

# Christ the King Sunday Service, November 24, 2019

Last Sunday after Pentecost  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Decorah, Iowa  
Rev. Amy Zalk Larson

**Note:** Today's service included Pastor Amy's reflections, scripture readings, hymns, and Sunday School and Youth Forum students bringing pieces of cloth in the liturgical colors for placement on the altar. Hymn titles, scripture references, and the complete Order of Worship are in today's bulletin found here: <https://www.goodshepherddecorah.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Sun11-24.pdf>  
Photos from today's service are here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/goodshepherddecorah/>

## **Pastor Amy ..**

Today we celebrate Christ the King Sunday, marking the end of the church year. Worship today is a journey through the liturgical year, the way the church marks time. Beginning with Advent and continuing through The Time after Pentecost, we will honor Christ the King - celebrating that the reign of God is love for us in all seasons and all times. We will be singing a lot today.

## **Advent**

### **Reflection:**

Happy New Year! The season of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, is the beginning of the church year. The color of Advent is blue - that clear, crisp blue that blankets the night sky just before the dawn. It's a color that symbolizes expectant hope. Not just Mary, but the whole creation is pregnant with possibility. During the season of Advent, we look not only toward our celebration of Christ's birth, but also toward that day when Christ will come again to fulfill God's reign of peace and justice, light and life. Advent reminds us that even while we wait with hope, Immanuel is already here making all things new.

### **Reading from Isaiah, Chapter 40:**

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

## **Christmas**

### **Reflection:**

The season of Christmas begins with the celebration of the birth of Jesus and continues for 12 days, ending on January 6. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in the baby Jesus. God extends care and compassion for all the earth in a new way. Heaven comes to earth. God's word, God's love, takes on flesh and bone. A baby is born, bringing light and life to all - symbolized by the white and gold that announces the Christmas season. His name is Immanuel, God with us.

### **Reading from John, Chapter 1:**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*

## **Epiphany and The Time after Epiphany**

### **Reflection:**

In Christ, light broke through into our weary world, shining the brightness of God into all brokenness and pain, into every anxious and hopeless place.

At Epiphany, we remember how the light of Christ breaks into our lives, transforms us into the people God intends for us to be, and enlightens all the world. We remember wise men who traveled far upon seeing this light. White and gold shine that light for us in our worship space. The Time after Epiphany lasts until Ash Wednesday. The color of that time is green, as we focus on the growing mission of Jesus.

### **Reading from Isaiah, Chapter 60:**

*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.*

## **Lent**

### **Reflection:**

Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, marks the 40 days before Easter. The 40 days of repentance, reflection, and renewal that we experience during Lent mirror other biblical accounts of 40 - the 40 years the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness and the 40 days of temptation Jesus endured after his baptism.

In the Gospel of Luke we hear about these days when we're told that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,<sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished."

During Lent we pray to turn from sin and turn toward God. The color of Lent, symbolizing repentance, is purple. Throughout the 40 days, we are invited to carry out the disciplines of Lent - fasting, prayer, and works of love. In this spirit, we now lift our prayers to God for the church, the world, and all in need; we fast from pride and resentment by sharing the peace with our neighbors; and we give our offerings to join God's work of loving and healing the world.

## HOLY WEEK - EASTER

### **Pastor Amy:**

During the time of communion each week, we remember Christ's betrayal, death and resurrection. In communion, Christ is made known to us as he was made known to two disciples on the day of Jesus' resurrection.

### **That story is told in Luke 24:**

*13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' <sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

Beloved, Christ is made known to you today in the breaking of the bread. Every Sunday is a "little Easter," a day of resurrection, when the church gathers to proclaim that Christ is risen and to meet Christ again as he takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to us.

### **Day of Pentecost and The Time after Pentecost**

#### **Reflection:**

Pentecost is the 50<sup>th</sup> day of Easter, a day when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. It's a grand culmination of a joyous celebration. The color of Pentecost day, symbolizing the fire of the Holy Spirit, is red. The Holy Spirit, given on that day so long ago, continues to ignite hearts and inspire lives. In baptism, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. We are freed from fear to live lives of loving service, empowered by the Spirit. Martin Luther wrote that the "Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ." We are in good hands!

The Time after Pentecost continues through the rest of the church year. It's sometimes called ordinary time, helping us recognize the beauty in the ordinary. It's the time in which we spend most of our days.

And the gift of the long, green Time after Pentecost (green symbolizing growth in faith) is that it invites us to see God in the midst of our daily lives, in the midst of ordinary routine, in the midst of the mundane ... God is there. God is here.

**Reading from Acts, Chapter 2:**

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Awe came up- on everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

**Christ the King**

**Reflection:**

The church year ends with our celebration of Christ the King, in all seasons and in all times. As God's people, we rejoice in the gift of love and the promise of life given by God for us. We leave here today knowing that next week we return in joyful expectation, to begin a new year. As we go, receive this blessing from Colossians, one of the assigned readings for Christ the King Sunday.

**Blessing (Colossians 1: 11-20)**

*<sup>11</sup>May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from Christ's glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup>He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*