Apostles Lutheran Church

THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN
7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 693-9098 | apostles-elca.org | facebook.com/ApostlesELCA



CHRIST THE KING

The coming of the Son of Man; the separation of sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2026 | 10:00 AM

Our Mission is to be a Caring Inclusive Christian Community responding to God's grace through Worship, Service, and Sharing the Gospel.

RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WELCOME TO APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH!

It is an honor to worship God with you this morning. We pray you experience the Spirit's loving presence as we share our words, our actions, and the Holy Meal.

If this is your first time worshipping with us, please fill out a card in the pew rack with your contact info. A restroom can be found by exiting the rear door of the worship space. It is directly in front of you to the right. Additional restrooms can be found in the back corner of the fellowship area, near the Pastor's office.

RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

We, the people of Apostles Lutheran Church, follow Paul's message to the Galatians (3:28): "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Believing that because we are all one in Christ, and created in God's image, all are welcome as beloved children of God. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. **Rejoicing in God's amazing diversity, we welcome people of all ages, races, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, and physical and mental abilities.** Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to racial equity, breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are beloved.

FOR PASTORAL CARE

The Reverend Jay Serafin is our pastor. Pastor Jay's **schedule is noted in the calendar on the back of this bulletin.** Call Pastor Jay at 570-205-7506 or email him at j80j84@msn.com (preferred) or pastor.apostles@gmail.com. Messages can also be left on the Apostles answering machine 804-693-9098.

PRAYGROUND

Welcome to our youngest members! The area in the front of our sanctuary is for families and young children. There are quiet toys, books and drawing materials. **We ask two things: 1) sit in the front pews near your children** and **2) please sit with your children in the pews during the sermon.** They may return immediately after. Thank you and welcome!

NAME TAGS

Please wear your nametag! Guests: please fill out and put on a name tag before worship today. Blank nametags are in the baskets located in the pews.

GATHERING

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

Prelude and Silent Prayer

Martin Luther said of music: "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Please take a moment to ***silence all cell phones.***

Welcome and Announcements

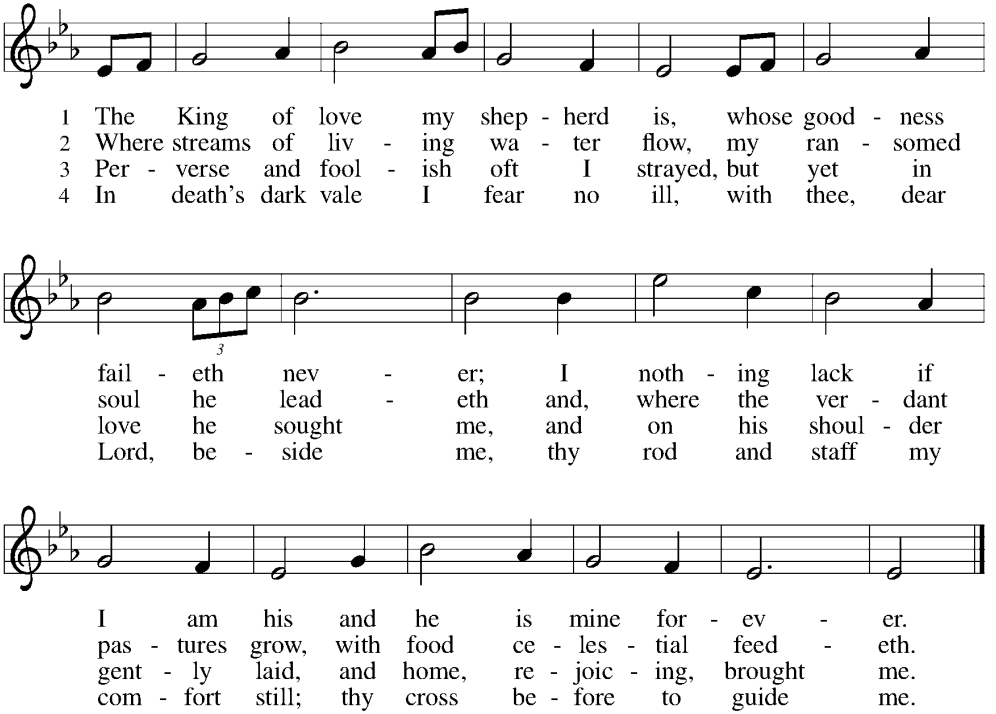
Please rise in body or in spirit. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.
In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



