

Last Sunday of the Church Year
November 23, 2025
8:00 am

AS WE GATHER

There is a phrase familiar to both preschoolers and powerbrokers. When they see that someone else has something they want, they declare, "That's mine!" seizing either toys or territory for themselves. This phrase is not unfamiliar to our God either. But where humans are motivated by selfishness, the Lord acts out of love. He claims you as His own because He loves you and He wants you to be with Him for eternity. You are His treasured possession! He will never leave you behind like a toddler may accidentally abandon her teddy bear, or neglect you like a king would treat those who supported his rival. When the Lord says, "You are Mine," you have His pledge of enduring faithfulness, today and unto eternity!

PRELUDE

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN

700 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

4 Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

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INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Leader: God's Word tells us that if we say we have not sinned, we make God out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us. Knowing that one who keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it, let's take a few moments to call to mind those times during this past week where we have fallen short of God's standard in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.

TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

Leader: Let us confess our sins to God our Father

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of your holy name. Amen

Leader: Almighty God in His mercy has given His 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.

People: Amen

HYMN OF PRAISE

790 v. 4&5 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

4 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your
work and defend you;
Surely His goodness and mercy shall
daily attend you.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do
As with His love He befriends you.

5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me
adore Him!
All that has life and breath, come now
with praises before Him!
Let the Amen
Sound from His people again;
Gladly forever adore Him!

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SALUTATION

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

READINGS

FIRST READING

Malachi 3:13–18

"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Colossians 1:13–20

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 23:32–43

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
People: Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And he will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON HYMN

606 I Lay My Sins on Jesus

- 1 I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus
To wash my crimson stains
Clean in His blood most precious
Till not a spot remains.
- 2 I lay my wants on Jesus;
All fullness dwells in Him;
He heals all my diseases;
My soul He does redeem.

I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases;
He all my sorrows shares.

- 3 I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces;
I on His breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes
His name abroad is poured.

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SERMON

"Is it All in Vain?"
Malachi 3:13-18

Pastor Eric Clausen

OFFERING

LORDS PRAYER

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

HOLY COMMUNION

WORDS OF OUR LORD

Leader: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

AGNUS DEI

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

619 Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior

1 Thy body, giv'n for me, O Savior,
Thy blood which Thou for me didst
shed,
These are my life and strength forever,
By them my hungry soul is fed. Refrain

ref Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood
Be for my soul the highest good!

2 With Thee, Lord, I am now united;
I live in Thee and Thou in me.
No sorrow fills my soul, delighted
It finds its only joy in Thee. Refrain

3 Who can condemn me now? For surely
The Lord is nigh, who justifies.

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570 Just as I Am, without One Plea

1 Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2 Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each

No hell I fear, and thus securely
With Jesus I to heaven rise. Refrain

4 Though death may threaten with
disaster,
It cannot rob me of my cheer;
For He who is of death the master
With aid and comfort e'er is near.
Refrain

5 My heart has now become Thy dwelling,
O blessed, holy Trinity.
With angels I, Thy praises telling,
Shall live in joy eternally. Refrain

spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about
With many_a conflict, many_a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

- 4 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;

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- Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Leader: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, we give thanks that we have again received the Body and blood of Christ, the bread from heaven. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage, that we speak the truth in love and build up the Body of Christ until that day we see You face-to-face; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Leader: The LORD bless you and keep you.
The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The LORD look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: Amen

CLOSING HYMN

803 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

- 1 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.
- 2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,

Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

- 3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Fountainhead of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit!
Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

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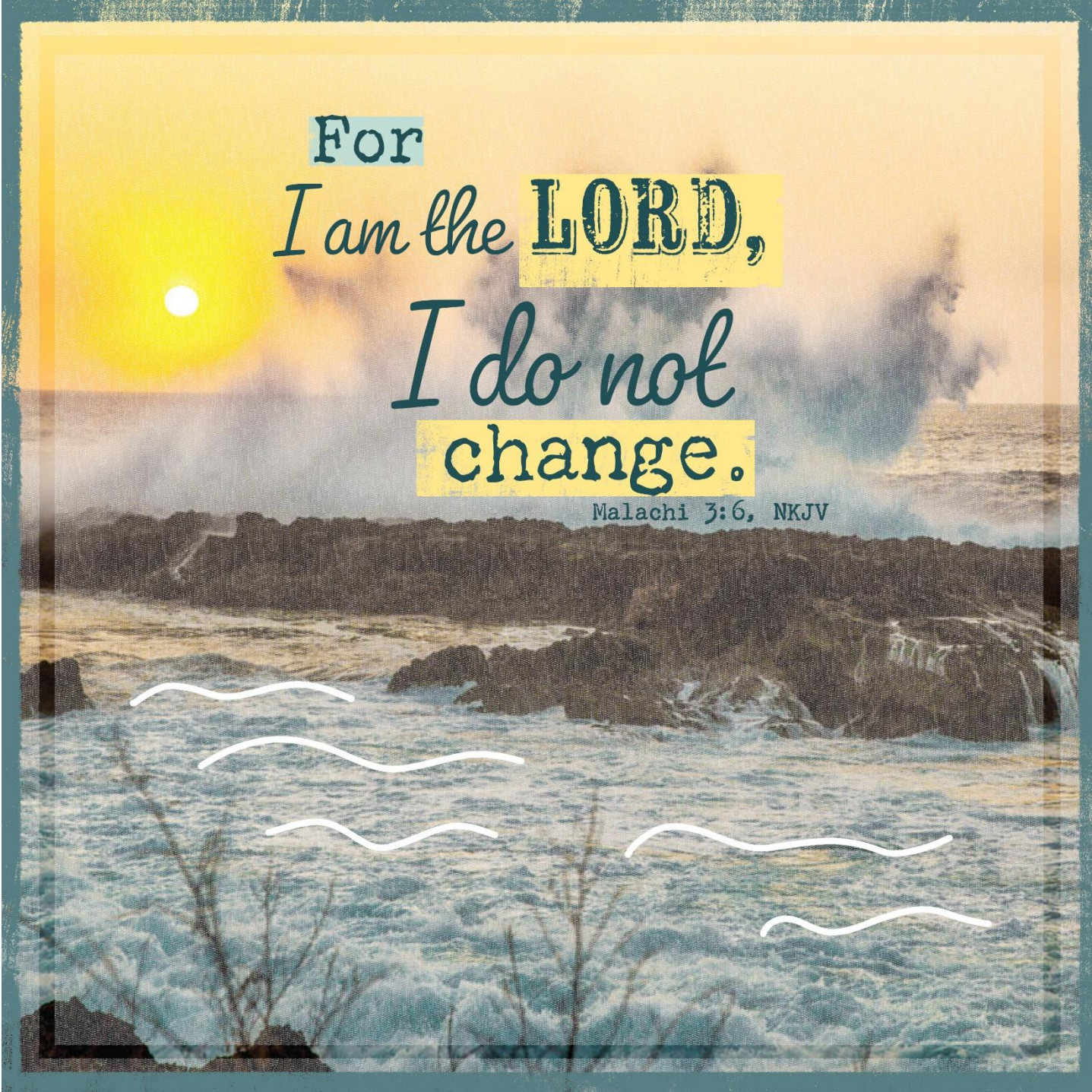
DISMISSAL

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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For
I am the **LORD**,
I do not
change.

Malachi 3:6, NKJV