

November 17, 2020 – The Week ahead at Holy Cross

We are intentional people of God who seek to be used by God for God's purposes – to build up individuals, and communities, to praise God together, to foster goodwill and care for those who may be in need or want at this time. To be God's disciples – following Christ's example. Bless you – Pastor P+

This week here in Marion County we are cognizant of the Governor's decision for a two week plan to stop the surge. May we as a people of God seek to protect our weaker brother or sister by wearing masks, or best of all, staying home whenever possible to make a difference in the spread of the Pandemic.

Your council meets tonight (Tuesday) on Zoom for a time of focus on how Holy Cross can bless their neighbors and how we can honor God in this ministry that God has given us. I am blessed to be part of that group.

Here's the week events – including changes to our practice in support of the Governor's two week plan to stop the surge.

Thursday, Nov 17 – Bible Study Day! **We will Cancel our in person Bible study for this week.** It's the Safe things to do – however you are all invited to use Zoom at 5 pm for What is God saying today? (that link is here - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78252959541?pwd=NVps>) Read **Matthew 25:31-46** and join us. We are on break for Thanksgiving week, and stay tuned for more information as that week gets closer.

Sunday, November 15, 2020 – **We will Cancel our in person worship event for this day. I will meet with the worship team to record the parts of the service which are not already recorded separately.** Just as we do every week, check out our 5 worship elements which are posted every week on our website – www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org and our Facebook page, Holy Cross Lutheran – Salem or are available on my YouTube channel Pastor Patricia Hughes. We will mail you a copy of the sermon in next week's mailout.

Long range - the office will be closed for Thanksgiving, and the next day, November 26 and 27th. We will also not be able to have the Thanksgiving Eve event we have grown to love at Holy Cross. There will be a special video with Thanksgiving prayers for you all.

Advent is on the horizon, and we have some meaningful moments coming your way – our theme is “Waiting Here For You”. I have some exciting collaboration news to share. You are a blessing to me, and I am thankful for you. God bless you all

Reverend Patricia Hughes+, Pastor

Sermon for November 15 - It isn't about money. We're talking today about Matthew 25 beginning with verse 14 – it's the parable of the talents. A talent is a unit of money. And, my friends, I would appreciate it if you would trust me that these verses near the end of Matthew's Gospel are not about money. A talent is a ridiculously large amount of money. Equal to 16 years of wages, in those days, which in modern terms equates to at least \$1 million dollars. So, the master in the parable Jesus tells today in Matthew 25 entrusts 3 of his slaves, yep they are slaves, not just salaried employees, part of the times in which Jesus lived that makes us uncomfortable. The master entrusts 3 of his slaves with a total of 8 million dollars while he goes on a journey. So, it's a cartoonlike amount of money, a fantastical amount of money. And so, It isn't about money. So, my friends, every 3 years when I come upon a lesson from the lectionary, I think to myself, why is this passage coming up in the lectionary now, why is it important for me and for the dear souls who get the joy of listening to e preach? What are we supposed to learn, what are we to take away. Well, one thing, its not about money. Matthew's gospel has a theme, my friends, and this passage is congruent with that theme. The Theme is, "God's son came to earth to save us from our sins." We need to be saved my friends, we are sinful people. Even you. We say unkind things, we think mean thoughts, and I think worst of all, we have hardened our hearts against the plight of those who are struggling, starving, and afflicted. How can this be? Our Lord is a lord of compassion, and we are God's servants, given life as a gift. How is it we find compassion outside our reach? There's a comic drawing that makes me smile, of two people sitting and talking. One of them is Jesus. The other person says, "How can you sit by and watch while people starve and horrific things happen?" And Jesus says to the person, "I was just going to ask you the same thing." We are the slaves in the story my friends. And our master has gone on a journey and left us in charge. Do we use the resources the master gives us for good or do we not? As I say, it's not about money.

There are key things to notice in the scripture, the opening - "For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. You and I are the Christians who live in the time after Jesus walked the earth. He has surely gone to a far country. We are surely his own servants, and we are in receipt of the man's goods. The master's goods. Not ours. We are merely caretakers of this earth, our island home. It would be good if we didn't mess up the place too much. And the servants are not called to give an account for a long time. A long time. It's been more than 2000 years since Jesus left us behind, and the waiting for Christians can feel so long that we almost begin to doubt we'll ever have to give an accounting. I don't know when Jesus is coming back, and neither do you, but I do know that when we die, we will be in that presence of God and for you and for me that will be the end of the world. I am expecting a conversation about this. What did we do with what we were entrusted? I think about that. And then there's the third slave, who is asked for an accounting and says, "I knew you to be a hard man." Well, that's not a good start. This is not an accounting he is giving but an excuse. A fine quote I know is "It is the genius of wicked men to lay the blame of their miscarriages upon others, oftentimes upon God himself." Remember what I told you the point of matthew's gospel is? To show that Jesus came to save us from our sins. Well, my friends, the parable of the talents is story, a fiction, used by Jesus to help his listeners then, and now to realize that the master is going away. For a long time. And we've got the ball. Will we make the plays that are needed to advance the game? A little basketball visual. Or will we make excuses and blame the God who entrusts us with an unbelievably large gift – the whole of the planet, and all the people. For such a time as this we were placed upon the earth, my friends. Our neighbors and friends are dying from a pandemic. We can protect them, if we care. Our friends and neighbors are toiling at jobs that do not feed their family or allow them to go to the doctor. We can protect them if we care. Our fellow human beings are struggling with great loss due to wildfire, or civil war, throughout the world. We can assist them, if we care. Expecting God to bring the hail mary pass to every catastrophe or sad moment in the world is the act of the third servant. We have been entrusted with the talent, by the master who believes in us. Let's get into the game. Amen. – Pastor Patricia Hughes

