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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion
November 19, 2017 – 9:00 AM

Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, NJ

WELCOME TO CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Through the readings today we learn of the faith-generated response to God's lavish grace.

Breaking the sound barrier! We invite you to try one of our listening devices, which allows you to sit anywhere in the sanctuary. They are available by speaking to an usher, Tom Kearns or David Crouse.

Pink Prayer Cards: You may write names for prayer on a pink card found in the pew rack. Please place your card on the altar rail for inclusion in the prayers of the day. If you wish a name to be added to our printed prayer list (for four weeks) please write "Prayer List" on the card. Please be sure this prayer request is approved by the person for whom we are praying.

Holy Communion: All who are baptized are invited to the table where Christ is bodily present in the bread and wine. At the directions of our ushers, all who are able kneel at the rail to receive this gift. The individual cups contain wine and grape juice (grape juice is in the center of the tray). A common cup with wine is also available. Children who commune should hold out their hands to the server.

Nursery Facilities: There is a self-serve Nursery and Infant Room for young children accompanied by their parents. The Infant Room contains a bathroom with a changing table. These rooms are located along the hallway from the side door of the sanctuary.

Need an offering envelope? We have envelopes in the pews for you. Please include your contact information or envelope number. **We also accept checks online.** Visit our website (www.clc4u.com) and click on "Give" to learn how to set up an account with your bank information. Thank you for your gift!

Contact Information:

Pastor: Rev. Marc A. Stutzel
Director of Music: Argine Safari
Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance
Parish Administrator: Doris Crouse
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Open on Sundays: 9:00 and 10:30 am

For today's worship all *portions in italics* will be spoken by our worship leaders. Congregational responses are in **bold-faced type**.

[Please stand.]

GATHERING – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God – you are faithful.

God – you are merciful.

God – you are love.

Hear our prayer as we confess our sins to you.

God, I confess that often I do not place you first in my life.

I confess that I have lived for myself and ignored the needs of others.

**I confess I have doubted your love and care. Some of my sin I know
but some only you know.**

In the name of Jesus, forgive me.

God is faithful.

God is merciful.

God is love.

In the name of ✠ Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

Amen.

13 C C/G G Am/G G Am⁷ D

I will fol - low all Your ways.
I will trust You, You a - lone.

17 G D/F# C Am⁷ D

All: I will give You all my wor - ship, I will give You all my praise.

21 G D/F# C

You a - lone I long to wor - ship, You a - lone are

24 Am⁷ D G

wor - thy of my praise.

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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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON [The congregation may sit.]

THE FIRST READING – Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

⁷*Be silent before the Lord GOD!*

*For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.*

¹²*At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts,
“The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm.”*

¹³*Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.*

¹⁴*The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.*

¹⁵*That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,*

¹⁶*a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.*

¹⁷*I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.*

¹⁸*Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL according to St. Matthew 25:14-30

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CONGREGATION ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS [The congregation may sit.]

[Pink prayer cards with your joys or concerns may be placed on the altar rail.]


SERMON – “Talents”

[The offering will be received during the singing of the following song.]

SONG – “Indescribable” [Words and Music by Laura Story and Jesse Reeves]


$\text{♩} = 60$

C#m B/D# E



1. From the high - est of heights ___ to the depths of the ___ sea, ___
2. Who has told _ ev-'ry light - ning bolt where it should ___ go, ___

5 F#m⁷ A/E Dmaj⁷



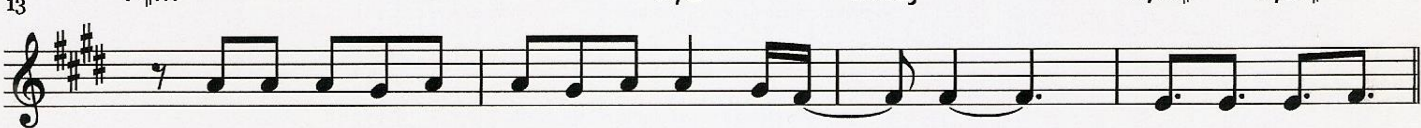
cre - a - tion's re - veal - ing Your maj - es - ty. ___
or seen heav - en - ly store - hous - es lad - en with ___ snow? ___

9 C#m B/D# E




From the col - lours of Fall to the fra - grance of ___ Spring, ___
Who i - mag - ined the sun and gives source to its ___ light, ___

13 F#m⁷ A/E Dmaj⁷ A/C# B/D#



ev - 'ry crea - ture u - nique in the song that it ___ sings. ___ All ex - claim - ing:
yet con - ceals it to bring us the cool - ness of ___ night? ___ None can fath - om.

