

**Service for Sunday, November 15, 2019**  
**Provided via Elim's website, Email, and Facebook**

**\*Be sure to have some type of bread or cracker on a plate and wine or juice in a glass or cup. We will be celebrating the Holy Meal of Communion together at today's worship.**



**Greeting**

May the grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
 in whose image we are made,  
 who claims us and calls us beloved. **Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy One,  
**we confess that we are not awake for you.**  
**We are not faithful in using your gifts.**  
**We forget the least of our siblings.**  
**We do not see your beautiful image in one another.**  
**We are infected by sin**  
**that divides your beloved community.**  
**Open our hearts to your coming,**  
**open our eyes to see you in our neighbor,**  
**open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.**

Beloved, we are God's children,  
 and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us.

Through ✝ Jesus we are forgiven,  
 by Jesus we are welcomed,  
 in Jesus we are called to rejoice!  
 Let us live in the promises prepared for us  
 from the foundation of the world.  
**Amen.**

### Hymn

#### ***Come and Fill Our Hearts***

Text: Psalm 136:1 Taizé

Music: Jacques Berthier

Come and fill our hearts with peace.  
 You alone, O Lord, are holy.  
 Come and fill our hearts with peace.  
 You alone, O Lord, are holy.

### The Word

A reading for today from the 90th Psalm:

- <sup>1</sup>Lord, you have been our refuge  
 from one generation to another.
- <sup>2</sup>Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born,  
 from age to age you are God.
- <sup>3</sup>You turn us back to the dust and say,  
 "Turn back, O children of earth."
- <sup>4</sup>For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past  
 and like a watch in the night;
- <sup>5</sup>you sweep them away like a dream,  
 they fade away suddenly like the grass:
- <sup>6</sup>in the morning it is green and flourishes;  
 in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- <sup>7</sup>For we are consumed by your anger;  
 we are afraid because of your wrath.
- <sup>8</sup>Our iniquities you have set before you,  
 and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

<sup>12</sup>So teach us to number our days (Psalm 90:1-8, 12)

This ends the Psalm.

Today's New Testament Reading is from the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians.

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup>But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup>for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup>for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)

This ends the New Testament lesson.

### Gospel Acclamation

**Alleluia.** Abide in me as I abide in you; those who abide in me bear much fruit. **Alleluia.**  
(John 15:4, 5)

Today's Gospel is from the 25th Chapter of Matthew: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>14</sup>"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came

forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup>But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' " (Matthew 25:14-30)

The Word of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**



### The Message

Have you ever had an item which is really special to you? Perhaps it is something you've used for years. And then it becomes unusable or beyond repair, so this dear item ends up in the trash heap, buried by piles of dirt and trash at the city dump.

That happened to me this past summer. I had my grandma's colander, you know, the thing that strains liquid off food or allows you to wash food ridding the said food of dirt and water as it drains out. This dear colander was used by her to hold the vegetables she gathered from her enormous garden. And you should have seen the strawberries and raspberries she gathered into that large, useful kitchen item.

I used it also to gather tons and tons of raspberries from our patch in Rochester before we moved to Fargo. But then...the unthinkable happened. This colander, that I'd had since my grandma died 36 years ago come January, became totally rusted and crusty. It couldn't be cleaned or refinished, and I felt horrible. This simple thing, that I'd had for over three decades had to be thrown away. After many years of sure and trustworthy use, it was gone.

And you might ask me, what does this have to do with today's readings, and what's the big deal the three servants in the parable that Jesus told.



Nearly all the readings this month address the end of days, the time when Jesus comes again to gather his people together and take them home to live eternally. We hear a lot of stories about these end times, when it will happen, and how it will be. We've been told many times that we are not to know the details. But the Apostle Paul tells us that when that day comes, it will come like a "thief in the night." We will be surprised when the Lord returns. However, Paul urges us to be alert and sober. Don't become unaware. I guess this all make sense – up to this point. And then Jesus tells us the parable of the talents. Go figure...

Looking up the value of a talent, I found several sources that said a talent was worth somewhere between 16-20 years of labor in Jesus' day. That's a lot of value. Think about it – the servant with five talents, who then earned five more, had riches equaling 80-100 years of work, while the one with two talents to begin with and then earned two more was still wealthy. Even the one with only one talent who buried it and did not earn additional talents, still had a significant pocket full of warlth. But he was

berated and punished by his master to the tune of being “thrown out where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

This doesn't seem like the kindly master that God is thought to be. Not sure, but I don't think I'd really want to have a relationship with that god. The one who, when I fail daily, throws me out of the kingdom. That is not the comforting and loving God who I have been taught about for years and the one I know and love.

