



# Beyond Human Time

*Sunday, November 19, 2023*  
*Extended Advent 2*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)  
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

## Sunday, November 19, 2023

### PRELUDE

The Promised Land

(On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand)

from *The Sacred Harp*

arr. Don Hustad

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Our readings during November speak of the end times. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.*

### GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather today.

**It is time to worship!**

We listen for God

**It is time to hear!**

We receive God's grace.

**It is time to be loved!**

We leave in peace.

**It is time to serve others!**

As we wait for Jesus' arrival, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is already here in this time and place.

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

With God, there is always time for forgiveness. We trust God, and we confess our sins together.

*Brief pause*

Holy One,

**We have not stayed awake. We have missed you when you appeared in our neighbors, in strangers half a world away, in the suffering planet. We have wasted the time and the skills that you gave us and assumed we were powerless to mend the breaches in our world. Sometimes, we have given up on your mercy, justice, and love. Speak tenderly to our anxious hearts. Tear open the heavens and heal what we have done. Amen.**

People of God, hear this good news: In the name of † Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven. Forgiveness gives us the courage we need. Wherever we wait for God's time to come, we will witness wonders.

**Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand

ELW 437

GREETING

The grace of God, who was, who is, and who is to come, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

KYRIE



Lord, have mer - cy\_\_ on your peo - ple. Christ have mer - cy\_\_ on\_\_ us.  
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.\_\_ Chri - ste e - le - i - son.



Shine your light in\_\_ to our dark - ness. Fill\_\_ us\_\_ with your ho - ly love.  
Heal all\_\_ con - flicts be - tween na - tions. Teach us\_\_ how to\_\_ live as one.



Be our strength in times of\_\_ trou - ble. Set us free from chains that\_\_ bind.  
Show us how to love our\_\_ neigh - bor. Run to those who\_\_ cry for\_\_ help.



Breathe new\_ life in - to our\_ spir - its. Pu - ri - fy our\_ hearts and minds.  
Word made flesh who lives a - mong us; Christ our\_ Lord, Em - man - u - el.

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

“The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast.” (Zephaniah 1:14)

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” (Psalm 90:1)

Let us pray. God who is near:

Our days rush past us, and we can't hold onto what's most dear.

Our days drag on until we long for change.

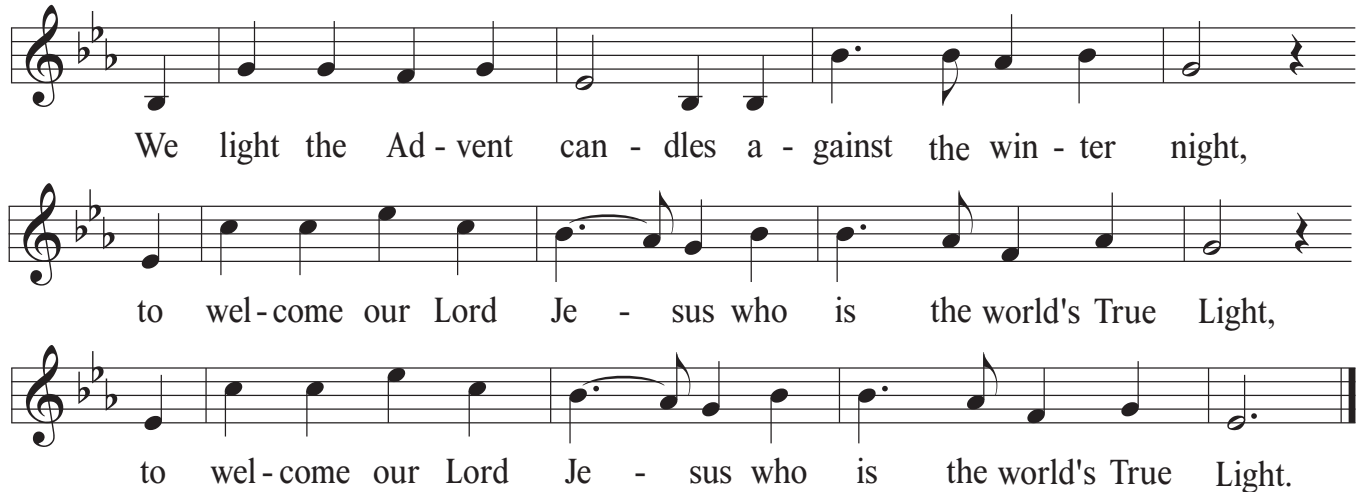
Yet you are everlasting, as faithful to us now as to those who lived thousands of years ago.

