

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of November 23, 2020

Christ the King Sunday

Written by Vicar Jamie Witt

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 God is my Shield

“God is my shield, who saves the upright in heart.” Psalm 7:10. For me, this verse conjures up the lyrics from “A Mighty Fortress” which we just sang for Reformation Sunday a couple weeks ago, “For God himself fights by our side, with sword and shield victorious.” When we struggle, no matter the circumstances God is with us and by our side. We are supported by the strength of Christ our King to face whatever is ahead of us. We never fight anything alone. In those moments when we are feeling weak and don’t know what to do, or have the words to say, God supplies both. God’s strength takes over when we are too weak to go on. The psalmist writes that God is their shield. Remember that a shield is always in front of us, not behind. God goes before us and ahead of us into where we will walk, and then remains by our side. There is no situation that we encounter that God isn’t already in the midst of, meeting us there to help us through it. Trust in that love and strength. Prayer: “Sovereign God, thank you for being ahead of me and beside me in all my struggles. Continue to carry me through all the days ahead for you are my rock and my salvation. Amen.”

Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020 Use Your Voice!

“For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming on my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kin-

dred?” Esther 8:6. Esther was in a difficult position. She was married to the king and knew of a plot to attack the Jewish people, her people, for she was Jewish but had hid that identity from the king. She risked a great deal by speaking up for the people. Instead of passive silence she chose to speak up and advocate for those that could not. Her bravery resulted in the saving of the Jewish people as the king listened to her and stopped the plan to harm them. When we see others in pain or persecuted, we are called to follow Esther’s example and speak up. We are called to use our voices to help those that have no voice. Our call as followers of Christ is to love our neighbors, and that includes all our neighbors, every living thing God has created and placed on this earth with us. Where there is injustice and oppression we must stand up, knowing God stands with us, and do what we can to make it right. Use your voice! Use your gifts! Share the love of the King of all creation with all creation! Prayer: “Lord God, my strength and shield, give me courage to speak for those who cannot and to bring love to those who have never felt it. Amen.”

“Stir Up Our Hearts”

Written by Pastor Matt Henning

Wednesday November 25th Voice of Life

“Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father

has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have Life in himself;" John 5:25-26. Jesus is speaking to the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem about the connection that he has with God as Father and Son. This connection runs deep into the very being of Jesus who is connecting his actions in this life and the life to come with God. Jesus is claiming his place in the kingdom as redeemer and judge, calling people out of death and into life. He is offering life to the people and the temple and the world with his voice. This means that when Jesus speaks they are hearing the voice that will call them out of death and into life. Jesus teaches that faith is the way people will hear this voice calling them from death toward life. The Holy Spirit is the bearer of faith for all people and will enable people to hear and respond to the voice of life. This Advent we are reflecting on that same Spirit's work in our hearts stirring us with God's power. Prayer: "Dwell in our hearts, O Spirit, that we may hear God's call through faith this day. Amen."

Thursday November 26th Thanksgiving

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!" Psalm 80: 1-3. Today is Thanksgiving Day in the United States, a day of thankful reflection on all that we are given as people in this country. The words of this Psalm are a cry for deliverance and may seem odd to read on this day. These

words can be read as an acknowledgment that all the blessings of this life are a gift that come from our God. The writer is seeing everything in his world from the leader to each citizen of Israel as being blessed by God. This is also true for us in our world today. We are given gifts in this life to be life for the people around us. We are called to be thankful for all of God's work in our lives and share from our abundance with others. Prayer: "Gracious Lord, stir up in us life of thanksgiving and praise this day. Guide us on to generous paths of grace and mercy for our neighbors. Amen."

Friday November 27th God will Call Us Up

"For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever." 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17. Paul is reminding the Thessalonians that they will be in the kingdom of God through the activity of God in Christ Jesus. They will be called up in faith to be with all who have been raised and this should give them confidence in the love and grace of God for all people. It was God's intent that all of creation be restored into the kingdom of heaven and God is at work in the world through Jesus to make that happen. Prayer: "Open my ears to your call, O God, that I may be a worker in your Kingdom. Amen."

Saturday November 28th God will Gather

“I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the survivors of Israel; I will set them together Like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture; it will resound with people. The one who breaks out will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king will pass on before them. The Lord at their head.” Micah 2: 12-13. Judah was facing a future of uncertainty, division, and loss out of their conflict with Israel and the surrounding kingdoms. In the midst of this chaos, Micah has a vision of God gathering the people of Israel like a shepherd gathering a flock in his pasture. God will build, restore, and reunite the people of Judah with the tribes to the north in Israel. Micah is teaching his people that it is the will of God for unity among the people. They are called to follow their shepherd out of division and into the oneness of the flock of God. This happens because of the power of God at work in their hearts and in the hearts of their adversaries. God calls us out of our own divisions and conflicts to remember that we are all one humanity, one flock of God. Prayer: “Stir in my Heart, O Lord, the Spirit of unity and grace that only you can bring. Give me courage to follow you. Amen.”

Sunday November 29th**Stir Up your Power**

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from

the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.” Mark 13: 26-27. This advent season we ask God to stir up God’s power in our world and also stir up in us a desire for action and movement in faith as we enter this time of preparation and waiting. Mark’s gospel points to the coming of the Son of Man and all the visual signs that will accompany him. When we stop and consider the return of Christ, we often turn our thoughts inward to reflect on how we have lived our lives as followers of Jesus. We are called this week to reflect on ourselves and our actions and yet also remember the power of the One who calls us into forgiveness and grace. Prayer: “Stir up your power, Lord Christ and come. Amen.”