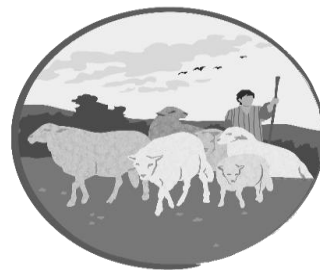


LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

People of His Pasture/The Difference Maker

November 22, 2020



AS WE GATHER

Today is the Last Sunday of the Church Year. This Sunday is traditionally filled with themes of Christ's roles as King and Judge. But consider these words from Psalm 95: "We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." We are God's chosen sheep. He is our Shepherd. We follow Him as He goes to seek the lost, bring back the stray, and bind up the injured. We pause to consider our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who have been ignored or mistreated. We are reminded today that Christ has chosen us to be His people, to be heirs with Him of salvation. Such grace gladdens our hearts and emboldens us to help our brothers and sisters in need.

✕ PREPARATION ✕

SOLO

Minister D. Gardner

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 95:1–3a, 6–7*

Pastor: Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;

People: **let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!**

Pastor: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving!

People: **For the LORD is a great God.**

Pastor: Oh come, let us worship and bow down.

People: **For He is our God,**

Pastor: and we are the people of His pasture,

People: **and the sheep of His hand.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Indeed, our heavenly Father has called us to be His people. He has led us to green pastures and still waters. Yet, there have been times when we have treated our fellow sheep with disdain, when we have wandered away from our Shepherd. But our Good Shepherd does not abandon us, and we confess our sins before Him and one another.

Silence for reflection

Pastor: Heavenly Father,
People: we confess that we have wandered away from You. We confess that we have acted shamefully toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions. We have failed by our inactivity. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, O Lord, that we might follow You to the green pastures and still waters of everlasting life.

Pastor: Our heavenly Father has heard Your confession and sent His only Son, Jesus, to be our Good Shepherd. Jesus searches for each one of His sheep. He brings back those who have strayed. He binds up the injured. He even lays down His life for the sheep. By Christ's death and resurrection, God forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. We are sought by our Shepherd. We are forgiven in Christ.

☩ WORD ☩

HYMN "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" TLH 123 Sts. 1-2

1 Our God, our Help in ages past, our Hope for years to come, our Shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal Home!

2 Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure; sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with You.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24 (God will search for His sheep.)*

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

GRADUAL *Revelation 7:14b; Psalm 84:5*

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Blessed are those whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 15:20–28* (The last enemy to be destroyed is death.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Revelation 22:13*

Alleluia. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 25:31–46* (The separation of the sheep and the goats)

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SELECTION **Minister Terry Dale**

SERMON

SELECTION **Minister Terry Dale**
(We Bring Our Tithes & Offering To The Lord)

CREED **APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father, almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our LORD. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Leader: Dear heavenly Father, You promise to seek the lost. We pray for all those who have wandered away from Your Church. We pray that You would strengthen us to

reach out to them, to receive them with open arms and open hearts when they return home. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Lord, You promise to strengthen the weak. Send Your strength and courage to all those who need it, to the aging, the lonely, the tired, and the vulnerable. Protect and defend them from the wolves of this world. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Lord, You promise to feed Your sheep with good pasture. Raise up faithful servants and shepherds to share the nourishment of Your Word and Sacraments with all Your sheep. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Lord, You promise to rescue Your flock from all enemies. Guard and keep us from the enemies of sin, death, and Satan. Lead us away from temptation and always closer to the arms of our Good Shepherd. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Lord, You promise to bind up the injured. Bring Your healing to all those who suffer now through injury, illness, and oppression, [*especially* . . .]. Heal them according to Your good and gracious will. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Lord, by Your Word You have told us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. As we await the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, we still grieve and mourn when the enemy of death strikes our friends and family. Be near all those who are mourning the death of loved ones, [*especially* . . .]. Comfort them with the hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

People: **Give ear to our cry.**

Leader: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. *Numbers 6:24–26*

People: **Amen.**

SOLO

Minister D. Gardner