And you are urgent, bringing sweeping change within a single moment.

As we light another Advent candle, remind us of your power unfolding in seconds and in eons.

**Amen.**

*The Advent candle will be lit as we sing:*



The image shows three staves of musical notation in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We light the Ad - vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,  
to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,  
to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.

## **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

### DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

*All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.*

### READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

*Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Ho - ly God, ho - ly and glo - ri - ous,  
glo - ry most sub - lime, you come as one a - mong us  
in - to hu - man time, and we be - hold your glo - ry.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

*Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.*

[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.' "

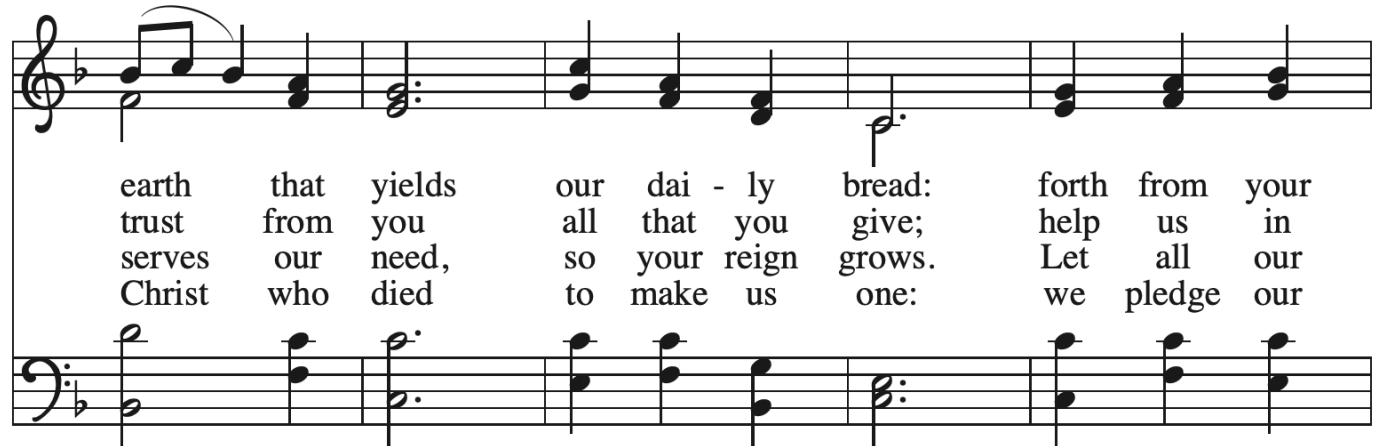
The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON



1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of  
 2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in  
 3 As grows the hid - den seed to fruit that  
 4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the



earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your  
 trust from you all that you give; help us in  
 serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our  
 Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our



boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,  
 love to share, teach us like you to care  
 toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,  
 lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.



that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.  
 for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.  
 no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.  
 Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.*

People of God, we are each other's kin, and we are family with all creation. As we wait and yearn for God, we pray together for our community, for the church around the world, and for every need.

*A brief silence.*

#1 Gracious God, you give talents and gifts to all your people, and you equip the church to serve. Turn us from fear and self-serving ways, that we use our talents to glorify you and encourage our neighbor. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#2 You have been our dwelling place from one generation to another. Sustain the life of the planet; protect farmlands and harvests. Direct all people in wise stewardship of all the earth's resources. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#3 You call us to honesty and integrity. Instill these values in the hearts of all nations and their leaders. Free any who are oppressed, expose all corruption, and bring redemption to victims of injustice. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Come, Lord Jesus to neighbors far and near. Deepen our kinship with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Sean & Caroline (Madilyn), Marlene, Dylan, Marja & Ronald, and Lisa. Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Come, Lord Jesus to all who are hungry, thirsty, ill, or experiencing any struggles.

