

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY

LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR

November 21st, 2021



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294 Fax 905-685-7661

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoefts (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoefts@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

Prayer: Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son, we pray, that He may lead home His bride, the Church, that we with all the redeemed may enter into Your eternal Kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Organist: Mayumi Munoz
Readers: 9 a.m. - Greg Jack 11 a.m. – Lorraine Kaija

Children’s Message: “Beware” <https://youtu.be/ujeDxoMstSI>

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Phil. 2: 12-18 Wed.: Matt. 25: 14-30 Friday: Heb. 10: 32-39
Tuesday: Heb. 12: 12-17 Thurs: 11 Cor. 2: 14-17 Saturday: Heb. 12: 22-29

WORSHIP NOTE:

- A recording of Sunday’s service will be uploaded to YouTube – “Gathering the Scattered” at: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3a4p6prdJGEyP5S-q-cNSq>).
 - A PDF version of the order of service for each Sunday will also be posted on our church website: christlutheransc.ca.
 - Archived videos of Sunday’s service will be uploaded to christlutheransc.ca – “Worship” page.
- Any questions or concerns, please check out our church website (<http://christlutheransc.ca/>), contact Judy Slingerland (chairman.worship@christlutheransc.ca) or Pastor Todd (pastortoddhoefts@gmail.com). or phone the church office. May the peace of the risen Lord be with you all.

EDUCATION HOUR: Sundays 10:10 AM — 10:45 AM

- **Adult Bible Study** will be held weekly in the basement [SOUL area]
 - November 21 & 28: led by Louise Gondosch;
 - 4 week unit on Old Testament Prophet Malachi
 - **Sunday School** – Will be held on the 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month in basement classrooms
 - **Youth Catechism** –
 - November 21 & 28: led by Pastor Todd
- All other adult classes Pastor Todd will teach.
- Education hour **will not meet** in December, but will resume in:
 - Sunday school and Bible Study - late January 2022
 - Youth Catechism - February and March 2022.

BAPTISM TODAY: We are happy to welcome **Trevor Lawrence Koch**, into Christ’s family by Holy Baptism today during the 11 a.m. service, son of Kevin & Vanessa Koch, grandson of Michael & Sharon Koch. Trevor’s sponsor is Leanne Michelle Winkels. May God bless Trevor with a lifetime of rich blessings and protection.

CHRISMON SERVICE will be held next Sunday, November 28th, the first Sunday in Advent. If you would like to hang an ornament for one of the services, please sign your name on the sheet at the back of the church or tell Louise and she will sign you up.

BAZAAR CRAFT TABLE WALK: Crafts, for purchase, will be on display November 21st and November 28th after each service. We hope you will come downstairs and walk through.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT & BAKE SALE: **St. John's Lutheran Church**, 3837 Netherby Road, Snyder, ON, Saturday, November 27, 9 a.m. - noon. Featuring gift baskets, handmade pottery, handiwork, jams, crafts, \$2.00 surprise bags, white elephant table and of course an amazing selection of holiday treats and baked goods. *"For the safety of everyone, masking and social distancing will be in effect. Vaccinations are encouraged and appreciated."*



Christmas Tree Set-up:

Please join us Saturday, Nov. 27th at 4:00 p.m.

to decorate the Church for Advent and Christmas.

The Fellowship Committee will supply a Lasagna Supper in the basement after.

Please sign up in the narthex so they can plan for the meal.

Proof of vaccination required.

Speak to Tim Reck or Marge Stark for details.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2021 WORSHIP



- SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH
Advent 1 --9 & 11 AM – Chrismon Service & Chrismon Ornament Decorations
- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5TH
Advent 2
9 AM Creative Communion
11 AM Traditional Communion
[Introducing Lutheran Service Book Divine Service Four]
- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
Advent 3
9 am - Morning Praise
11 am - LSB setting 4 without Communion
- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 – 9 & 11 AM: – Lessons & Carols Service
- FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE –
7 PM: Christmas Carol Candlelight Service
10 PM: Christmas Carol Candlelight Service
- SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY–
10 AM: Christmas Carol Communion Worship
- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26 – BOXING DAY –
10 AM: Christmas Carol Communion Worship
(no Education Hour this morning)
- SUNDAY, JANUARY 2ND, 2022 –
10 AM: Epiphany Blended Worship
(no Education Hour this morning)

Please feel WELCOME to join us for any / or all of these Special Advent and Christmas Services!!

LUTHERAN CHURCH - CANADA NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING:

Lutheran Young people from across Canada will be gathering together this **July 15-19, 2022** in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The theme for the gathering is "**IN NOT OF**" from Philippians 3:20 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ." Information packages are available from Louise. Save the date, check out the website at <http://www.lccnyg.ca>, start following the Facebook and Instagram pages and check out this fun announcement from Pastor Glenn Worcester <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68gXVYofMY> .