The one servant was practical in his approach to tending the master's talents, while the other two, with more to begin with, were rather impetuous in the care of their masters worth. But here, the impetuous, brash servants were rewarded. It doesn't seem to make sense, especially to those of us who were taught to be wise with our money. Don't spend foolishly on things that aren't necessary.

If we look at this parable from another angle, things might seem different. How about seeing this story with new eyes, the eyes of holding tightly to something instead of sharing with others. What if this one lone talent represented the Words of the Gospel? What if we held on so tightly to the Gospel, as if it was meant for only ourselves? That would not be the intent of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These words and lessons and parables are meant to be shared so all the world knows the love of God and Christ for all. So think of it this way: one buried talent equals holding the light of Christ under a bushel basket so no one else is able to see. Instead, let us lift the basket and shed the light so it is visible to all the world. Yes, my beloveds, take the chance. Use the

Gospel to increase the Gospel harvest. Share the good news over and over and over again.

This story is like the story of my precious colander. I held so tightly to something that was useless, that I doubted the faith that I could live life, at least in the kitchen and the garden, without it. But I have survived without Grandma's colander. I purchased a new one and it's used almost daily in our kitchen. Life goes on, and you know what, I still have the memories of Grandma's good work, love, and generosity. And I have faith that I can function without that broken piece of metal.

God is like that. We can and should have a solid faith that God comes to us, not broken and defeated (like my colander), but as the One, in human form, who has erased sin and defeated death...for us. Let our relationships with Christ be filled with faith and trust, because God is trustworthy and true. God's promises are sure. For God in Christ is whole. God in Christ remains true, faithful, merciful, and gracious. And God in Christ will return and make us new, living new lives in the Heavenly home where there is no weeping and no gnashing of teeth.

Be as the servants whose daring and willingness to invest in the growth of the talents left in their keeping. Use your gifts to grow the Good News for the common good of all. Share the Good News with all the world which is filled with violence and despair. Send it from one corner of the earth to earth's end so all hear the Gospel call of hope

and Christ among us. And wait, alert and ready, for the Lord Jesus Christ to come again.

This is most certainly true. Amen.

### Hymn

#### *Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand*

Text: Wilhelm A. Wexels

Tune: Nikolaus Herman

Oh, happy day when we shall stand amid the heavenly throng;  
And sing with hosts from every land the new celestial song,  
The new celestial song.

Oh, blessed day when Christ shall come and show himself as Lord,  
And thousands meet in their new home which Jesus has prepared,  
Which Jesus has prepared.

Oh, what a mighty rushing flood of joy and love and peace  
Will roll down over us with good and blessedness and grace,  
And blessedness and grace.

O Lord, your grace is everything; your love has made us free  
To stand among the saints and sing the glory that we see,  
The glory that we see.

### The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there 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.

### **Prayers of the People**

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

Lord of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the nations, sound forth your justice in the ears of all leaders. Increase concern for those who are most vulnerable, especially as international leaders forge trade agreements and cooperate to end human rights abuses. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. The prayers we raise in hearts today are especially for Kim Olschlager, Les Rheault, Marilyn Dolezal, Sarah VanRaden, Bonnie Duggan, Jeanne Roen, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer's sister, Rose – Lenora Scheer's niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, Brandon - Victoria Savanh's cousin, those suffering from the global pandemic, hurricanes, wildfires, and racial atrocities, and all others we name in our hearts before you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins. Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.  
**Amen.**



### \*Holy Communion

#### Great Thanksgiving

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

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation. With all the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn...

Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 Hosanna in the highest.  
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna in the highest.  
 Hosanna in the highest.

On the night our Lord was betrayed, he took bread, blessed it and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, our Lord took the cup gave thanks and blessed it and said to his disciples, "This cup is the new promise in my blood which is shed for you and for ALL people for the forgiveness of sins. When you drink from this cup, remember me, for I will not drink from it until I return."

#### The Lord's Prayer

As we have been gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray together the pray we have been taught.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by 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. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

#### Invitation

There is a place for you at the banquet.  
 Come and feast at Jesus' table.

#### Prayer After Communion

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet.  
 Sustain us on the journey,  
 strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,  
 and give us glad and generous hearts  
 as we meet you on the way. **Amen.**

#### Sending

### Blessing

May the God of all creation,  
in whose image we are made,  
who claims us and calls us beloved,  
who strengthens us for service,  
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!  
The blessing of God,  
Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit,  
be with you today and always.  
Amen.

### Dismissal

Beloved of God,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.



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