

Christ the King Appreciation Sunday

11/22/2020

J.V. Trautwein

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (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.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Jesus Shall Reign”](#)

Psalm 95:1-7

O come, let us sing to the Lord;

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

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the Lord is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,

and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down,

let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

Hymn of Praise: [“Rejoice, For Christ Is King”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God of power and might, 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.”

1st Reading: [Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24](#)

2nd Reading: [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

Hymn of the Day: ["O Savior, Precious Savior"](#)

The Message and The Angel Tree ([Video Link](#))

This year continues to set our lives up-side down with rapidly spreading cases and deaths from the pandemic. With the virus seemingly on an uncontrollable rise our life style will definitely be limited through the rest of this year and well into the New Year. There is little doubt that we were little prepare to meet the surprise of how rapidly life would change when a worldwide pandemic overtook life .After all we live in the twenty-first century with the availability of modern medicine.

Just when we think that everything in life hovers around the state of normalcy then something happens to shake us out of any kind of complacency. It is a reminder that all too often we take life for granted always expecting that everything will fit into our normal life patterns and desires. Prior to this sudden change in life many of us had given little thought to how much we appreciate all that can be stated as normal and within our comfort zone. We may even have complained and agonized over what may have been minor interruptions to our state of normalcy.

It is so easy to fall into the pattern of taking all that life has given us for granted. This is especially true in our relationships. We come to expect our relationships within family, friends, and acquaintances to always be there for us. They become such a part of our lives that they are just a normal participant of our state of being. We expect them always to be there for us as a vital part of our lives. When they are not there it can shake the core of our lives. It is when they are not there for us that we discover how much we may have taken them for granted. This certainly has been the case during this period of isolation and limited contact with others.

The tragedy for so many of us is that along the road of life we take few pauses to realize how much we appreciate the relationships that we have and how much they have meant to us. Nobody likes to be taken for granted and eventually to be taken for granted destroys relationships resulting in the normalcy of life being shattered.

Paul in his writing to the Church at Ephesus recognizes how important the Ephesians are to him. "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do no cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." To Paul the church was just not numbers but people who affected each other's lives as well as his life. Paul was not only compelled to tell that he had not taken them, their life and mission, for granted but to tell them how much he appreciated them for being a part of the church and his

life. His appreciation ran so deep that he was thankful for them. This thanksgiving though was far more than for a relationship but thankful that their lives were being fulfilled with the hope of the Good News of the resurrected Christ. "I pray 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, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you..."

Paul's deep faith was his basis of appreciation for he was appreciative that the Ephesians were beginning to share in the same faith which gave Paul so much joy and meaning. He knew that in sharing this faith in the risen Christ that their lives would find the eternal joy within God's Kingdom. When you think about it such an appreciation and thankful heart is the ultimate life of love. This faith and appreciative love is what drove Paul to devote his whole life to spread the Gospel no matter the personal consequences he would experience.

But it is important to understand that this appreciative love is not only extended to one's fellow beings. The foundation of this appreciative love is having faith in the resurrected Christ as the basis of one's being. This faith is the norm of the Christian life but can also suffer the consequences of being taken for granted and fail to take the time to appreciate the gifts of God. This is why Paul reminded the Ephesians to be thankful and appreciative of the great gift which God has given us through Jesus. "...what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. 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, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also all the age to come."

With this recognition the Christian life begins and continues to live. Therefore we find fulfillment in life when God's love through Jesus is not only lived but lived with thanksgiving and appreciation of life and of others. The depth of one's appreciation of this God given life is reflected in the love that we live. To truly be appreciative means that our love follows the love that God has first extended to us. In response we show our appreciation by extending this love to the needs of life around us – the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked or poor, the imprisoned, and the sick. As in our Gospel lesson Jesus verified this by saying: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Therefore in appreciation of God's love as we see it through Jesus as ruler and king in our lives, we share this love with others who may very well be in need. This brings us to the realization of Christ as king and ruler of all life even life eternal which gives us the joy of not taking this gift of life for granted.

On this appreciation Sunday you the members of Epiphany Lutheran Church have taught me so much about being appreciative. To be a part of a church whose membership is so alive in contributing to its life and mission is certainly a great privilege. To be a part of this body of Christ whose members see themselves as a part of an extended family is heartwarming. To witness the outpouring of love to those in need through the world hunger appeal and the angel tree as well as the individual efforts to reach out with a helping hand is a joy to behold. To

experience the reality of the Body of Christ in which Paul's words come alive is uplifting "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ....Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

So many do so much; so many share so much; so many love so much; so many are so appreciative of each other; so many are deeply concerned about each other as well as those in need; so many are so actively involved; so many know and live the joy of God's love; so many give so much; it becomes unfair to single out any one individual for their service? Everybody is so important to the life of Epiphany and as Pastor I feel so very fortunate to experience this and am so appreciative of each member, each participant and each visitor.

Today, like Paul, I extend to you my thanks and appreciation to you. There is little doubt that you have been a blessing in my life for which I am truly grateful. You are a gift of God. Never forget this. My prayer is that others may come to experience and live this gift of the Body of Christ. So let me just say thank you for the life you have shared with me and hopefully will continue to share with others and with each other in the future. You are truly God's beloved and chosen children.

Anthem: ["How Great Thou Art"](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

O Lord our God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, we pause to give you thanks for all the gifts of life and the wonders of creation you have given us. We are especially grateful for the gift of love you have shown us through the good news of you Son. Instill in us a continual appreciation for our families, friends, neighbors, fellow church members, and all of our brothers and sisters who share your creation with us. Give us the will and strength to show this appreciation by actively living your love. This is especially true during this pandemic during which people are suffering physically, mentally, and economically

We continually pray for all those who are giving of themselves by comforting and bringing life-saving procedures to the sick and dying. Let each of us understand the sacrifice they are making and be thankful for their service. Grant to us patience and the will to follow guidelines in order to slow the spread of this deadly disease.

We pray for all whole need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Danny Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea,

Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson who will have surgery this Wednesday, the family of Richie Wokkittel, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Let All Things Now Living"](#)

We are discontinuing in person worship services on Sundays until further notice. The online worship experiences will continue as well as the Midweek Thoughts.

Bible Study with Vicar Karen Pugatch, Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30

***Offering**

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

Or sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
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