

The Gathering of God's People

----- Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost -----

November 19, 2023

Greeting

Prelude.....Leslie Jones, Pianist

Processional Hymn.....#680 O God, Our Hope in Ages Past

Song of Praise (spoken)

Collect of the Day

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Zephaniah 1:7,12-18

Be silent before the Lord God!

For the day of the Lord is at hand;

the Lord has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people

who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,

"The Lord will not do good,
nor will he do harm."

Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;

though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast;

the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.

That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.
I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the Lord,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Reader. The Word of the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

The Psalm

Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12

Domine, refugium

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge *
from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born, *
from age to age you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to the dust and say, *
"Go back, O child of earth."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is
past *
and like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep us away like a dream; *
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; *
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

- 7 For we consume away in your displeasure; *
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.
- 8 Our iniquities you have set before you, *
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
- 9 [When you are angry, all our days are gone; *
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
- 10 The span of our life is seventy years,
perhaps in strength even eighty; *
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
- 11 Who regards the power of your wrath? *
who rightly fears your indignation?]
- 12 So teach us to number our days *
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn.....#547 Awake, O Sleeper, Rise From Death

The Gospel

Matthew 25:14-30



Presider: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "It is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves

and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Fr. Bob Towner

Affirmation of Faith

Nicene Creed

Prayers of the People

Confession and Absolution

The Exchange of Peace

Offertory Hymn.....#53 Once He Came in Blessing

Eucharistic Prayer

Sanctus.....in booklet

Lord’s Prayer

Fraction..... in booklet

Communion Hymn.....LEVAS #161 Go Preach My Gospel

Announcements

Recessional Hymn.....#561 Stand Up, Stand Up For My Jesus

Postlude.....Leslie Jones, Pianist

Please during the postlude leave in silence or stay and enjoy silently

This Service’s Servers

<i>Presider</i>	Rev. Jeff Goldone
<i>Eucharistic Minister</i>	Gloria Miller
<i>Preacher</i>	Fr. Bob Towner
<i>Lector</i>	Kent Miller
<i>Host</i>	Sheila Thiele
<i>Altar Guild</i>	Monica Waldon
<i>St. Isidore’s Guild</i>	Bruce Mims
<i>Vestry Counter</i>	Dana Dickerson
<i>Organist</i>	Leslie Jones

1. "Go ___ preach my gos - pel," saith the Lord, "Bid ___
 2. "I'll ___ make my great ___ com - mis - sion known, And ___
 3. "Go ___ heal the sick, ___ go raise the dead, Go ___
 4. "While ___ thus ye fol - low my com - mands, I'm ___
 5. He ___ spake and light ___ shone round His head, On ___

1. the whole earth ___ my grace re - ceive, Ex - plain to them my
 2. ye shall prove ___ my gos - pel true By all the works that
 3. cast out dev - ils in my name. Nor let my proph - ets
 4. with you till ___ the world shall end. All pow'r in trust - ed
 5. a bright cloud ___ to heav'n He rode. They to the far - thest

1. sa - cred word, Bid ___ them be - lieve, ___ o - bey, and live." ___
 2. I have done, And ___ all the won - ders ye shall do." ___
 3. be a - fraid, Though ___ man re - proach, ___ and will blas - pheme." ___
 4. in my hands; I ___ can de - stroy, ___ and can de - fend." ___
 5. na - tion spread The ___ grace of their ___ as - cend - ed God. ___

Notes on the Service

Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Wis Sol 6:12-16 • Ps 70 • I Thes 4:13-18 • Mt 25:1-13

With only two more Sundays remaining in this church year, the New Testament readings concentrate on thoughts of the End. The collect, derived from this year's All Saints' epistle and written by Bishop Cosin of Durham for the 1662 Prayer Book, asks that we may purify ourselves so that when Christ appears we may be like him, pure.

After Alexander the Great's conquest of the Near East, some Jewish thinkers took advantage of the philosophy which had accompanied the spread of Alexander's empire. Especially in Alexandria, Egypt, Jews adopted some Greek concepts which rabbis found compatible with the Torah. One first-century B.C. product of that adoption is The Wisdom of Solomon, counted as in the Apocrypha by Protestants.

The parts of the Book of Wisdom read today personify Wisdom as a female being who attends and assists God, and acts as the intermediary with humanity. Anyone who wishes to approach God, therefore, seeks Wisdom, who enlightens and leads to God.

Used today in place of a psalm, Wisdom 6:17-20 is a poem in the Stoic style, called a *sortes*, laying out the seeker's steps from the desire for wisdom toward God's eternal kingdom. "Kingdom" here is like a timeless Platonic realm.

Although Paul was not ignorant of Greek philosophy, his view of the Kingdom was not so intellectual nor so individualistic as Wisdom's. Paul looked for the Day when Christ would return from outside this world, raise the dead, and finish history. Thus we should not des-pair of the dead who wait in hope. The earliest Pauline vision of the Last Day, today's epistle, informs millenarian views of the Rapture.

On the last three Sundays before Advent, Gospels are about preparedness for the Kingdom. The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins could exhort readiness for the Messiah's first coming, or his second (as in I Thessalonians), or both. In several important manuscripts the first sentence of this passage reads, "*meet the bridegroom and the bride,*" [italics added], which would accord with that era's Jewish custom of the groom's escorting the bride to her father's house, the site of the wedding banquet, as is described in Tobit 8, in the Apocrypha. This parable is the source of Philip Nicolai's stirring Advent hymn, "Sleepers, wake," set to Hans Sachs' tune, *Wachet auf*. later harmonized by J. S. Bach.

Rev. Stephen Weissman
Asheville, North Carolina