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2020
CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY
ELW SETTING THREE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, One God, who creates, redeems and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Let by the Holy Spirit, live in Freedom and newness to do God's work in the world with our own hands.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 634 "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

Sing verses 1, 4 and 5

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

READINGS AND PSALM

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

God will shepherd Israel

Psalms 95:1-7a

We are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand. (Ps. 95:7)

Ephesians 1:15-23

The reign of Christ

Matthew 25:31-46

The coming of the Son of Man; the separation of sheep and goats

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 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 (see attached prayers)

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

Communion Blessing The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

COMMUNION BLESSING

God of the welcome table,
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness
and have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **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;
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.**

BLESSING

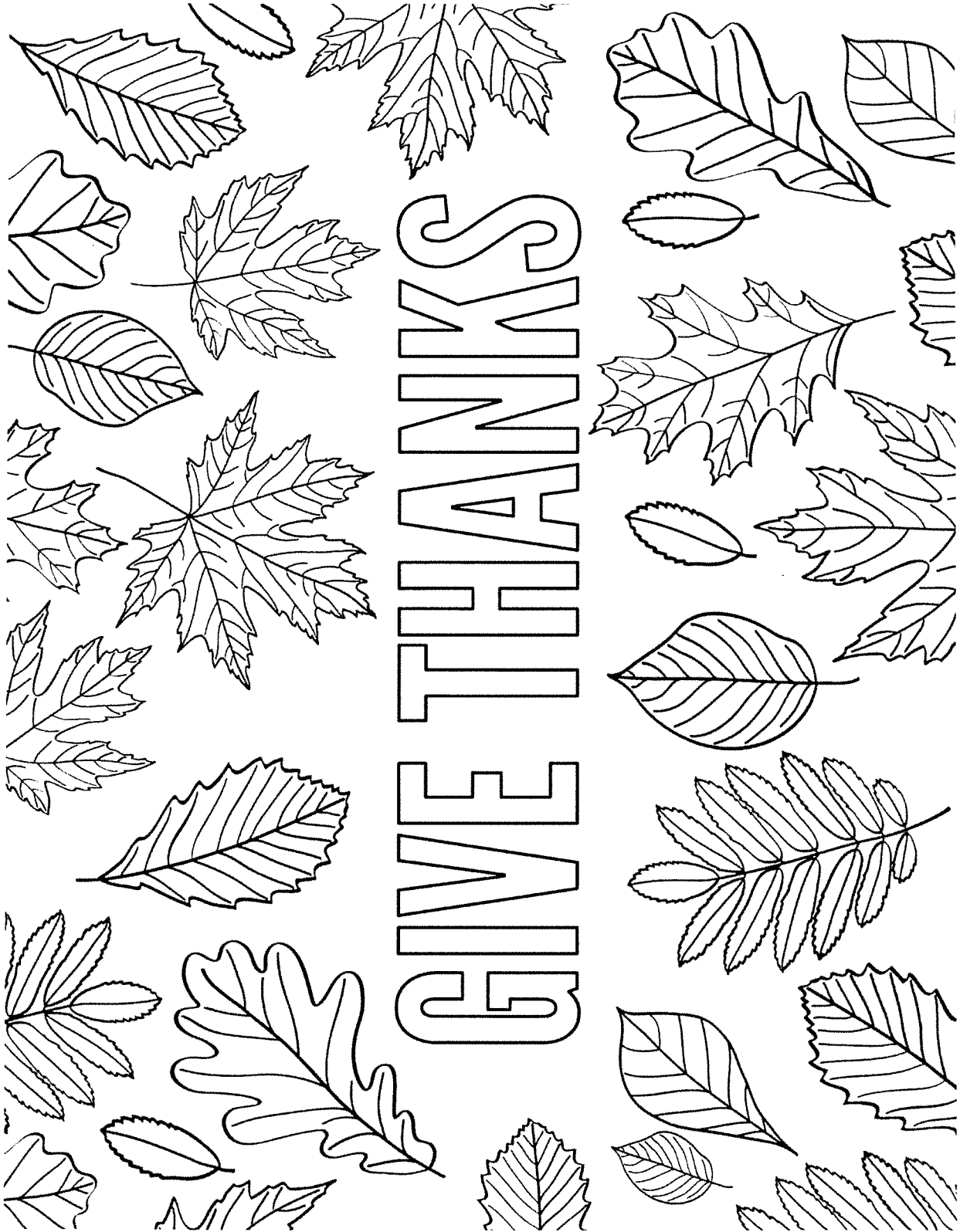
The God of compassion, hope and joy,
Our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
Bless your feet to carry you into places of need.
Bless your lips to proclaim love and mercy.
Bless your heart to love and listen to those you encounter.
Bless your hands to care for the needs of your neighbors.
Bless you to be a blessing to others.
Now and always.

Amen.



Kids! Grab your
crayons or
markers and color
this page (your
folks could copy it
too on their
printer) See how
many colors you
can make the
leaves! Just like
people, leaves
come in all colors
and shapes and
sizes and make the
world a wonderful
place to live!

Hugs – Pastor
Patricia+



Praying together at Holy Cross – November 22, 2020

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all social ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Bring peace to every place where conflict rages. Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in your reign of unity and reconciliation.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Heal the sinful divisions we erect between us and release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away. Be present in these days of Pandemic, with those who are lonely, those who are ill and those who grieve.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Pour out the gifts of your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work in children's ministry, youth ministry, and campus ministry as they nurture the gifts of young people. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

Amen.