Gathering Hymn — ELW #502

"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"



5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821–1877
Music: St. Columba, Irish tune

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Sit

READING — EZEKIEL 34:11-16, 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

11 Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. 12 As
shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my
sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of
clouds and thick darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from
the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of
Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. 14 I will feed them with
good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie
down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.
15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord
GOD. 16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I
will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with
justice.

20 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep
and the lean sheep. 21 Because you pushed with flank and shoulder and butted at all the
weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, 22 I will save my flock,
and they shall no longer be ravaged, and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

23 I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall
feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David
shall be prince among them; I the Lord have spoken.

Response after the First Reading

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please rise in body or in spirit.

The gospel is announced. All are invited to make a small cross over your forehead, lips, and chest, inviting Jesus the Word into your heart, mind, and speech.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 25th Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel — Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels
with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before
him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from
the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the
king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the
kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, 35 for I was hungry and you
gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you
welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I
was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it
that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?
38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you
clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the
king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers
and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who
are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,
42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick
and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that
we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care
of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the
least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment but
the righteous into eternal life."

The gospel concludes:

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon — Janet Gomez

Silence is kept after the reflection.

Agape Meal

Members of the gathering are invited to proceed to the banquet table and select food and drink to bring back to their place. Once all have returned to their places, the presider will continue.

Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

God's love endures forever.

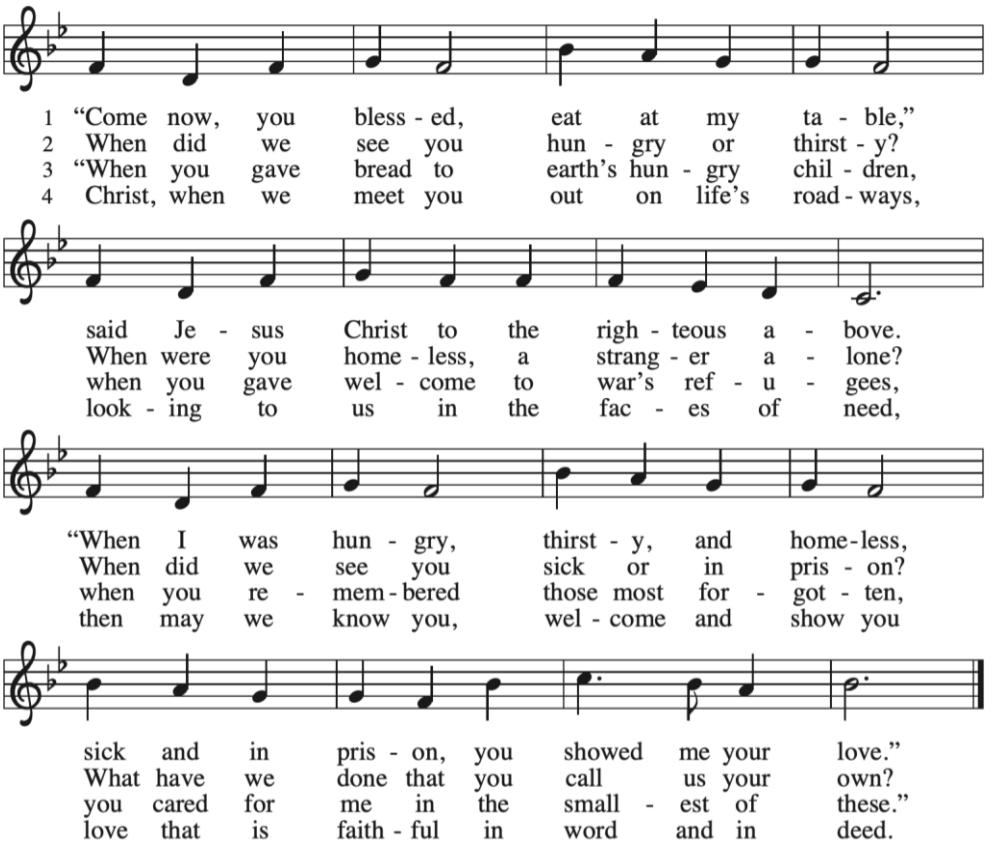


Please rise in body or in spirit.