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- Jerry T, especially wife, Toni, who died 11/4
- Jai, daughter of Jim and Jane, friends of John C



*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Mary S, who is recovering from a broken hip
- Morey R, who is recovering from a recent hospitalization
- Dawn W, niece of Sue T, who is recovering from multiple surgeries
- Joan B who is in rehab at Penfield Place following a recent fall
- Brian, Learning Links leader, as he undergoes treatment
- Donna B who is recovering from anticipated surgery
- David M, brother of Ron M, who has been diagnosed with cancer and will start radiation treatment

Hear also these concerns we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

God, you are always with us. We gather these prayers together, and we entrust them to your endless love in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## **SHARING GOD'S MEAL**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.*

*If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.*

OFFERING

*Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting*

*[blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry).*

OFFERING OF MUSIC

God Has Called Us

words, Susan Palo Cherwien  
music, Robert A. Hobby

The Chancel Choir

## OFFERTORY



1. Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.

2. Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.



Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Loving God, for the time we have, and for the gifts we offer, we say:

**Thank you.**

For the chance to help others, and for the people whose lives will be better because of these gifts, we say:

**Thank you.**

For the ways you are changing the world, we say:

**Thank you.**

We pray in the name of Jesus, who appears wherever people need our help.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

God, our Creator

**the abundance of your goodness overflows into creation.**

Through the generations

**your goodness continues to flow in friendship with humanity.**

From beyond time into this moment

**your goodness comes in this meal.**

When the time was right, you entered our human existence in Jesus, who was born humbly, who spent his life with the unlikely and unloved, who healed and taught and preached the good news of your way.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Whenever we share this bread and cup,  
**Jesus is here with us, in this moment, in this time and place.**

Whenever we share this bread and cup,  
**God takes us out of time and joins us with God's people in every time and place.**

Whenever we share this bread and cup, we proclaim the mystery of faith.  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Send the Spirit of your presence on us now, O God, so that we too will overflow with goodness.

**Strengthen us by this meal, so that through us, your presence will flow out in mercy, justice, and love. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We prepare for you, praying as you taught us,

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

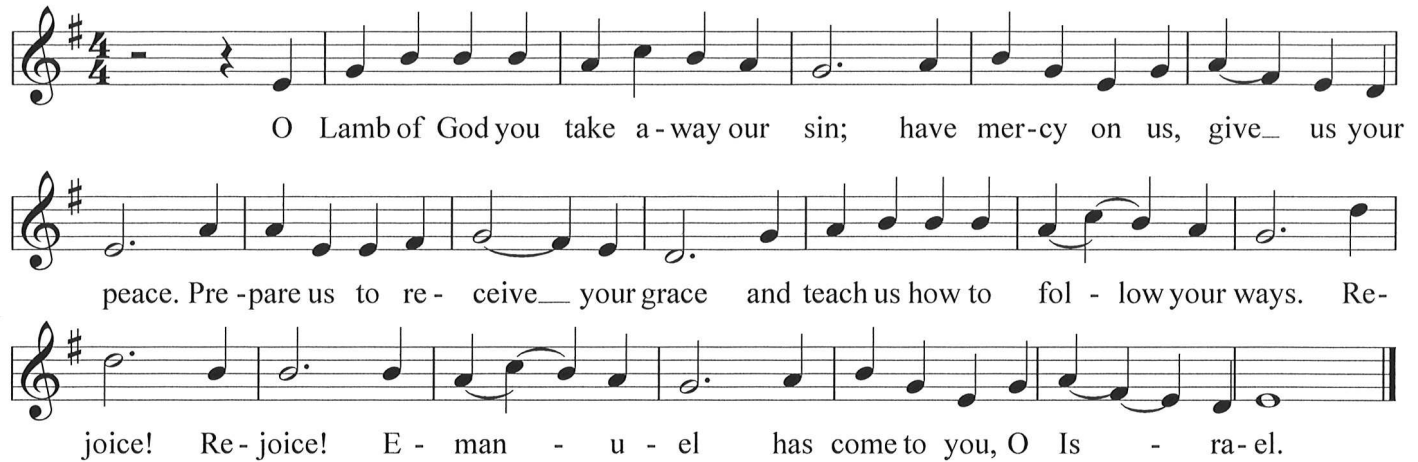
The time is now! Taste and see God's goodness!

