



FROM THE PASTOR

Psalm 148

¹ Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for at his command they were created,

⁶ and he established them for ever and ever—
he issued a decree that will never pass away.

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

⁸ lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,

⁹ you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,

¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,

¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,

¹² young men and women,
old men and children.

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

¹⁴ And he has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his faithful servants,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.
Praise the LORD.

Psalm 148 is what we would call a 'praise song' of ancient Israel. The ability to praise God is part of that wonderful relationship we have as God's children. We are baptized and infused with the Holy Spirit, so that when we give praise to God, it is more than a personal expression—it is participation in the response of all creation to its Creator. Just look at the list of all God created and all that are called to share in the universal song of praise:

Heavens	Angels
Heavenly hosts	Sun, moon and stars
Sea creatures	Ocean depths
Lightning, clouds	Snow and hail
Fruit trees and cedars	Wild animals
Cattle	Birds and small animals
Kings, princes	All rulers
Young men and women, old people and children	

By any standard, that is one amazing choir! All that God made shows forth God's goodness and praises Him. It made me think of what Jesus said on the first Palm Sunday as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Luke 19:37-40 tells us: ***When [Jesus] came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."***

Too often, when we think of the Kingdom of God, we think of a future heaven. But, if we just take a moment and listen with the ears of faith and

discernment from the Holy Spirit, we can hear the song of the Kingdom being sung all around us. We can even hear it in silence. God's creation resonates with it. Since I was a young teenager, my favorite poem has always been Robert Frost's, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." It describes a momentary respite taken by a busy man. He not only sees the snow falling, he hears it. I don't know if the poet intended it but I see in this poem a picture that illustrates this psalm.

The psalm reminds us that the song of all creation is a song of praise of Jesus, our Lord. In Jesus, creation is restored. In Jesus, the song will go on for eternity. ***"And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart. PRAISE THE LORD."***



FROM THE PASTOR

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost



Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Brian Shirey

Post Scripts:

- † Our lessons for this Sunday, November 22, Christ the King, are:
First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 95:1-7a
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46
- † As I said last week, it seems there is an increase in the need for COVID precautions in Butler County. Our schools are going virtual. We know that this pestilence will end, but I don't think even the most optimistic among us is willing to offer a prediction about when that will be. I think we are in a good place at St. Luke's. I think that our expectations of what we can and cannot do are very realistic. So, we will just continue to take the precautions we have been taking. So, as I have said so often, thank you for your patience and your faithfulness.
- † We are being asked to scale back Thanksgiving celebrations this year to limit virus spread. But there is no need to scale back our thankfulness and praise of our Lord who protects us in this difficult time. Have a happy—and meaningful—Thanksgiving celebration.
- † Happily, we are now able to live-stream worship on YouTube. Please spread the word. It is one more tool for living out our life together at St. Luke's. Thank you to Kelly Weston and all who help us take advantage of new opportunities. Visit the St. Luke's YouTube channel or go to stlks.com and click on the Welcome to Worship icon. You can also view past services.

