

THE TIME IN BETWEEN

A horizontal timeline with tick marks and a double-headed arrow indicating a period between two points.

A TIME FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

November 19, 2023

SERIES THEME: THE TIME IN BETWEEN

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

THEME OF THE DAY: A TIME FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

As we wait for Christ to return, we are not to be sedentary. The reason Christ has not yet returned is that there is still work to be done. And Christ carries out his good work through us, his Church. So, until Christ comes again and says, "Stop!" believers will be busy with faithful service. Christ has given every believer gifts and talents. And when Christ entrusts us with those gifts and talents, he calls us to use them all for his glory. In the time between Christ's first and second coming, we use everything the master has given us to live according to his will and to carry out his mission.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Cori Humann

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting Three with the Rite of Holy Baptism (Baptismal rite starts on page 151; Setting Three page 188 in Christian Worship 21)

HOLY BAPTISM

Hymn: 680 Baptized into Your Name Most Holy

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded Baptism when he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

All of us are born into this world with a deep need for Baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. In Baptism, he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. We recall what Baptism means for our daily lives:

Baptism means that the sinful nature in us

**should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance,
and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death.**

It also means that a new person should daily arise

to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

As baptized children of God, we confess our sins:

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit and united us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Every day God forgives your sins, removes your guilt, and strengthens you to defeat Satan's power. His promise is for you and your children, and he will never forsake you. Your sins are forgiven. You are clothed with Christ. You are at peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

The Rite of Baptism continues at the font.

Sacrament of Baptism

The Gospel according to St. Mark:

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Khloe Baumann, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Receive the sign of the cross on the head and heart + to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given you the new birth of water and the Spirit and has forgiven all your sins. May he strengthen you with his grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

Let us pray.

We give thanks, most merciful Father, that you have received Khloe Baumann as your own child and made her a member of Christ's body, the church. Now, we pray, grant to her and to all your church on earth that, being dead to sin, we may live to righteousness and, being buried with

Christ into his death, we may also share in his resurrection, so that, with all your saints, we may inherit eternal life; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that we may always look forward to the end of this present evil age and the day of your righteous judgment. Keep us steadfast in true and living faith, and present us at last holy and blameless before you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Isaiah 1:10–18

While Israel responded to God's gifts with grudging service, God responded to them by promising to make them as pure as newly fallen snow.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom!

Listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹ What do your many sacrifices mean to me? says the Lord.

I have more than enough rams as burnt offerings
and enough fat from well-fed animals.

I am not pleased with the blood of bulls
or the blood of lambs and male goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me,
who has asked for this from your hands:
this trampling on my courts?

¹³ Stop bringing worthless offerings!

Your incense is an abomination to me.
I cannot stand your sinful assemblies
on the new moons, Sabbaths, and holy days.

¹⁴ Deep in my soul I hate your new moons and your appointed feasts.

They have become a burden to me.
I am tired of putting up with them.

¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you.

Indeed, even though you make many prayers, I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.

¹⁶ Wash yourselves. Purify yourselves.

Remove your evil deeds from my sight.
Stop doing evil. ¹⁷ Learn to do good.

Seek justice. Relieve the oppressed.
Seek justice for the fatherless. Plead for the widow.

¹⁸ Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.

Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow.
Though they are as red as crimson, they will be like wool.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 128: In front of hymnal- Blest Are All Who Fear the LORD

Second Reading

Romans 12:1–8

When we keep God's mercy in view, we understand and appreciate the gifts he gives us in Christ, and we use those gifts faithfully.

¹ Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy and pleasing to God—which is your appropriate worship. ² Also, do not continue to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you test and approve what is the will of God—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

³ So by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought, but think in a way that results in sound judgment, as God distributed a measure of faith to each of you. ⁴ For we have many members in one body, and not all the members have the same function. ⁵ In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace God has given us. If the gift is prophecy, do it in complete agreement with the faith. ⁷ If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. ⁸ If it is

encouraging, then encourage. If it is contributing, be generous. If it is leadership, be diligent. If it is showing mercy, do it cheerfully.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Revelation 2:10



Refrain



Tone



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Gospel

Matthew 25:14–30

Through a parable Jesus calls his followers to faithful service in grateful response to the gifts that the master has given and in joyful anticipation of the master'

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

¹⁴“You see, the kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a journey. He called his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to

still another one talent, each according to his own ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The servant who had received the five talents immediately put them to work and gained five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the servant who had received the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But the servant who had received one talent went away, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The servant who received the five talents came and brought five more talents. He said, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.'

²¹ "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²² "The servant who received the two talents came and said, 'Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more talents.'

²³ "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²⁴ "Then the servant who received one talent came and said, 'Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter seed. ²⁵ Since I was afraid, I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'

²⁶ "His master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers so that when I came I would get my money back with interest. ²⁸ Take the talent away from him and give it to the servant who has the ten talents. ²⁹ Because everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ³⁰ Throw that worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 751 O God, Your Hand the Heavens Made

Sermon: Isaiah 1:10-18

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Loving God and Lord, you created the universe that surrounds us and the globe on which we live. You control all things through your Son, who sits at your right hand in glory.

Comfort us with the promise of your eternal presence.

Give your Word power as it works in our hearts and minds. Clear away our confusion, and demolish our doubts. Send your Spirit to strengthen both our confidence in your promises and our desire to live according to your will.

Take away our love of sinning, and restore us each day by your grace.

The signs of the times warn us that the end of time is near. Protect us from scoffers who sneer at your truth. Spare us and Christians around the world from all forms of hate and persecution.

Give us courage to carry the cross with patience and joy.

Instill in the hearts of our children a desire to follow you as they prepare for future days. Help them distinguish between what is passing and what is eternal, between instant thrills and lasting joy. Encourage more young people to prepare for service in the public ministry of the gospel.

Mold us and move us to be good examples for our youth.

Hold in your care, Lord, those who are experiencing physical or emotional pain and all who are afflicted by disease or facing death. [Especially bless . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Pour out your compassion on the grieving, and comfort the mourners who miss someone they loved.

Move us to pray for these brothers and sisters and to help when we can.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Whether we pray together or alone, you have promised to hear and answer us. Give us patience to accept your blessings in whatever way you send them. In your love and wisdom, prepare us for the day when you will take us to be with you forever.

Hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 735 Before You I Kneel

sts. 1, 3

Choir will sing verse one. Congregation is invited to sing verse 3.

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.**

Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 930 Go, My Children, with My Blessing

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Thursday 11/23: 8:45 AM Thanksgiving Day Worship

New Bible Class- The Righteous Shall Live by Faith: A Study on the book of Galatians

This morning we started our new Bible Study on the book of Galatians. This book was written by Paul to a congregation that knew the truth of the Gospel message but was now being led astray by false teachers who proclaimed a deceptive "gospel" message. What message were they proclaiming that was leading these Christians astray? How does Paul respond to their attacks and encourage these Christians? Why was this a beloved book by Martin Luther? These are just some of the questions we will look at throughout the course of our study. Hope to see you there!

Christmas Decorating

Following our worship service on November 26th we will decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 18, Worship 45 in person, Facebook Reached 28, Audio/YouTube 7. Offerings: Home 1,572.00, WELS 50.00, NELHS 20.00, Trinity 825.00, Benevolence 25.00 **To God be the glory!**

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