Hymn of the Day

ACS #1059

"Come Now, You Blessed"



Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947
Music: MATTHEW 25, Emily R. Brink, b. 1940
Text © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.
Music © 1994 Faith Alive Christian Resources

Apostles Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles Creed.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the
power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right
hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge
the living and the dead.

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

Prayers of Intercession

United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:
God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Into your steadfast love, faithful God, we entrust all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus, your beloved.

Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We share a sign of Peace with our neighbors saying **Peace be with you** to which we respond **And also with you**. Please know that it is fine if you do not want to shake hands but would rather just share a sign of peace.*

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Sit

Offering

Choir Anthem

"Whatsoever You Do"

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.
To give online:

- **Visit apostles-elca.org/contributions**
- **From your mobile phone, text the word GIVE to 844-215-5453**

Please rise in body or in spirit.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. Eternal God, our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from you. Receive what we offer, and all that you entrust to us, until hungry no more, all the world is fed, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

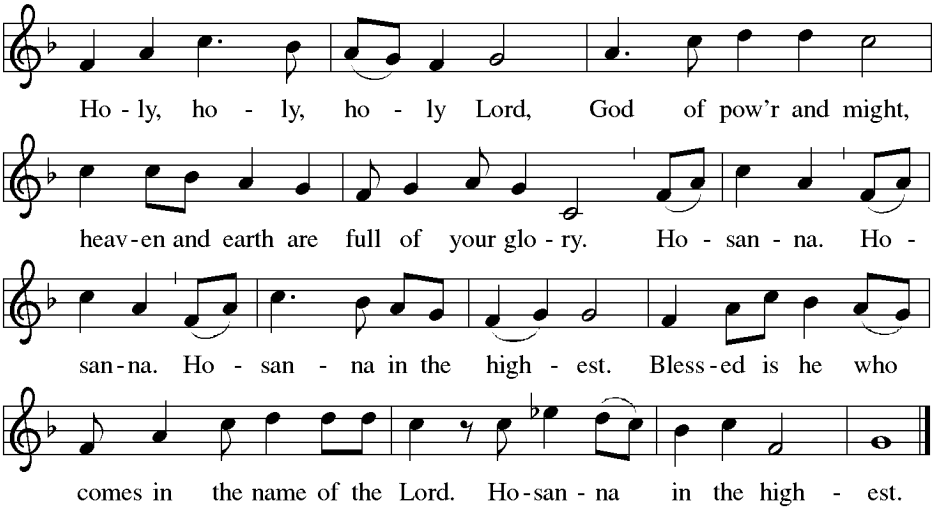
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The great thanksgiving continues.

… we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



The great thanksgiving continues.

Thanksgiving At The Table

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;
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.

Invitation to Communion

In bread and cup the reign of Christ is breaking in.
Come, receive what Christ has prepared.