LWML-C/Mary Martha: **LWML-C/Mary Martha:** We are so excited to invite you to join us at our LWML-C/Mary Martha meetings which will be held **in person!** We will be still wearing masks and social distancing at our meetings. (You are welcome to bring your own beverage.)

- Dec. 21, 5:30 p.m. Advent Tea (note date change)

Last Sunday Attendance: Nov. 14, 2021 **Attn: 9 a.m. – 45; 11 a.m. — 52; Total: 97**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or - (--)</u>
Current:	271,175.00	5,214.90	1,843.00	169,922.90	(69,962.68)
LCC Missions	20,000.00	384.62	85.00	15,445.50	(2,246.81)
Property Improvement:			54.00	5,310.50	

THANK YOU to all who donated to the Silver Spire shower fund. We raised money and lots of towels, laundry soap and shampoo.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHURCH DURING THE PANDEMIC: It's important for members to keep in mind that expenses for payroll, utilities, maintenance, etc. continue to accumulate even when you are not comfortable attending service.

1. THROUGH EFT DONATIONS: Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation continues to facilitate this service for us. To assist you in continuing your financial support to your church, we encourage you to fill out the form that is available for printing at: http://christlutheransc.ca/?page_id=96 and then mail the form along with a voided cheque to:

Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation,
275 Lawrence Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3,
Attn: Darryl Holland

2. BY MAIL: cheques can still be mailed to:

Christ Lutheran Church,
140 Russell Ave. St. Catharines, ON L2R 1W1

or dropped in the Church mailbox at the East entrance.

3. ONLINE VIA LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA: Lutheran Church-Canada has opened a web portal that allows parishioners to donate directly to their home church:

<https://lutheranchurch-canada.tng-secure.com/?pageId=donation-edit&categoryId=10972>

select "St. Catharines-Christ Lutheran-30950" from the drop down menu, enter the amount of your donations and LCC will transfer your donation to Christ. Donation is via VISA or Mastercard. Tax receipts will be issued by LCC (not Christ). This opportunity will be in effect until the COVID-19 emergency is over.

Christmas Bazaar

UPDATED BAZAAR NOTES

TODAY: "CRAFT TABLE WALK THROUGH" Come downstairs after either Service and look at the crafts we have for sale. (You might also find some other treats there as well!)

- Come downstairs, via the aisle on the left (Lectern side),
- Down the east stairs into the kitchen end of the basement.
- Donated Crafts will be on display for purchase, arranged on tables such that you can walk through from the one side to the other,
- exiting at the opposite side and up the stairs to the parking lot.

LAST CHANCE TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR BAKING AND DELI ITEMS:

- All orders need to be in this Sunday or next at the latest.
- There will be 2 pick-up dates (Sat. morning Nov. 27th and Sat. morning Dec. 4th).
- You will receive an email or phone call to tell you which date you may pick up your order and the cost.
- You may write a cheque to the Mary Martha Society or pay by cash with exact amount as we will not have money for making change.

Thank you for placing an order with us. **(P.S. – No more cabbage rolls available.)**

SILENT AUCTION

Is up and running on Facebook.

It is an open public group and pictures and descriptions of the items up for bid are posted there.

- Type "Christ Lutheran Church Silent Auction" in the search bar to visit the site and place bids (in the comment section) and see other people's bids,
- keep returning to the site as often as you like to see how the auction is going and 'up' your bids.
- The auction will run until Dec.4th, at which time the successful bidder's names will be posted, along with information for pick up of your item(s).

Thank you also to those who have been bidding so far. The Auction is going well. Thank you also to those who made donations of the items for the Auction and to Judy Mason for running it.

- Proceeds from the Auction will support:
 - The Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Mixte Nazareth Feeding Program
 - St. Catharines "Out of the Cold" Program
- Proceeds from sales of Crafts, Baking and Deli items will support:
 - Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Bible Translators, Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, CLC Nicaragua Fund, Lutheran Medical Missions, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, SOUL and our Refugee Fund.

We have also already made a substantial donation to *Silver Spire United Church* towards their Shower Project to provide private change rooms and add laundry facilities for folks living on the streets.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 2021*** MARY MARTHA/LWMLC ***

Again this year, we offer you the opportunity to place your orders for BAKING & DELI ITEMS, using the form with this notice. Drop them in the basket on the table in the Narthex. They will be collected each Sunday **OR** you may send an order to carolepink121@gmail.com
Be sure to include your email and/or phone # so we can contact you about your order if need be, and to give you the purchase total and pick up date.

Pick up dates are tentatively: Saturday, Nov. 28 and December 4.

payment is by cash in the exact amount owed, or cheque. Contact Carole if you have any questions.

