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Saints Triumphant - Nov 15 & 16, 2020

“Encourage One Another!”

Lord, keep us watchful for our triumph! Today the Church hears strains of the distant triumph song. Jesus wants us to be the waiting Church—the Church that watches for her Savior and cries, “Come, Lord Jesus!” As we journey through these latter days, however, our vigilance slips, and our hearts grow drowsy because the bridegroom seems to be taking so long. So while we wait, the Church prays, “Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven.”

We live-stream our 8:00am service.

Go to our website www.gracelutheran-church.com and click on the “Live Stream Video” link. Live-streaming will begin about 5 minutes prior to the start of worship. This recording will also be archived for future viewing.

SERVICE OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT (page 26 in hymnal)

HYMN #234: “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

P: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

PRAYER AND PRAISE

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

P: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy; hear our prayer, O Lord.
C: Lord have mercy. (sing)

P: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ. **C: Christ, have mercy. (sing)**

P: For the well being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise; hear our prayer, O Lord. **C: Lord, have mercy. (sing)**

P: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care. **C: Amen**

O LORD, OUR LORD—ALL sing

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Let us pray. Almighty God and Savior, you have set the final day and hour when we shall be delivered from this world of sin and death. Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen. ALL sing

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 52:1-6 (EHV)

Isaiah prophesies to captive Israel who is sleepwalking through life, because they are lost in the stupor of grief over their problems. “Awake!” the prophet cries, and hear God’s promise of coming triumph that will give you strength to face your present problems. God would reveal his glory by redeeming his people and leading them safely home. Captive Israel here is a picture of the waiting Church, and one day God will fulfill this promise also in us. The prophet cries to us, “Awake!” for the day of triumph is coming when God will lay bare his arm and redeem us from sin, death, and the devil forever. He will lead us to the New Jerusalem where we will sit enthroned at the marriage feast of the Lamb. The day is coming—watch for it!

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Alleluia. They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. Alleluia. ALL speak

THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:1-13 (EHV)

Jesus pictures the time before his return as virgins waiting for a bridegroom and the start of a wedding feast. The parable divides all people (ten virgins) into two groups: foolish and wise. They weren't described that way because of what they did in the parable, but their actions showed what they were. The foolish virgins acted utterly foolish, bearing empty lamps. The other virgins' actions showed that they indeed were wise. The wise went into the joys of wedding banquet, but the foolish lost both invitation and even recognition. Jesus' central instruction in this parable calls for the waiting Church to be the watchful Church. Keep watch for you do not know the day or the hour!

P: This is the gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ! ALL sing

SERMON—based on 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18 (EHV)

These words are so simple, yet so profound! We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that all who die in Christ will go with him to heavenly triumph. And we will be with the Lord forever. This is the crown jewel of the Christian faith: blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Paul's main point: encouragement. Encourage each other with the hope of saints triumphant so that there is neither ignorance nor hopeless grief, but rather faithful, expectant watching for the triumph we know is coming.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the countless blessings, which we receive from your hand: the beauties of creation and the bounties of the earth, the joy of life and the pleasure of friendship, the good of work and the gift of rest, the privilege to share happiness and sorrow with one another. Above all we praise and thank you for your saving Word and for your Son's body and blood, which you give us to eat and to drink in the sacrament. Through these means of grace, you send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and unite us to Jesus and to the whole Christian Church on earth.

C: Strengthen us through this heavenly food; increase our trust in Christ and our love for one another.

P: Great God and Lord, without your continuing help we easily waver in our faith, lose courage, and grow careless in our watchfulness. The times and days are perilous. Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence. Open our lips to speak of your grace, and move us to use the gifts that you give us to share your Word of salvation with all people. Protect and prosper the family, the school, the government, and all good institutions that you have established for the benefit of society. Remember in mercy those who are sick and suffering, and bring your healing to troubled homes and lives.

C: Move us to pray for those in need and to help them with deeds of kindness.

P: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions. (*Silent prayer*) Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen. Amen. Amen. ALL sing

HYMN #332: "Go, My Children, with My Blessing" ALL sing stanzas 1 & 4

- **This week's topic for Adult Bible Study "Politics is Driving Me Crazy" Series:**
"The Imperfect State" Tue, 11/17, 6:30pm / Wed, 11/18, 1:30pm / Sun, 11/22, 9:20am:
- **Food Drive continues through Nov 29th.**
- **Christmas Poinsettia donations \$5 per plant. Signup deadline is Mon, Dec 8.**
See red table display for details.
- Our Brother's Keeper program, which helps those in need, is currently active.
- Have you checked out the "Marriage Moments" offered through our church body? These 3-5 minute moments with God's Word can bring grace and meaning to the hearts of our marriages.
- **Thanksgiving Worship is planned for Nov. 25, 6:30 pm and Nov. 26, 9:30 am .**