Sit

Communion

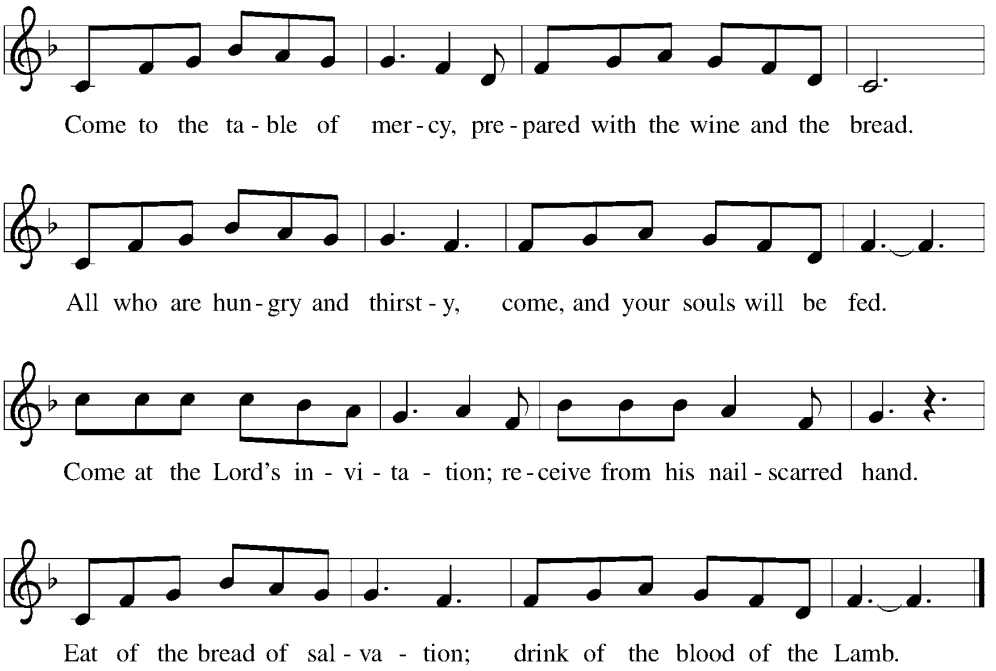
All are invited to join us at the Lord's table to receive the presence of Jesus through the bread and wine. Jesus himself invites you and Jesus turns no one away.

Distribution will take place at your table as you remain seated. The communion will be brought to you by the pastor and assisting minister. Receive the bread and consume it. Leave your empty glass on the table and it will be collected following worship.

Hymns During Communion

ELW #481

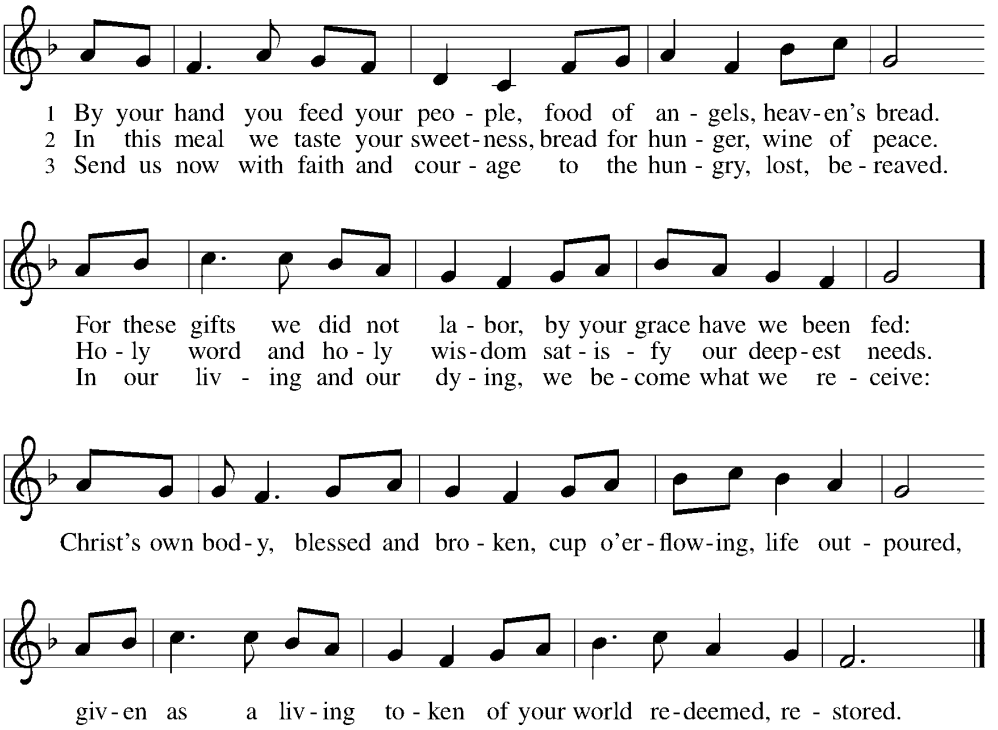
"Come to the Table"



Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942
Music: COME TO THE TABLE, Martin J. Nystrom, b. 1956
Text and music © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music; Juniper Landing Music, admin. Word Music; and Word Music.
Used by permission.