AS ALWAYS, MONIES EARNED GO TO SUPPORT MISSIONS:

- Haiti Lutheran Mission Society – Mixte Nazareth Feeding
- Nicaragua Feeding Program
- Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- Lutheran Bible Translators
- Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary
- Lutheran Medical Missions
- SOUL
- CLC Refugee Assistance Fund

******MONETARY DONATIONS also gratefully accepted******

(Donation envelopes can be found in the Narthex, next to the order forms)

1. Place a donation into the same basket that collects the order forms.
2. A cheque made out to Mary Martha Society can be put into the Offering plate
3. Cash or cheque may be given directly to our Treasurer, Ivy Parkhouse.

***PLEASE NOTE:** All Deli and Baking items come from an uninspected source.
They are made by our own ladies with love and care
Please include any necessary details of your preferences like:

- regular 8" or 9" pie or individual 5" size
- ½ doz. or full doz.
- Raisins or nuts or plain

BAKING:

- LOAVES: \$6.00-7.50 - depending on kind and whether plain or with nuts or raisins (banana, zucchini, pumpkin, lemon, cranberry, date n' nut)
- HALF LOAVES: \$3.50 -4.00
- PIES: 9" - \$9.00 or 10.00 depending on kind
8" - \$8.00 or 9.00
5" \$3.50 (any kind of fruit or combination, or raisin, mincemeat, lemon)
- TARTS: 6 for \$5.00 -6.00 - depending on what kind you would like & size
- COOKIES: 6 for \$3.00-3.50
1 dozen for \$6.00-7.00 depending on variety
- SHORTBREAD: Priced as above, choice of -
 - rolled shaped shortbread
 - drop shortbread
 - plain or with cherries or nuts
- DATE SQUARES: 6 large for \$5.00
- ANY OTHER KINDS OF SQUARES: 6 for \$3.50-5.00 (depending on kind)
- CHRISTMAS CAKE: \$22/loaf or \$11/half loaf
we also have 5 light fruit cakes and 8 dark fruit cakes that are 2 lbs.
- TURKEY or BEEF PIES: individual serving size \$5.00
- PIEROGIES: 1 dozen for \$5.00
(choice of cheddar cheese & potato; cottage cheese & potato, or sauerkraut)
- CABBAGE ROLLS: \$3.00-\$3.50 each (depending on size)
tray of 4 - \$14.00 (very large - limited amounts)

DELI:

MOST OF OUR CANNING AND PRESERVING HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE SO HERE IS A LIST OF THOSE SPECIFIC ITEMS THAT WE HAVE TO OFFER (on a first to order basis until they run out):

- 4 jars Peach jam 250 ml -\$4.00
- 4 jars Peach jam 4 oz. -\$3.00
- 5 jars Crabapple jelly 250 ml \$3.50
- 9 jars Salsa - 250 ml \$4.00
- 48 jars Grape jam 250 ml -\$4.00
- 12 jars Cran pepper jelly 250 ml - \$5.00
- 12 jars Habanero Gold hot pepper jelly 250 ml -\$5.00
- 5 jars Lady Rose Relish 250 ml \$4.00
- 5 jars Chili Sauce (not hot) 250 ml wide mouth jars -\$4.00
- 5 jars Beet Pickles pint 500 ml - \$4.00
- 24 jars Peppy Salsa (500 ml) -\$7.
- 2 jars Jalapeno Jelly (250 ml- \$6.
- 4 jars Jalapeno Jelly (125 ml) -\$3.
- 4 jars Jalapeno Pepper Jam (260 ml) -\$5.
- 3 jars Jalapeno Pepper Jam (125 ml) - \$2.50
- 10 jars Apricot Jam (250 ml) -\$4.10 jars Blackberry/Apple jam (250 ml) -\$4.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER

To share the joy of Christmas with those in our community who are less fortunate than we are, the “Outreach Committee” is planning to distribute, complete Christmas turkey dinner packages. We are asking for confidential referrals from our members. Last year we helped 25 families by making up 25 baskets.

We need your help by:

- Providing us with confidential referrals which can be placed into a box located in our church narthex
- Donating the funds required for the purchase of perishable and non-perishable food items which will be purchased just before the packages are distributed
- Letting the Outreach Committee,
Judy Mason—905-641-7546
Howard Bogusat—905-468-3566
know if you would be willing to help package baskets
- Praying that this project is a success and that those who receive these gifts are touched by the joy and wonder of our Saviour’s birth and by His love for each one of us.

(PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE COLLECTING “MONETARY DONATIONS” ONLY FOR THIS PROJECT)

THANK YOU!