17 E B A²



In - de - scrib - a - ble, un - con - tain - a - ble; You placed the stars in the sky, and You know them by ___

21 C#m E/G# A E



___ name. ___ You are a - maz - ing, ___ God; ___ All pow - er - ful,
(Last time) In - com - p'ra - ble,

PRAYERS OF THE DAY [Please remain standing.]

Loving God, you teach us to keep nothing from you. We bring to you all our prayers, large and small, those heavy on our hearts and those known only to you.

*We pray for the church. Enliven its witness in ecumenical ministries, feeding programs, and new ventures. We pray for our Bishops, Elizabeth and Tracie, and all members of church councils everywhere. Open our hearts to friendships that share faith, and open our mouths to share your good news. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We pray for the nations of the world, their leaders, and those God has entrusted into their care. Raise up just and wise advocates and judges from small-town courts to international tribunals. We pray for Donald, the president, and for all justices on the Federal Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of New Jersey. Enlighten all leaders to discern what is right and do what is good.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for those who cry out for healing, hope, or help, and for those for whom we have promised to pray. We lift up to you. . .

*Beverly Albert, Dolores Albert, Bill Caver, Kathy Cipoletti, Tony Conboy,
Peter Gluesing, Kim Herrera, Gerald Hoenes, Bo Hoag, Ken Huebner, Mae Hulburt,
Millie and Roger Hildebrand, Shiloh and Katherine Johnson, Gary Meserole,
Fred Messner, Chris Montana, Holly Mullins, George Namendorf,
Meghan Otte, Anne Pangalo, Michael Pyne, Lorraine and Jack Sadlon,
Ellie Soehren, Nancy Sorbo, Nancy Sweet*

Bring relief to caregivers and surround those who are lonely with your powerful presence. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for retail workers, managers, and all who are preparing for the holiday shopping rush. In times of stress, bring them peace. When they are feeling overwhelmed, show them the way. When anger and frustration replace joy and fun, open them to your calming presence. And give all of us, retail workers and customers, the grace to set a good example to all among whom we live, to be just and true in all our dealings, and give us hearts that are generous and courteous towards all. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for all who celebrate Thanksgiving this week. Strengthen our own sense of thankfulness. Help us remember all of your good gifts. Keep all who travel safe, and bring reconciliation, love, and joy to dinner tables where there is distrust. Hold tight those who will mourn this week. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

TEMPLE TALK – Bill Daub

HOLY COMMUNION

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[The congregation may sit.]

HOLY COMMUNION

[All are invited to the Table where Christ is bodily present in the bread and drink.

At the direction of our ushers, everyone who is able kneels at the rail.

Bread will be distributed first (gluten free wafers are available),

followed by wine and grape juice in individual cups.

A chalice with wine is also available.

Children and all who have not received First Communion will receive a blessing.

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.]

[Please stand.]

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BLESSING

Dear Jesus, we are happy you are our friend. We know that it is sometimes hard to be thankful. There is always a new toy, new book, or new place we want to go. It is easy to focus on what we don't have rather than what we have. Help us see the blessings we have so we can live lives that are always thankful. Amen.

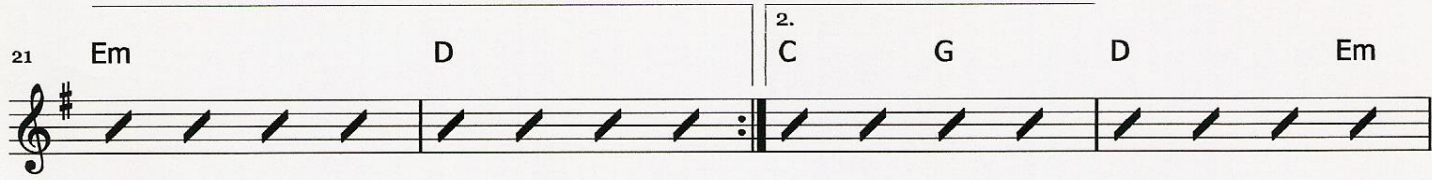
Amen.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

21 Em D 2.
C G D Em



25 C G D Em C G



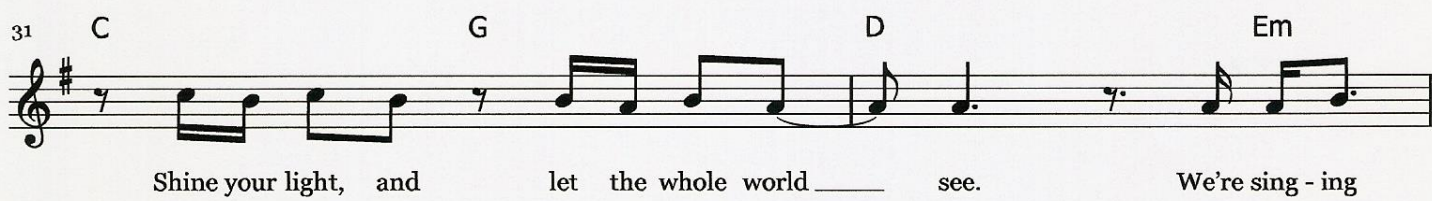
Shine your light, and let the whole world _

28 D Em C G D Em



_ see. We're sing-ing for the glo - ry of the ris - en King. _ Je - sus.

