

Sunday, November 22, 2026

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA

Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope & Love

Introduction:

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
BELL
ANNOUNCEMENTS
BEHOLD WEEKLY CHALLENGE QUESTION

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

P: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
C: The world and those who live in it.
P: Let the floods clap their hands,
C: Let the hills sing together for joy.
P: For God is coming to judge the earth,

C: With righteousness and equity. Praise the Lord!

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, whose compassion endures forever.
C: Amen.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**
P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: You show us how to live as your servants, yet we act as though your teaching applies to everyone else but us. We pass judgment on others, devalue ourselves and disrespect your creation. Show us the way back to the path which leads to life, and help us repair the damage we have caused to our relationships, ourselves and this earth, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

P: Through God's love we are forgiven, and all things are being made new through Christ. God's grace is enough to cover us and make us whole again, to live and serve another day. Let us rejoice that our God is full of mercy!

C: Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: *"Crown Him with Many Crowns"* (ELW 855)**

1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne;
hark, how the heav'nly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the virgin's Son,
the God incarnate born,

whose arm those crimson trophies won
which now his brow adorn;
fruit of the mystic rose,
yet of that rose the stem,
the root whence mercy ever flows,
the babe of Bethlehem.

3 **Crown him the Lord of love--**
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
No angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bend their burning eyes
at mysteries so bright.

4 **Crown him the Lord of life,**
who triumphed o'er the grave
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

5 **Crown him the Lord of years,**
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity.

Text: Matthew Bridges, 1800-1894, sts. 1-3, 5; Godfrey Thring, 1823-1903, st. 4

***GREETING:**

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

C: And also with you.

***KYRIE: *sung* (ELW pg. 213)**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**
Christe eleison: **Christ, have mercy.**
Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE *"Glory to God"* ELW pg. 213**

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;

glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth,
and peace to God's people on earth.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: O God of power and might,

C: 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.

Please be seated

WORD

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

FIRST 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. The word of the Lord…**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 95:1-7a ~ *Congregation reads the* ***bold***

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

[1]Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

[2]**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the Lord with psalms.**

[3]For you, Lord, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.

[4]**In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours.**

[5]The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.

[6]**Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.**

[7a]For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 1:15-23

In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.

15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and
for this reason 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my
prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a
spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18 so that, with the eyes of
your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called
you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is
the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the
working of his great power. 20 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him
from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all
rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not
only in this age but also in the age to come. 22 And he has put all things under his feet
and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the
fullness of him who fills all in all. The word of the Lord.... **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: (ELW pg. 216)

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia

GOSPEL READING: 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 of the Lord…**Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S TIME & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Come, Join the Dance of Trinity"* (ELW 412)

1 **Come, join the dance of Trinity,**
before all worlds begun—
the interweaving of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
The universe of space and time
did not arise by chance,
but as the Three, in love and hope,
made room within their dance.

2 **Come, see the face of Trinity,**
newborn in Bethlehem;
then bloodied by a crown of thorns
outside Jerusalem.
The dance of Trinity is meant
for human flesh and bone;
when fear confines the dance in death,

God rolls away the stone.

3 **Come, speak aloud of Trinity,**
as wind and tongues of flame
set people free at Pentecost
to tell the Savior's name.
We know the yoke of sin and death,
our necks have worn it smooth;
go tell the world of weight and woe
that we are free to move!

4 **Within the dance of Trinity,**
before all worlds begun,
we sing the praises of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
Let voices rise and interweave,
by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life:
the dance of Trinity.

Text: Richard Leach, b. 1953
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

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

A brief silence.

L: Prepare your people for your reign to come among us. Where the church is wary, make us bold; where we are complacent, stir us to action; where we are anxious, assure us of your never-ending care. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: All the heights, depths, and expanses of the earth belong to you. Deliver every corner of your creation from disaster. Restore lands ravaged by floods, fires, drought, or contamination. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bind up the wounds of all your people. Give courage to all who experience uncertainty, guide all people facing difficult decisions, and lift the spirits of any who are in need especially Jerry, Bruce, Kristy, Ricky, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Kim, Sara, Marg, Karen, Pete, Lynnsy, Barb, Dirk, Jeramie, David, Denny, Steph, Al, and Dianne. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Accompany communities struggling with conflict. Help us to listen deeply to one another, that we might know one another more fully and release any hurt or anger. Create ways of healing and reconciliation among us. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Fill us with the spirit of wisdom and perseverance that you grant to all the saints, and bring us, at the last, into the hope of your promised new day. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

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

C: Amen.

Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED: (ELW pg. 217)**

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.

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

OFFERING

We thank you for our gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in our communities and the world.

OFFERING HYMN: *"Praise and Thanksgiving"* vs. 3&4 (ELW 689)

3 Father, providing food for your children,
by Wisdom's guiding teach us to share
one with another, so that, rejoicing
with us, all others may know your care.

4 Then will your blessing reach ev'ry people,
freely confessing your gracious hand.
Where you are reigning, no one will hunger;
your love sustaining showers the land.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901-1984, alt.

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Please stand as you are able

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

P: Eternal God,

C: 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.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER: *sung* (CLH 632)**

Our Father, which 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to our neighbor in need

***BLESSING:**

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

***SENDING HYMN: *"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"* (ELW 843)**

1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness
with a liberating light;
praise the One who frees the pris'ners,

turning blindness into sight.
Praise the One who preached the gospel,
healing ev'ry dread disease,
calming storms and feeding thousands
with the very bread of peace.

2 **Praise the One who blessed the children**
with a strong yet gentle word;
praise the One who drove out demons
with a piercing, two-edged sword.
Praise the One who brings cool water
to the desert's burning sand;
from this well comes living water
quenching thirst in ev'ry land.

3 **Praise the one true love incarnate:**
Christ, who suffered in our place;
Jesus died and rose for many
that we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory;
praise the One who makes us one.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955
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***DISMISSAL:**

P: Go in peace. Encourage one another.

C: Thanks be to God!

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson
Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather
Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist
Lois Rosenquist
Ricky Hart
Sara Skoglund
Steph Stueve
Denny Hagen – uncle of Mark Ratajesak

Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Marg Peterson -friend of the Thoms
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Karen Schlosser – mother of Justin Schlosser
Pete Baugh – brother-in-law of Pr. Ken Bowman
Barb Hoyhtya – friend of the Thoms
Dirk Bergquist – friend of Esther members
Jeramie Harris – friend of the Townsends
David Meidinger – cousin of Jewel Townsend
Al Ratajesak – uncle of Mark Ratajesak
Dianne Parnow – sister of Brian Arvidson
Family and Friends of: Bruce Carter, Gary Willie, Connie Pesta, Kathy Wilkins, Jim Schlosser, Leroy Olson, Dale Flemming, Wally Schlosser, Carter Stockert, Woodrow Peery, and Wes Hoyhtya.

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Friday, November 20th
5 pm – First Lefse Making Event – Any and all help appreciated!

Saturday, November 21st
8 am – First Lefse Making Event – Any and all help appreciated!

Sunday, November 22nd - *Christ the King Sunday*
Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship
9 am – Sunday School
9:15 am – Behold Connect & Reflect: Coffee & Conversation
10 am – Worship led by Pastor Greg Billberg
11 am – **Decorate Church for Christmas**
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Wednesday, November 25TH
NO CONFIRMATION

Sunday, November 29th - *First Sunday of Advent*
Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:15 am – Behold Connect & Reflect: Coffee & Conversation
10 am – Worship led by Pastor Ken Bowman
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Nov. 22 – 9 am – Christmas Program Practice
Nov. 29- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
Dec. 6 – 9 am – Christmas Program Practice
Dec. 13- 8:30 am - Christmas Program Practice and Program to follow in Worship at 10 am
Dec. 20 – All People Sunday School
Dec. 27- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

SERVING IN NOVEMBER

Pastor: Nov 22 – Pr. Greg Billberg, Nov 29- Pr. Ken Bowman
Organists: Marcia Guenther
Altar Care: Donna Pederson
Usher: NEED VOLUNTEER
Acolyte: Nov 15-NEED VOLUNTEER, Nov 22- Sawyer Ratajesak, Nov 29- Sawyer Ratajesak
Lay Reader: Chris Carter
Communion Assistant: Chris Carter
Birthday Card Sender: Confirmation Class

NEWS AND NOTES

Check out the Esther Calendar on our website to stay up to date on everything happening! Go to estherlutheran.com and click on "Esther Calendar."