CONTEMPORARY MORNING PRAISE

Adopted from Lutheran Church of Australia Modern Matins

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY

November 21, 2021, 9 AM Contemporary Service

FIRST SONG:

“Crown Him”

**Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! How the Heav’nly anthem drowns all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing -- of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.**

**Crown Him the Lord of Love: Behold His hands and side;
Rich wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified:
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.**

**Crown Him the Lord of life triumphant from the grave,
Who rose victorious from the strife for those He came to save:
His glories now we sing Who died and reigns on high;
Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.**

Words: Matthew Bridges (1800 - 1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823 - 1903) public domain

SPOKEN MORNING PRAYER SCRIPTURE RESPONSES:

Open up my lips O LORD!

And my mouth will sing praises to Your Name!

Come quickly to Help me, O Lord

And be speedy to keep me away from harm.

Teach me Your Way, O Lord, that I may walk in Your truth.

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As it was then, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Praise to You, O Christ!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give glory to our God, our Light and our Life!

O come, let us worship Him!

PSALMODY

“Come Let Us Worship & Bow Down”

[Dave Doherty]

**Come let us worship and bow down
Let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker.
Come let us worship and bow down
Let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker.**

**For He is our God
And we are the people of his pasture
And the sheep of his hand
Just the sheep of his hand**

**For He is our God
And we are the people of his pasture
And the sheep of his hand
Just the sheep of his hand.**

Writer(s): David J. Doherty

PSALM 93:

The Lord rules as king! He is clothed with majesty.

The Lord has clothed himself; he has armed himself with power.

The world was set in place; it cannot be moved.

Your throne was set in place a long time ago.

You are eternal. The ocean rises, O Lord.

The ocean rises with a roar.

The ocean rises with its pounding waves.

The Lord above is mighty—

mightier than the sound of raging water,

mightier than the foaming waves of the sea.

Your written testimonies are completely reliable.

O Lord, holiness is what makes your house beautiful for days without end.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord God, Heavenly Father, Whose will it is to restore all things to Your beloved Son, Whom You anointed Priest forever and King of all creation: we humbly pray that all the [people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE SCRIPTURES:

The Old Testament: *Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14*

“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him...The court was seated, and the books were opened. “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading: *St. John’s Revelation 4:1-8*

John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. “Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” So shall it be! Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL SONG:

“Crown Him”

**Crown Him the Lord of Heav’n, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is giv’n the wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is king of all.**

The Holy Gospel: St. Mark 13:24-37

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus says:] ‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

CHOIR: “WATCH NOW”

Watch now, for you know not when He comes.

Watch now, for the gift of God’s own Son.

Watch now, for you know not when He comes,

And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.

Watch now, for you know not when He comes.

Watch now, for the gift of God’s own Son.

Watch now, for you know not when He comes,

And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.

Will He come at midnight, Will He come at dawn?

Will He come in daylight while the sun shines on?

Will He come at eventide, when the moon is bright,

Or when stars shine at night (or when stars shine at night?)

The Lord who watches over Israel does not slumber, neither does He sleep

The Lord who watches over Israel does not slumber, neither does He sleep

Watch now, for you know not when He comes.

(watch now, for you know not when He comes.)

Watch now, for the gift of God’s own Son. (gift of God’s own Son)

Watch now, for you know not when He comes,

And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.

Watch now, Watch now, Watch now.....

For you know not when He comes.

Watch Now Ruth Elaine Schram Lorenz Corporation

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GOSPEL SONG:

"King of Kings"

[Hillsong © 2019]

In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes—

To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt—

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings.
To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross—

For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake you died.

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings.

And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
'Til that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death

And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored;

And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint—

By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me.

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings
Praise forever to the King of Kings.

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MESSAGE

CONTEMPORARY TE DEUM SONG: "God We Praise You" Tune: "Come Thou Fount"



1. God, we praise You! God, we bless You! God, we name You sov-'reign
 2. True a - pos - tles, faith - ful proph - ets, Saints who set their world a -
 3. Je - sus Christ, the King of glo - ry, Ev - er - last - ing Son of
 4. Christ, at God's right hand vic - to - rious, You will judge the world You



Lord! Might - y King whom an - gels wor - ship, Fa - ther,
 blaze, Mar - tyrs, once un - known, un - heed - ed, Join one
 God, Hum - ble was Your Vir - gin Moth - er, Hard the
 made; Lord, in mer - cy help Your ser - vants For whose



by Your Church a - dored: All cre - a - tion shows Your
 grow - ing song of praise, While Your Church on earth con -
 lone - ly path You trod: By Your cross is sin de -
 free - dom You have paid: Raise us up from dust to



glo - ry; Heav'n and earth draw near Your throne, Sing - ing,
 fess - es One ma - jes - tic Trin - i - ty: Fa - ther,
 feat - ed, Hell con - front - ed face to face, Heav - en
 glo - ry; Guard us from all sin to - day. King en -



"Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord of hosts and God a - lone!"
 Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it, God, our hope e - ter - nal - ly.
 o - pened to be - liev - ers, Sin - ners jus - ti - fied by grace.
 throned a - bove all prais - es, Save Your peo - ple, God, we pray.

