THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR
NOVEMBER 21-22, A.D. 2026
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, WEST POINT, NEBRASKA

THE KING RETURNS FOR HIS SHEEP

AS WE GATHER

The Last Sunday of the Church Year is the day we take comfort in how Christ's work comes to fulfillment for us. Rather than an end, it serves as the beginning of our eternal future—a future safe and secure for all believers (Ezekiel 34:22) through faith in the eternal victory won for us by Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:26). Our time is short. We don't know when Christ will return or when he will call us home. Thus, we stay vigilant in our Christian lives by availing ourselves of Word and Sacrament, which give us the assurance that Christ's eternal victory is ours by faith (Matthew 25:31).

WELCOME AND GREETING OF PEACE

HYMN "Crown Him With Many Crowns" LSB 525 (Saturday)

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 wond'ring 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 heav'n,
Enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the king to whom is giv'n
The wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns
As thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns,
For He is king of all.

Text (sts. 1–3, 5): Matthew Bridges, 1800–94, alt.; (st. 4): Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903
Tune: George J. Elvey, 1816-96; setting: Service Book and Hymnal, 1958
Text and music: Public domain

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN STUDENTS *"I'll Do My Best" & "Micah 6:8"* (Sunday)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Ezekiel 34:11–12, adapt.*

P The Lord Himself will search for His sheep and will seek them out.
C **He will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered.**

Silent reflection on God's Word and for self-examination

P Let us then confess our sins to God, who seeks us out.
C **Most merciful God, we cry out to You from the places that our sin has scattered us. We have sinned against You in ways that we know and in ways that only You know. There are strangers we have not welcomed, the hungry we have not fed, the naked we have not clothed, the sick and imprisoned we have not visited. Deliver us from all our transgressions. Forgive us, bind up our injuries, and strengthen our weaknesses, that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His firstborn, only-begotten Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

INTROIT *(Entrance Psalm)* *Psalm 39:4–5a, 7–8, 12; antiphon: 2 Peter 3:13 NIV*

P In keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth,
C **the home of righteousness.**

P O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days;
C **let me know how fleeting I am!**

P Behold, You have made my days a few handbreadths,
C **and my lifetime is as nothing before You.**

P And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?
C **My hope is in You.**

P Deliver me from all my transgressions.
C **Do not make me the scorn of the fool!**

P Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears!
C **For I am a sojourner with You, a guest, like all my fathers.**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P In keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth,
C **the home of righteousness.**

KYRIE *(Lord, have mercy ~ A prayer for peace with God and with one another)* *LSB 204*

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who labor, those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P For these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.
Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24*

" 'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. " 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 15:20–28*

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel *Matthew 25:31–46*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I

was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (NIV)

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

APOSTLES' CREED

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✢ everlasting. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN "O God of Mercy, God Of Might" LSB 852

1 O God of mercy, God of might,
In love and pity infinite,
Teach us, as ever in Thy sight,
To live our lives in Thee.

2 And Thou, who cam'st on earth to die
That our lost world might live thereby,
O hear us; for to Thee we cry,
In hope, O Lord, to Thee.

3 Teach us the lesson Thou hast taught:
To feel for those Thy blood hath bought,
That ev'ry word and deed and thought
May work a work for Thee.

4 All are redeemed, both far and wide,
Since Thou, O Lord, for all hast died.
Grant us the will and grace provide
To love them all in Thee!

5 In sickness, sorrow, want, or care,
May we each other's burdens share;
May we, where help is needed, there
Give help as unto Thee!

6 And may Thy Holy Spirit move
All those who live to live in love
Till Thou shalt greet in heav'n above
All those who live in Thee.

Text: Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, alt.
Tune: Samuel Howard, 1710-82; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
Text and music: Public domain

SERMON "*And What does Tthe LORD, Who Has Shown You What Is Good, Require Of You?*

Text: Micah 6:8

TITHES & OFFERINGS

HYMN "The King Of Love My Shepherd Is" LSB 709

1 The King of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.

2 Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul He leadeth
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me
And on His shoulder gently laid
And home rejoicing brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
Thine unction grace bestoweth;

And, oh, what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever!

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821–77
Tune: Irish, c. 18th.; setting: Service Book and Hymnal, 1958
Text and music: Public domain

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the whole church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God and Father, You sent Your Son, our Shepherd, to gather Your sheep according to Your promise. Grant that all of us who have been brought into Your church through the washing of Holy Baptism join in Your ongoing mission of seeking those who have not yet been gathered. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P Heavenly Father, in Your Son You fulfilled Your Word in setting over us one Shepherd. Bless all pastors in their work as under-shepherds, that they faithfully point us to all that is good and right and true, and that we discern what is pleasing to You. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P Patient Lord, through Your prophet Ezekiel, You have made clear to us that You will be the one to judge Your sheep and to sort out the mess of this world. In times when we are tempted to take on that work ourselves, help us to remember that Jesus is the one who sits on the throne and that we can trust Him with that work. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P Lord of Creation, in Your wisdom You have placed over us people with authority to watch over and protect us. Guide their staff and strengthen their shield that they use their offices for the good of all, especially those among us who are the most vulnerable. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P Merciful Lord, You know the needs of Your sheep and all the ways they have been scattered and wounded. We lift before You all who are in need of care, [*especially . . .*]. Help us to see those You have set before us who are hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, and in need of welcome. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P Lord of time and eternity, You alone know the true measure of our days. When our days seem long or when life feels brief, help us to hold on to Your promise of resurrection, that we remain steadfast in our gaze toward the new heaven and the new earth. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **rescue Your flock.**

P *[Other thanksgivings, petitions and requests are followed by]*…Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P For all these things and whatever else You know us to need, we ask of You, dear Father in heaven; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C **Our Father who 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 trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION - Hebrews 13:20-21

P May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through ✢ Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

C **Amen.**

HYMN "Beautiful Savior" LSB 537

1 Beautiful Savior,
King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love Thee,
Truly I'd serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

2 Fair are the meadows,
Fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
He makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine,
Fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels in the sky.

4 Beautiful Savior,
Lord of the nations,

Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine!

Text: Münsterisch Gesangbuch, 1677, Münster; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823–1904
Tune: Silesian, 19th cent.; setting: Service Book and Hymnal, 1958
Text and: Public domain

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