ELW #469

"By Your Hand You Feed Your People"



Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952
Music: CAMROSE, Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Text and music © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com
800.442.3358 w All rights reserved. Used by permission.

After all have returned to their places, all rise in body or in spirit.

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

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. Holy God, we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal. You continuously seek the lost, bind the injured, and feed your people abundantly. Now send us out, awake to your presence, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission back into the world.

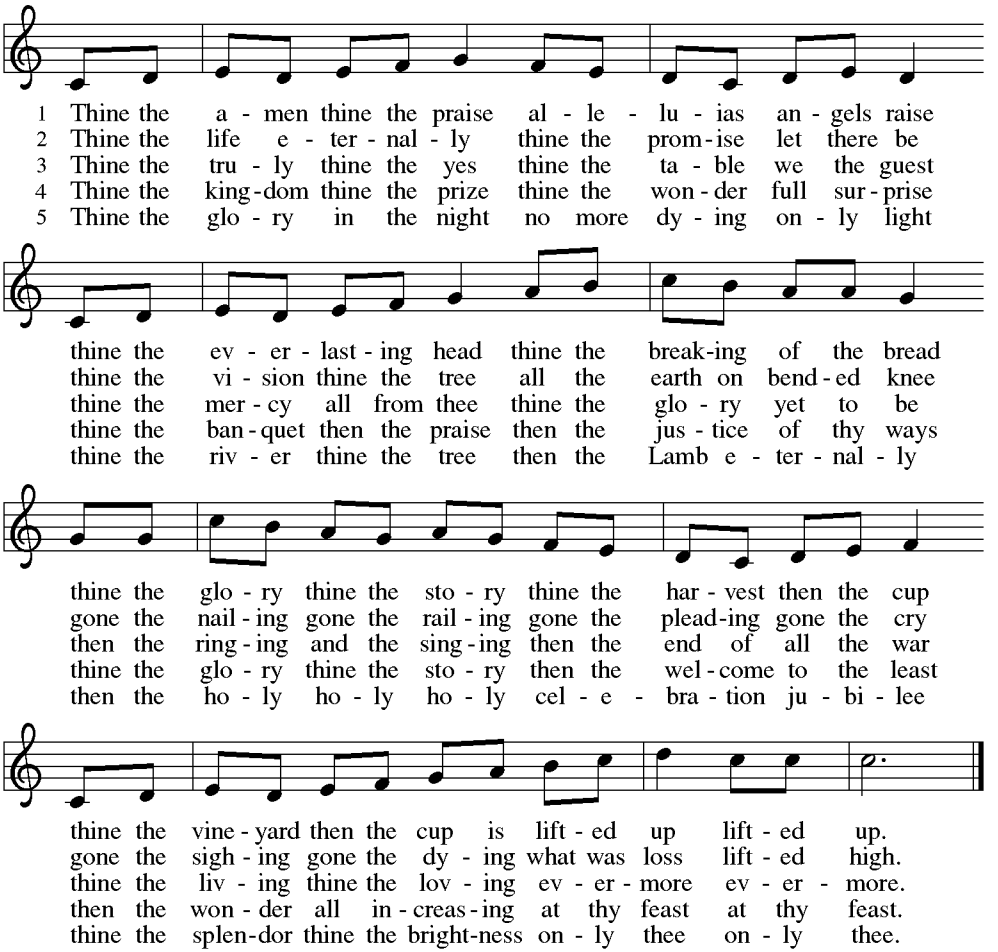
Blessing

The holy Trinity, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you with wisdom to welcome the reign of God, today and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn — ELW #826

"Thine the Amen"



Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926
Music: THINE, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
Text and music © 1983 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Encourage one another.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

****

Congregational Meeting

All congregation members are asked to stay after the service to discuss and approve the ministry spending plan for 2027.