C. M. Idle, b. 1938

NETTLETON
 J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music, Part II*, 1813

THE PRAYERS

Almighty God and King, we praise you for the coming of your Son to earth. We thank you that the first time he came in humility and lowliness as our Saviour; now we look forward to his return in power and glory as our merciful judge. Bless your holy church throughout the world, that she may be watchful and ready for your Son's return. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

You watch over the nations of the earth. Ease the burdens of those who live in strife torn lands. Give all leaders a spirit of justice and wisdom and bless the work of all who work for peace and harmony. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

We give thanks for Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour and Judge eternal: for including us in your new creation through baptism, and for crossing us from death to life by His own death and resurrection. Build up our confidence in you so that we have no fear of Judgment Day, but rather rejoice in the new and perfect life you have in store for us. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Strengthen your church so that she never ceases to magnify the gospel to all people. Preserve us from skepticism, and give us courage to witness to the truth of Your saving power. Preserve our Synod and District leadership as well as all those with whom we are ministry partners across the globe. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Open the eyes of those who use violence, terrorism and sabotage to find the error of their ways. Especially we remember.....Have mercy on all who do wrong, and turn them to you in repentance and faith. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

You feed the hungry and take care of the orphan and widow. Be with the poor, the homeless, the friendless, the sick, and the prisoner. We especially remember today all who are in need for hope and relief [names added now...]. Use us to bring your blessing to those in need through our service and abilities. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Father, Your church awaits the day when the Son of Man will come in his glory, and the angels with him, and he will sit on his royal throne. Until that day, when we will be received as your blessed people, keep us safe in your care. Make us merciful, serving your Son now as he comes to us in those in need. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Lord, remember us in Your Kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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. 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

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER:

I thank You, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger. And I pray that You would keep me this day, also, from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe have no power over me. Amen.

BLESSING & BENEDICTION:

Let us praise our Lord:

Praise God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, + be with you all.

Amen.

SENDING SONG:

“Soon and Very Soon”

Verse 1:

**Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Soon and very soon
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King**

Verse 2:

**No more crying there
We are going to see the King
No more crying there
We are going to see the King
No more crying there
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King**

Verse 3:

**No more dying there
We are going to see the King
No more dying there
We are going to see the King
No more dying there
We are going to see the King
Hallelujah hallelujah
We're going to see the King**

CCLI Song # 11249

Andraé Crouch

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THE ORDER OF MATINS

Adapted from Lutheran Service Book

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY

Last Sunday in the Church Year

November 21, 2021 + 11 AM Traditional service

OPENING HYMN:

“Baptized in Water ”

“Praise & Thanksgiving” tune

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, cleansed by the blood of Christ our king:
Heirs of salvation, trusting his promise, faithfully now His praises we sing**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, dead in the tomb with Christ our king:
One with His rising, freed and forgiven, thankfully now His praises we sing.**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit, marked with the sign of Christ our king:
Born of the Spirit, we are God's children; joyfully now His praises we sing.**

*Words: Michael Saward (1932-); © by Jubilate Hymns, Ltd. (admin. by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188).
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+ Baptism of Trevor Lawrence Koch +

Parents: Kevin and Vanessa Koch

Sponsor: Leanne Michelle Winkels

ORDER OF HOLY BAPTISM

The Lutheran Church of Australia Worship Resources

SCRIPTURAL COMMAND:

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: 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, teaching them to keep everything I have entrusted to you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

ADDRESS:

Scripture teaches that we are born sinful and unclean. So our heavenly Father washes us clean in the waters of baptism. We are re-born as His children as the Holy Spirit renews us and gives us eternal life. Through baptism He graciously forgives us our sins and unites us with our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we share in His death and resurrection.

PRESENTATION:

Who brings this child for holy baptism? **I/we do.**

How is this child named? (Name is spoken)

ADMONITION:

Since you as parents and sponsors have brought (Name) to be baptized, you are responsible for his/her upbringing in the Lutheran Church. Remember him/her in your prayers. Bring him/her to the services in God's House and teach him/her the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments. Remind him/her of her baptism, set him/her a good example, and provide for his/her instruction in the faith that he/she may join you and all believers around the Lord's Table to feast on Jesus' Body and Blood. Do you intend to joyfully do this?

Yes, I/we do.

MARKING OF THE CROSS:

(Name), receive the sign of the holy cross †, upon your forehead and upon your heart, to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION:

Now receive the Good News of our Lord: As people brought children to Jesus that He might touch them, the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this He was extremely angry. He said: Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth; unless you receive the Kingdom of God like a little child you shall never enter it.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Let us ask the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ on (Name) and pray together the prayer He has taught us:

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.

PUBLIC CONFESSION OF THE FAITH:

I ask you now to publicly speak your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

Yes, I do renounce them.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord?