31 C G D Em



Shine your light, and let the whole world _ see. We're sing - ing

33 C G D D.S. al Coda



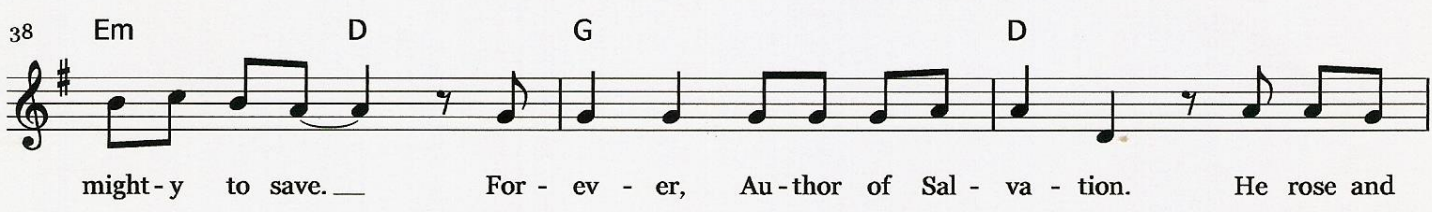
for the glo - ry _ of the ris - en King. _

⊕ Coda
35 G D C G



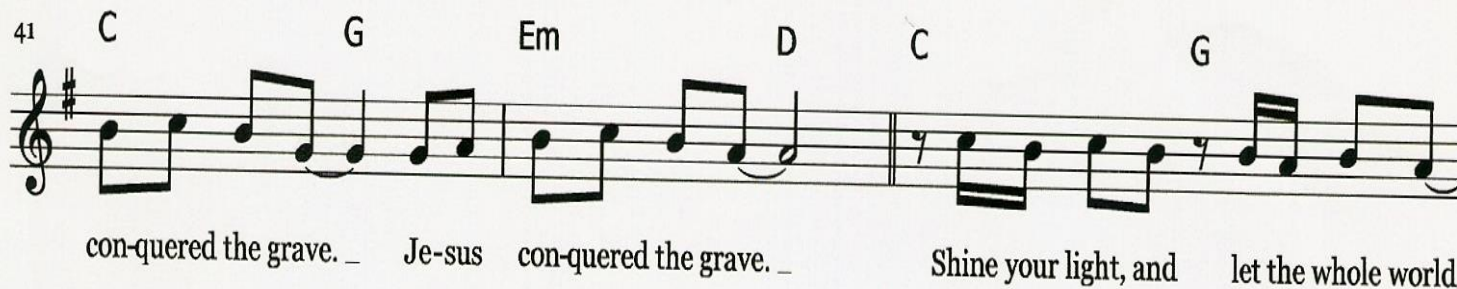
Sav - iour, He can move the moun - tains. My God is might - y to save. _ He is

38 Em D G D




might - y to save. _ For - ev - er, Au - thor of Sal - va - tion. He rose and

41 C G Em D C G



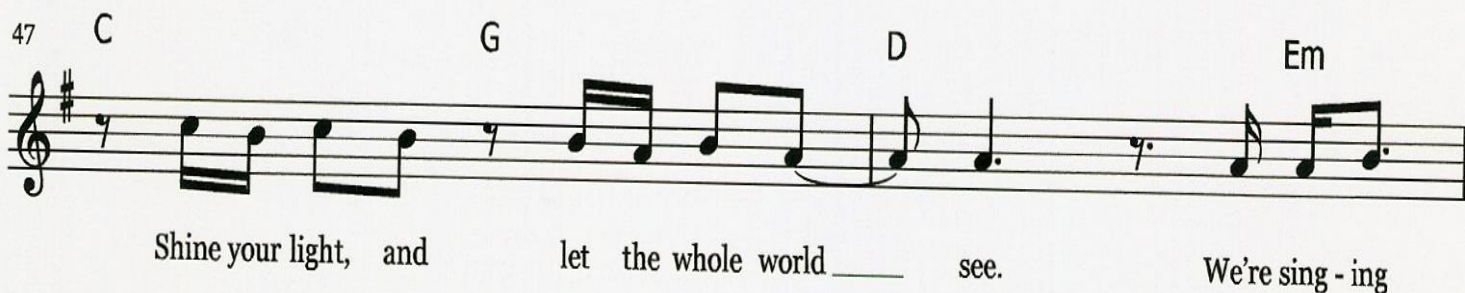
con-quer-ed the grave. _ Je-sus con-quer-ed the grave. _ Shine your light, and let the whole world

