealed by having more interest in them than God's Word, more desire to be doing them than to be in worship.

The Word says resist the devil and he will flee.^{viii} *But we must actually be in the Word to keep up that resistance!* The devil does not flee from the one who is spending more time in the things of the world than the Word. As faith weakens, so does the resolve to live a holy life, leaving the person "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power"^{ix} as St. Paul warns. Such a one ends up increasingly failing to resist temptations and so falls into more, and more serious sins as for some even the external holiness of life is lost as great shame and vice take over. But even if the externals remain, while better for here on earth, if the flame of faith is no longer heating them, the Lord's return will prove it to be a cold and dead love which came from a heart filled with mere natural affection at best, and self-righteousness and hypocrisy as well.^x We might be fooled, but not so the Judge who sees the soul. Though they cry out, "Lord!" His response will reveal the reality, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you."

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."^{xi} Fellow redeemed, *you lack absolutely nothing* to enter the eternal wedding feast. Christ Jesus has saved you. Whether great or small, horrific or minor, truly anything and everything that has blemished the perfect holiness which God demands, has blemished you, your Savior has taken to the cross and paid for it all in full. You have been reborn in Holy Baptism by the water and the Spirit-filled Word, and regenerated by that same Holy Spirit that you might live and grow in that new spiritual life you into which you were born. Know this, believe this, live this, *and don't quit. That is wisdom!*

So don't be foolish, *nor become foolish later*. Be wise, keep watch by being filled with oil by hearing God's Word and receiving His Sacrament, for there Christ's Spirit is present *for you* with all the Father's grace. God's Law does not save you, but the saved person daily meditates on God's Law, delighting in it, and so diligently practices and grows in holy virtues to battle against sinful desires even as that which is godly and good comes forth.^{xii}

So keep your resistance against the devil, the corrupted world, and your sinful nature strong by being more in the Word than the world, more focused the Blesser than the blessings, and avoiding all things that would lead you into temptation and sin as if your eternal life depends on it. For it does. And this means people too. Of course we are to witness to others, but unbelievers are *not* to be chosen as our spouse or close friends as St. Paul warns, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'"^{xiii} And then also be regular in sincere prayer. Prayer to remain strong in faith, to grow in holiness of life, to endure suffering with patience, and to ever more desire the Lord's return and leave this world and enter the world to come with Him.

Dear Father make us wise virgins with burning lamps: our souls pure by forgiveness in Christ, our lives godly in every way, proving we are Christ's and Christ's alone. Amen

ⁱ Matthew 25:1-5. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱ Matthew 13:24, 31, 33.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Corinthians 11:2 (*emphasis mine*).

^{iv} Matthew 24:42.

^v 2 Peter 3:4.

^{vi} Matthew 25:6-12.

^{vii} 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

^{viii} James 4:7.

^{ix} 2 Timothy 3:5.

^x “Natural affection” is the term for that love that spouses, families, etc. have for one another, something which unbelievers also regularly have (cf. Matthew 5:46-47). It is not, of itself bad, as it is part of God’s creation and keeps families intact. Christians also have it. But it is not to equated with Christian love.

^{xi} Matthew 25:13.

^{xii} Cf. Psalm 1:2 and basically all of Psalm 119 for example.

^{xiii} 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 27A)
12 November 2023

Presentation of the Offering

Our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake the Father richly and daily forgives our sins and lightens our burdens with the hope of everlasting life, we dedicate our offerings to Your service, and not our offerings only, but our very lives which we commit anew to You. Inspired with Your promise of salvation we count it a joy and privilege to do this work. Let us never despise Your covenant of grace sealed to us in our Baptism nor withhold ourselves and our possessions from Your service. Hear us, precious Savior. Amen.

Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Lord, You are our help and deliverer. We ask that You grant us and all Your people all things needful and guard us against all things harmful. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, preserve Your people from believing that we are saved because of our works or religious ceremonies. Grant that what we do in worship and prayer may proclaim salvation in Christ Jesus alone and that our new life of holy works is not the basis of our salvation, but our way of honoring and thanking You and serving others. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, You bestow favor and honor and withhold nothing from those who walk uprightly. Bless parents and those who teach children Your ways, that generations to come would love Your promises, walk in Your truth and dwell in Your house. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, You despise corruption and command justice. Embolden our rulers and all in authority to enact and defend measures that preserve peace and provide justice for all. Help us to honor those who have served in the armed forces of our nation with courage and integrity even as You remind us that our nation either prospers or suffers under Your Providence, so help us return to the way of Your commandments. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, show mercy to those who cry aloud as they await Your Son's coming in glory, including Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Paula, Jim, Jim, Don, Michael, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Shandel, Jodi, Marilyn, Wanda, Aaron, Laurie, Drew, Carolyn, Paul, Carolyn, Scott, and Marilyn. Answer them with strength and healing, comfort and hope. Make them confident in Christ, who will raise His people on the Last Day. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly King, remember Preston, Sabrina, and Vivian Smith. Bless them in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, grant that we may not grieve as those who have no hope but rejoice and encourage each other in the promise of the resurrection to life everlasting. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our salvation, we know neither the day nor the hour of Christ's return, but we know that He has died and is risen again to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Until that day, preserve us in faith and guard us from temptation. Do not let us be caught unprepared for His coming. Let us live our days in loving service and joyful expectation of the life of the world to come; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

Collect of the Day

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.

Collect for the Word