Yes, 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 sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Yes, 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.

BAPTISM:

(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father † and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit †. Amen. May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you the new birth by water and the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His Spirit, so that you receive eternal life. **Amen.**

PRESENTATION OF CANDLE:

Receive this burning light. Live always by the Light of Christ and be ever watchful for His coming that you may meet Him with joy and enter with Him to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end. Let your light so shine before others, that they see your good works and glorify Your Father Who is in Heaven.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we join with (Name's) parents in thanking you for giving them this child and for adopting him/her as Your own child in holy baptism. Strengthen him/her faith by Your Holy Spirit, so that his/her sinful self may die each day and he/she may rise to new life with Christ forever. As You have written his/her name in the book of life and have made him/her a member of the body of Your Son, guide him/her, so that, with all Your saints, he/she may one day abide in Your Heavenly Home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRESENTATION OF BAPTIZED:

Through Baptism, God has added this new brother/sister a member of the Priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the praise of God and show forth His creative and redeeming Word to all the world:

We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as fellow members of the body of Christ, children of the same Heavenly Father, and workers with us in His Kingdom.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

SPOKEN MATINS RESPONSES:

O Lord, open my lips!

And my mouth will declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Make haste to help me O Lord.

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.

Praise to You, O Christ. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Glory to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Oh come, let us worship Him.

PRAISE PSALM VENITE:

COME, LET US PRAISE *Psalm 95: 1-6*

© *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal 1996*

**O come, and sing unto the Lord, come blend your voice toward Him Who saves.
with thankful hearts we enter now, to offer songs of glorious praise.**

**Our saving Lord is a great God a pow'rful King above all gods.
His steady hands embraces earth; The mountain peaks display His worth.**

**The sea and land divinely placed, our Maker, bow before His face,
His pasture nourishes all sheep, He'll shepherd, guard and safely keep.**

**All praise and glory be to You, the Father, Son and Spirit, Who,
Protects and shelters us from fear, His holy name this day revere.**

(Hymn version of Psalm 96; Tune: "All Praise To Thee!" LSB # 883)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We pray: Lord God, Heavenly Father, Whose will it is to restore all things to Your beloved Son, Whom You anointed Priest forever and King of all creation: we humbly pray that all the [people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SCRIPTURES:

The Old Testament: *Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14*

"As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him...The court was seated, and the books were opened. "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading: *St. John's Revelation 4: 1-8*

John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. “Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” So shall it be! Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Spoken Gospel Verse:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I Am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Alleluia!

The Holy Gospel: *St. Mark 13: 24-37*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus says:] ‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

CHOIR: “WATCH NOW”

Watch now, for you know not when He comes.
Watch now, for the gift of God's own Son.
Watch now, for you know not when He comes,
And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.
Watch now, for you know not when He comes.
Watch now, for the gift of God's own Son.
Watch now, for you know not when He comes,
And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.
Will He come at midnight, Will He come at dawn?
Will He come in daylight while the sun shines on?
Will He come at eventide, when the moon is bright,
Or when stars shine at night (or when stars shine at night?)
The Lord who watches over Israel does not slumber, neither does He sleep
The Lord who watches over Israel does not slumber, neither does He sleep
Watch now, for you know not when He comes.
(watch now, for you know not when He comes.)
Watch now, for the gift of God's own Son. (gift of God's own Son)
Watch now, for you know not when He comes,
And you do not want to be sleeping, no, you do not want to be sleeping.
Watch now, Watch now, Watch now.....
For you know not when He comes.

Watch Now Ruth Elaine Schram Lorenz Corporation

CCLI Song Number 4567871

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GOSPEL HYMN:

“Lo He Comes With Clouds”

[Tune: Picardy ‘Let All Mortal Flesh’]

**Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for ev’ry sinner slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ the Lord returns to reign.**

**Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in glorious majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see.**

**Yea, Amen! let all adore Him,
High on His eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdom for Your own;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
You shall reign and You alone.**

Charles Wesley 1707-88, public domain

MESSAGE

TE DEUM HYMN:

“We Praise You, O God”

**We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.**

**We worship you; God of our fathers, we bless you;
through trial and tempest our guide you have been.
When perils o'er-take us, you will not forsake us,
and with your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.**

**With voices united our praises we offer,
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
with You, Lord beside us, Your strong arm will guide us
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise.**

Julia Corey 1902 public domain

THE PRAYERS:

Almighty God and King, we praise you for the coming of your Son to earth. We thank you that the first time he came in humility and lowliness as our Saviour; now we look forward to his return in power and glory as our merciful judge. Bless your holy church throughout the world, that she may be watchful and ready for your Son's return. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

You watch over the nations of the earth. Ease the burdens of those who live in strife torn lands. Give all leaders a spirit of justice and wisdom and bless the work of all who work for peace and harmony. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