We will be decorating for the Christmas Season after worship today!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! LEFSE-MAKING EVENTS ARE COMING UP!

Friday, November 20th – 5 pm AND Saturday, December 21st at 8 am

Friday, December 4th -5 pm AND & Saturday, December 5th -8 am

Any and all help is greatly appreciated! Whether you can help for a little while or the whole time, we'd love to have you join us. Thank you for your time and support!

<u>YOUTH FUNDRAISERS:</u>

Youth are again selling 2027 calendars! Cost $10. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. **Orders due by November 29th.**

They are also selling gift cards. All proceeds will go towards their Ark Trip coming up next summer. Order forms are in the Narthex. **Orders are due by December 6th**. Make checks payable to Esther Lutheran Youth. Any questions please contact Joan at 218-640-7827.

Advent Readers: We are looking for individuals or families to read on each of the following weeks: November 29, December 6, December 13, December 20, and December 24th. Please contact Mandy in the church office if you are interested in helping.

There are Angel Tree Tags on the narthex table with needed gift items for children from our community this Christmas. If you would like to take a tag or two, please purchase the item and return the wrapped gift with the tag attached to Esther by **December 9th**. Monetary gifts are also accepted - please make your check out to "Immanuel Lutheran Church with "Angel Tree" in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity!

Applications for both campers and camp counselors at Luther Crest is open. Don't forget that financial assistance is available through our Camp Fund to help cover camp costs. We encourage everyone to apply and take advantage of this opportunity! If you need an application, you can find the Esther Lutheran Church Camp and Spiritual Growth Fund Application on our website at estherlutheran.com under "Faith Formation Resources."

Get your lefse ready for the holidays! Each package includes four lefse for $7.

Please submit your orders by November 30th. Order forms are available in the Narthex, or you can place your order by calling Lana Doll at 218-280-6326. **December 6th is our Christmas Market!** A sign-up sheet for soup & BBQ will be available soon. If you are unable to bring food, but would still like to contribute, monetary donations are also welcome. Please make checks payable to WELCA and give them to either Luella or Lana.

Simply Flourish in Parkers Prairie is once again sponsoring its "Sponsor a Resident" program. This year, every resident at St. William's Living Center and McCornell Court will receive a 4.5-inch poinsettia and a handwritten holiday card. If you would like to help spread some Christmas cheer, please contact them at 218-338-3800 to sponsor a resident. Thank you for helping make the season brighter for our local seniors!

The Bell Tower is leaking and needs to be repaired. Because of the high reach and difficult area to work with, we do not have an exact idea of cost, but it could surpass $50,000. Please consider helping with this important and much needed repair. Help keep the bell ringing! Please send your donation to the church: 11019 625th Ave Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 or scan the QR code.

Vanco online giving platform is a great way to set up a scheduled giving plan for even when you cannot make it to church. Scan the QR code, go online to estherlutheran.com, go to the tab “Give to Esther Lutheran Church” and click on the link https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R or download the app
Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement. Any questions please ask Mandy Arvidson.

We welcome you to join in the weekly “Behold the New Has Come” devotions available on our website estherlutheran.com on the “Behold” tab. Devotions are posted to the website and emailed out each Monday. If you are not currently on the email list and want to be, please notify Mandy in the office. Each weekly devotion includes a challenge for the week.

This past week’s challenge is:

In a world filled with shifting plans, uncertainty and personal anxieties, Psalm 33 offers a God who is "faithful in all he does." There will be moments this week when you have doubts about the best choice to make or questions about the future. There will be moments when your trust in others and in the work of the world will diminish. Remember the words of Psalm 33. Share the message of a great and awesome God. Help others to see God's love for us. Remember to wait in hope for the Lord, our help and our shield. If you feel comfortable doing so, perhaps you can share Psalm 33 or read it together with someone this week.

We hope these devotions and weekly challenges will inspire conversations and stories that we can share with one another as, together, we grow in faith through this initiative.

You belong here. We believe that each person has unique gifts, are created in God's image, and is a beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us each week to share in the community of faith at Esther - "Knowing Christ - making Christ known through faith, hope and love". If you would like to become a member of Esther, please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com.

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
11019 625th Ave, Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 - Telephone:218-338-2171
Website:estherlutheran.com
Email: secretary@estherlutheran.net
Facebook: facebook.com/estherlutheran/
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