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.*

## THE COMMUNION



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give\_ us your  
peace. Pre- pare us to re- ceive\_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-  
joice! Re- joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra- el.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

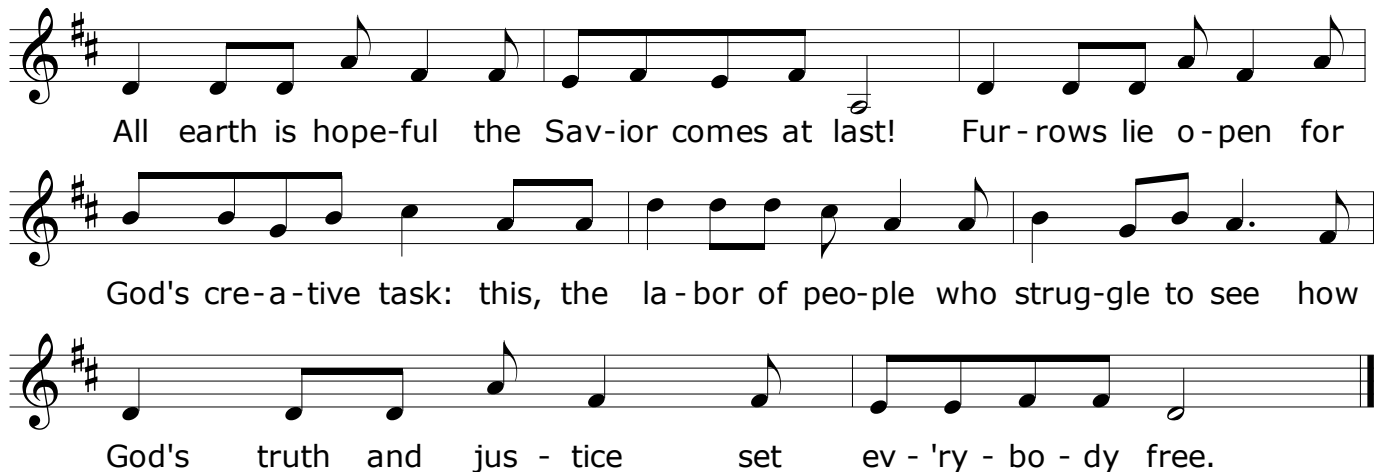
ELW 674

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

ELW 815

## TABLE BLESSING

## POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



All earth is hope-ful the Sav-ior comes at last! Fur-rows lie o-pen for  
God's cre-a-tive task: this, the la-bor of peo-ple who strug-ple to see how  
God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bo - dy free.

## LEAVING TO SERVE

### BENEDICTION

God our Creator, present before time; † Jesus our Redeemer, arriving at the right time; The Holy Spirit our Enlivener, acting in our time; Bless you now and always.  
**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN	Come, Ye Thankful People, Come	ELW 693
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### DISMISSAL

Keep alert: trust God; go in peace.

**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

Postlude on Two American Folk Hymns

*FOUNDATION* and *SIMPLE GIFTS*  
setting, Charles Callahan

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

**Thank you** to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org).

**Communicate with us:** Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

**What's happening at BLC this week?** Visit the Calendar of Events at [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org). Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org).

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God of the Fertile Fields: Text: Georgia Harkness, 1891-1974, alt. Music: ITALIAN HYMN, Felice de Giardini, 1716-1796

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## Awake to the Grace of God

Linked with the reading from 1 Thessalonians and Psalm 90, Jesus' parable of the talents invites a full-hearted response to God's lavish gifts of faith and purpose: "Use 'em if you've got 'em!" The people of God are meant to be engaged, alert, and ready to share what we have received from our prodigally (wastefully) generous God. While the parable has sometimes been interpreted in the context of judgment, a careful reading also spotlights the beauty of the faith-generated response to God's lavish grace.

One word for this is *stewardship*. Presented in light of God's gift of faith and purpose, this "churchy" term can today be transformed to new understanding in the proclamation of the gospel text. Instead of the weight of obligation and duty we so often associate with religion, we are invited today to another way: What does it mean to be awake to the grace of God?

On the surface Jesus' parable is a simple premise: the contrast of workers who please and workers who disappoint their master. Psalm 90 sings to us to carefully treasure our lifetimes, for there is something at stake. First Thessalonians is a letter reminding people they have exactly what they need to survive and thrive.

What does it mean to be awake to the grace of God?

In a time in history when so many people are discouraged with work, home, life, and church, a word from Jesus' parables may be healing, enriching, and startlingly attractive. The gospel text today is an opportunity to remind the people of God that there is a depth to faith that is sustainable. In fact, beneath the parables of Jesus is a depth it will take a lifetime to unpack.