We give thanks for Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour and Judge eternal: for including us in your new creation through baptism, and for crossing us from death to life by His own death and resurrection. Build up our confidence in you so that we have no fear of Judgment Day, but rather rejoice in the new and perfect life you have in store for us. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Strengthen your church so that she never ceases to magnify the gospel to all people. Preserve us from scepticism, and give us courage to witness to the truth of Your saving power. Preserve our Synod and District leadership as well as all those with whom we are ministry partners across the globe. Lord, hear our prayer:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Open the eyes of those who use violence, terrorism and sabotage to find the error of their ways. Especially we remember.....Have mercy on all who do wrong, and turn them to you in repentance and faith. Lord, hear our prayer:

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Father, your church awaits the day when the Son of Man will come in his glory, and the angels with him, and he will sit on his royal throne. Until that day, when we will be received as your blessed people, keep us safe in your care. Make us merciful, serving your Son now as he comes to us in those in need. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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BLESSING & BENEDICTION:

Let us bless the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, + be with you all.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN:

"Crown Him"

**Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! how the Heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing -- of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.**

**Crown Him the Lord of life triumphant from the grave,
Who rose victorious from the strife for those He came to save:
His glories now we sing Who died and reigns on high;
Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.**

**Crown Him the Lord of Heav'n, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is giv'n the wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is king of all.**

Words: Matthew Bridges (1800 - 1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823 - 1903) public domain

REV. TODD HOEFFS
Christ the King Sunday
Scripture: Mark 13:24-27
November 21, 2021

I like staying up late. Watch TV. Do a bit of relaxation reading. Pray.

Sometimes do some left over work. I can often do my best thinking late at night. No matter how stressful a day in ministry has ever been, I've yet [in 23 years] to ever miss a meal or lose a night's sleep. I'd have trouble being awake and ready. Once I fall asleep I am out so soundly even a fire alarm won't wake me. Sleep is important. Experts say that the average adult needs somewhere between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night. And yet Jesus says "Keep awake".

Countless demands can take away from our sleep—sick children, dirty dishes, a nagging assignment for work, an overdue bill. And yet, to a certain extent, our response is a matter of life choices.

To make ends meet some people are forced to work 2-3 different jobs. That leaves little time for rest or sleep. Transient people often have no real place to live. Imagine how difficult it would be for them to actually sleep. In the Biblical days, economic class and status affected sleep patterns. The wealthy, the influential and respected religious leaders all had the privilege and the means To live well, eat well, and have lavish bedrooms for sleep. In Jesus' parable it's the slaves and the doorkeeper of the home who are adamantly told to stay awake. Their existence is subjected to the whims of the master's return. Household slaves were expected to be awake first to prepare breakfast for their master and were the last to go to sleep. They made sure the house remained in proper order before they slept. Field laborers were expected to be out and at work at the crack of dawn. Only those of us who have enough sleep to "spare" can be alert---Jesus is leveling the playing field.

In the kingdoms of this world, many privileged people have the advantage—a nice place to sleep, well-rested bodies, and all that goes along with this—but in God's Kingdom each person is given the same belief system. Demanding to be in the "know", For any disciple to expect to know the day, hour and time For the end to come, Is expecting God to treat them as elitists. Jesus simply tells them, "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32). Being a follower of Jesus means you are part of His Kingdom. A kingdom which is not marked by strict details about the end of the world. It's a kingdom surviving on trust in God for all things. Trust that the days are in His hands, that He has the total number of days planned out.

While we may crave sleep, What we need it rest. While we want to know all the answers, What we need is a working knowledge of God's promises fulfilled. While we want to be ready, What we need is an attitude [heart] of being prepared. For anything. Any time Any hour.

Jesus is clear: "In those days ... the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken."

These are Jesus words to his disciples in the glow of the grand temple walls. A change is coming. The temple of the disciple's lives is soon coming down. A temple not built by stones, A temple built from the seed of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary. He is the Light of Life soon to be snuffed out in brutality and crucifixion. How will we find anyone find their way forward when the Son of God Who illumined our path no longer shines and guides? What do we do when it feels as if everything around us is falling apart? So often it looks like darkness is our only companion and God is nowhere to be seen. When Jesus himself—the very one who is coming—does not know the day or the hour, the privilege and power that comes with such insider information is dismantled. Not knowing when the master will return, the wealthy could send their slaves to watch for the master's return, but the result is that the slaves receive the Kingdom and not the masters. If anyone is so tied to the need to sleep their way to the end of life, They fail at being "alert". (Mark 13:33). The truth is that although we do not all have equal access to sleep, we all *must* sleep. The question is—what kind of

rest do we need? And what do we do *when we're awake*? Jesus isn't saying live your lives away 24/7. God created the Sabbath for rest for a purpose: A day would be set aside to worship the Lord. Many times you can sleep but not feel rested. So spending your time trying to rest without worshipping the Lord in His Church, You may find no rest at all. This is still the time Jesus calls the "birth pangs."