Worship Leaders

	Serving Today	Serving Next Week
Worship Leader	Pastor Jay	Pastor Jay
Preacher	Janet Gomez	Pastor Jay
Lay Assisting Minister	Doug Dalager	Linda Hodges
Lector	Doug Dalager	Sue Turner
Acolyte	David Muse	Chase Ambrose
Accompanist	Janet Gomez	Janet Gomez
Altar Care	Jamie Serafin	Janet Gomez
Communion Bread	Janet Gomez	Lowes
Flowers	Cyndi Lowe	Janet Gomez
Greeter/Usher	Heinz Albert	Cyndi Lowe
Technology	Chris Hawkins	Jason Lowe

Servants for the Week

	Serving This Week	Serving Next Week
Cleaning Team	Liljebergs	Bonnie Hanson
Tellers	Daniel Gomez/Tonia Fallin	Chris Hawkins/Linda Hodges
Fellowship Set Up	Jennie Hawkins	Caring Community
Fellowship Food	Agape Meal	Tonia Fallin
Fellowship Clean Up	Jamie Serafin	Caring Community

Readings For Next Sunday
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9
Prayer that God would come with power and compassion

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:24-37
The sudden coming of the Son of Man

We Embody the Presence of Christ

It is possible that the biggest barrier to accepting this as our lifelong vocation is not a lack of faith but a lack of imagination.

On this final Sunday of the liturgical year, we receive a parable from Jesus challenging and inspiring our imaginations to grasp our whole vocation that is celebrated in baptism: to embody Christ in every moment and to engage every part of our world as Christ's redeemed creation.

The parable of the sheep and the goats has sometimes been used to instill fear of God's judgment. However, it is possible that Jesus' point here is to urge his disciples to share God's generous saving grace with all. Jesus' parables consistently offer a simple setting and story, but behind them lie a world of rich meaning that takes a lifetime to unpack. For this reason, Jesus' parables are important texts for the postmodern church, which is hungry for story, for connection, and for meaning for our faithful lifelong questions.

With shepherding texts from Ezekiel and the Psalms as well as Ephesians, an epistle written to build faith, we have a constellation of texts that make the shape of God's intimate—even incarnational—love of creation. The parable even suggests that being merely intentional about ministry in the name of Jesus is not the point. After all, both "sheep" and "goats" groups are equally shocked at the news that Jesus was present in those relationships involving thirst, imprisonment, and so forth. Instead, Jesus seems to invite us to wonder what's at the deepest foundation of our presence and purpose—and perhaps even walk away faithfully bewildered at the possibilities of God's kingdom being practiced on earth as it is in heaven.

What if we really do embody the presence of Christ?

Images in the Readings

Calling this Sunday Christ the **King** may elevate that image above all others. Currently on the world scene some nations have rejected monarchies, some maintain figurehead monarchs, and some, while not using the term "king," maintain heads of state with absolute, even ruthless, power over the people. The Bible promises that God's power and majesty differ radically from the reign of most human monarchs. Thus we need to use the image of king as correcting the image of king. Several hymns do a splendid job of playing the image against itself. As an example of how God's reign differs from that of human monarchs, the baptized saints receive riches and power from God. Some churches prefer the phrase "the Reign of Christ" as stressing the activity, rather than the status: unfortunately English has the problem of the homonym "rain."

In the Bible, written within a culture that treasured its pastoral past, **sheep and goats** are images of the life God gives to the people. Like sheep and goats, we are created by God to live together and offer ourselves for others. It is an urban prejudice to defame sheep as dirty and stupid.

Matthew's parable was depicted in sculptures over the main doorway and in wall paintings over the chancel of countless Christian churches, and one can imagine the fun that artists had in shaping the monsters on the left side of Christ the **judge**. As this imagery becomes less important for some Christians, it is important not to lose the biblical call that we saints are to live out the justice that God intends, serving each needy person who is Christ-for-us.

As the first-century decades progressed, **saints** became an increasingly common term for the baptized people of God. The usual English translation of "being personally holy," the word saint is used differently by the several Christian branches. In Ephesians, everyone who is enlightened is called saint, the meaning most Protestants have retained.