44 D Em C G D Em



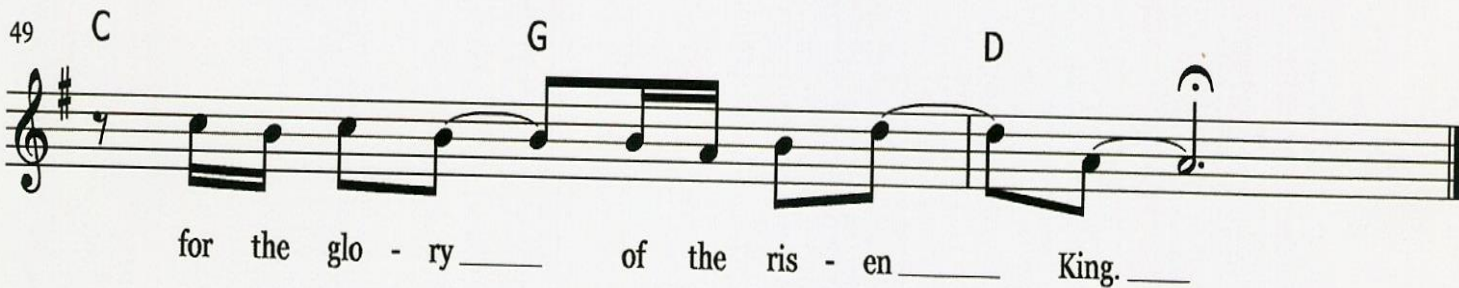
_ see. We're sing-ing for the glo - ry of the ris - en ____ King. _ Je - sus.

47 C G D Em



Shine your light, and let the whole world ____ see. We're sing - ing

49 C G D



for the glo - ry ____ of the ris - en ____ King. ____

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Pastor Marc

This reading from Zephaniah is terrifying.

It begins with a command from God demanding silence. This phrase lets us put this text in context. This command is used when something is taking place in the Temple. In ancient Israel, the Temple was where heaven and earth meet. It's where God truly is. By demanding our silence, the prophet Zephaniah tells us that these words are spoken in the place where God is present and where God is being worshipped. These words take place as people gather to pray and celebrate God. The people are participating in rituals, telling stories, and experiencing God. As we will discover, the people expect to be blessed when they worship God. Instead, they are challenged and undone.

We don't worship in the Temple but we do worship in our church. Within these eight walls, we pray, sing, and experience Jesus' presence in a holy community. We gather here on Sunday morning because this is where Jesus promises to be. In the stories we share and in the rituals we participate in, we experience a vision of what God's community of welcome, love, and hope actually looks like. We are living and expressing what God's reality truly is. Our rituals are both ancient and new. They are designed to help us experience the presence of God. We are invited guests, brought here to find comfort and joy at God's table.

But imagine Jesus speaking these words to you. What do you hear? What do you feel? The metaphors in the passage are centered around vines, vineyards, and wine. God, in the verses around this passage, is the tender of a vineyard, making fine wines and drinks. This drink is designed to be life-giving to all who consume it. In this metaphor, God's people are not drinking the wine God created. Rather, the people are the wine itself. God stored us, tending us carefully, and waiting for us to mature. Yet the wine grew complacent in dealing with God and each other. The wine sought out its own comfort at the expense of others. The wine went bad.

And so, in the presence of the God, the wine is destroyed. The people trusted their strength as a nation and a culture so that is the first thing God takes. They did not see God living in their community, so God takes their sight. They did not live lives believing that God will do both good and harm. They didn't believe that God keeps God's promises. The people just lived, assuming they were good people, and that's all they need.

When we are in God's house, we expect God to bring comfort and joy. But this text doesn't do that. This is not a text meant for other people. It's a text spoken to the people God claims as God's own. It's a text meant for us. Prophets bring us words that are harsh. Their words challenge us and terrify us. They can turn us defensive but they are here to change us into the people God wants us to be. Zephaniah wants to know, when it comes to daily life, do we live as if the vision of welcome, love, and hope that God proclaims is what we strive to be or do we pretend that our point of view, expectations, and perspective is the only thing God actually wants?