Its but the beginning. Don't just look around and point out all the ways the world around us fails. Point out how we all can work to ease the suffering that other's endure. Time is wasted competing, predicting, convincing, spinning our wheels getting stuck on our own sinful judgements while ignoring the real rigorous work needed in our own selves. Trying to be the "best" or the "most ready" for his coming won't help. No, we only remain alert for the best who is coming into our midst. Just as our households need renovation and de-cluttering, So our hearts and lives need to be renovated and de-cluttered of sin, selfishness and the barriers we build to keep others away. By resting in Jesus, we remain alert to the people and the needs around us. Indeed, we grow alert to the presence of the "Son of Man" (Mark 13:26) in our midst. The dark times of life are threshold moments.

The temptation is to do something; to fix it, to ease the pain, to escape the uncertainty, and to get back to what used to be. We can never go back. God does not undo our life. God redeems our life. The presence of Christ is the ultimate answer to every prayer, to every light extinguishing loss, to every season of our life. The signs that the Son of Man is near will neither be brilliant nor frightening natural phenomena, but rather the care and acceptance of one of God's children for another. All of God's people *do* have access to a full night's sleep so that when we respond to Christ's coming we might all be alert and awake. Perhaps Christ is calling us to truly recognize one another before we will be able to recognize God in our midst. We've experienced losses. We moved cross country in a pandemic. There's lots of loss with that life-change. We all have some idea of what it is like to enter the darkness of change. It brings some kind of loss. It may be the loss of a relationship, the loss of a loved one, the loss of what is comfortable, familiar, safe. Regardless, the world as we have known it has ended. And when all the things look like the end is close, Jesus says, remember the fig tree.

When its branch becomes soft and it puts forth leaves you know summer is near. So also when the darkness overtakes your life know that the Son of Man is near. Jesus gives the sign of life. Just as He called the wars and disasters of this age the "birth pangs," so He compares these cosmic signs to the budding fig tree of spring. Again life is the theme. The destruction of the heavens and the earth is a sign of life! Because in the dark destructive falling apart is the knitting together of the new heavens and the new earth promised. Christ's presence for our renewal and our salvation always takes place in the dark and messy parts of life. We have not and never will be abandoned to the darkness. Christ is not only warning us with alertness, But is offering rest so that we remain alert and awake. Darkness is not our enemy as much as is falling asleep. We fall asleep whenever fear controls or life, when hope gives way to despair, when busyness is equated with goodness, when entitlement replaces thanksgiving, when we choose what is comfortable rather than life-giving. So we close our eyes. We fall asleep and we become part of the darkness. We refuse to see the One who is always coming to us. The danger in the darkness is that we do not give our eyes time to adjust. We can trust in the Coming One more than the darkness. We can rest, watch, watch and wait.

That is contrary to what most of the world believes and what our society rewards.

With Christ living in our newly renovated hearts, we show up every moment of our lives representing Him. The Spirit moves our feet along that we can show up and be present in the darkness of life, is some of the hardest work we will ever do. As much as Jesus is Light He is also most present in our darkness. Because He entered into the darkness to battle sin, death and Satan. All these things Jesus predicts took place already. There was darkness and earthquake and even a resurrection when Jesus died on the cross. That, in a very real sense, was the end of the world as we know it.

Jesus embodied the whole world, the cosmos, in his own body, and so when He died, the world, for all intents and purposes ended. You've been baptized into the death of Jesus. His good Friday has become your last day. You've died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Already, now. And we see now a redeemed world, Even as we look at each other as redeemed in Jesus' Blood. And one day we will see a new world. The Last Day end of all things will be a day of gathering, as the angels gather Christ's elect, His baptized believers, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. It's a Day of reunion with the saints who have gone before us, a day of gathering the scattered church, a day of making one what now appears to be fragmented and hopelessly scattered.

As everything in this world falls apart, the church is brought together. We might be scattered, We might not look holy or brave We might not look united as a family, We move slower, we listen more than we speak, we know questions rather than answers. We wait expectantly but without specific expectations. Waiting in this ever is faithfulness and surrender to the Coming One, because in our waiting we are alert. We are present in the moment, Not reading the signs but trusting in God Who has it all in His hands.

We then will see the face of Christ in the tired mother wrangling little ones through the big-box store. We will witness Christ's love in a simple and random act of kindness on a busy street.

We will see and experience Jesus in the beloved community gathered to worship and feast at Holy Communion.

The time we do have is now.

Sleep and rest.

Rest in Christ.

Be ready and alert

A humbled heart prepared for Jesus' return.

A real wake-up call.

Amen.