Please Keep in Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Don Garfield, Ellen Kendzierski, David Leunig, Cyndi Lowe, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Pastor Jay Serafin, George Thomas, Lena Woodlief, and **Judy Wright**

Our Family and Friends

Natalie Abu Dayyeh, Patricia Armentor (mother of Arlene, Executive Director of Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic)**, Paul Bauer**, **Karen Bell** (Pam Moore's sister), **Bob & Dixie, Calli Bonfey, Patricia Boyd & Brad Zelmer, Amanda Brown, David Brown, Dennis & Dorothy Brown, Sally Burkholder, Juan Carlos, Amy Carter, Pat Cartwright, Laura Clodfelter, Jackie Collier, Ben Davis** (friend of Donna Ambrose), **Tommy & Kathie Davis, Jenny DeSha, Linda Edwards, Colton Elliot** (Michael Schlemmer's cousin), **Teresa Floersheim Miller** (Ingrid Peterson's mother), **Suzanne & Frank Gibson, Steven Godwin** (Juanita Sturdy's grandson), **Jimmy & Fay Gray** (Chris Hawkins' family), **Carl Greene, Karen Guire, Melvin Hawkins** (Chris Hawkins' father), **Chaneice & Daniel Hayden, Rosie Heins, Carl & Kaleb Hess, Aris Hibbs** (friend of Ray Scholz), **Ray Hughes, Scott Jeffery, Suzanne Kinkade** (friend of Ellen Quirk), **Terri Larsen, Marion Lucier, Wayne Mathews, Wayne McCormick, Sylvia Midgette** (Krystle McMahan's grandmother), **Debbie Minteins, Keith Morgan, Gary Mowery, Jamie Mullaney, Rachel Ogden, Carol Jo Osinski, Carol Pascale** (Lynn Jaeger's mother), **Chastity Perkins** (co-worker and friend of Donna Ambrose), **Brad Person** (Lilly Frost's uncle), **Dick Peterson & his brother, the Prusa Family, Joan Ritter, Glen Robertson, Pastor Wendy Roundy, Carol Schlemmer, Daniel Schmidt, Michael Scholz** (Ray Scholz's nephew), **Joseph Serafin** (Pastor Jay's father), **Kathy Shackleford, Elana Sierson, Fred Smith, Tammy Smith, Jean Sterling, Skye Sulton, Rick Tucci, Marier Upshrie, Keegan Walls, Williams Walters, Chuck Webb** (Tina Britt's father), **Makenzie Webb** (Tina Britt's niece), **Elizabeth & Steven White, Vicki Williams, Cory Woodlief, Jim Wright** (Judy Wright's husband), **Logan & Shannon Wymer, Derek Zwiers** (friend of CK Ambrose)

Our sponsored children in Guatemala

Amayra, **Hugolino, Manuela,** and **Pablo**

Prayer Requests

There is a book located at the rear of the worship space for you to write any prayer requests you have for today. Fill out a "Prayer Request" (on the back of each pew) and place it in the offering plate to add a prayer request to the "Prayer List" included in the bulletin and the newsletter. **Please print legibly!**

THIS WEEK AT APOSTLES

NOVEMBER 22, 2026 – NOVEMBER 29, 2026

TODAY	**10:00 AM**	**Worship Service & Agape Meal**
	11:00 AM	**Congregational Meeting**
MONDAY	6:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
TUESDAY	6:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
WEDNESDAY		
THURSDAY		

🦃 **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** 🥧

FRIDAY		
SATURDAY	5:30 PM	Young and Sober
SUNDAY	**10:00 AM**	**Worship Service**
	11:00 AM	Coffee Fellowship

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

Donna Ambrose – Mon, Nov 23 | **Reagan Jay** – Wed, Nov 25 |
CK Ambrose – Fri, Nov 27

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO...

Jason and Cynthia Lowe – Sun, Nov 29

HAPPY BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY TO...

Sue Turner – Wed, Nov 25

From Sundays and Seasons (sundaysandseasons.com). Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB149543, ONE LICENSE #A-717259, and CCLI License #A-21183732. All rights reserved.