

November 19, 2023

HYMNS FOR TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LBW #241 “We Praise You O God”

LBW #557 “Let All Things Now Living”

LBW #534 “Now Thank We All Our God”

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the Lord as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the Lord.

⁷Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people

who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts,
“The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm.”

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,

¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;

because they have sinned against the Lord,
their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath;

in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

PSALM: Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

R So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. (Ps. 90:12)

¹Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.

²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God.**

³You turn us back to the dust and say,
“Turn back, O children of earth.”

⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night; R**

⁵you sweep them away like a dream,
they fade away suddenly like the grass:

⁶**in the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.**

⁷For we are consumed by your anger;
we are afraid because of your wrath.

⁸**Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance. R**

[⁹When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

¹⁰**The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.**

¹¹Who regards the power of your wrath?
Who rightly fears your indignation?

] ¹²**So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. R**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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 we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

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:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then 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.’ ²¹His 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.’ ²²And 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.’ ²³His 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.’ ²⁴Then 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; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But 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? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

A 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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A 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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You call us to honesty and integrity. Instill these values in the hearts of all nations and their leaders (*leaders may be named*). Free any who are oppressed, expose all corruption, and bring redemption to victims of injustice. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. Where there is sickness or sorrow, bring healing, and where there is loneliness, reveal your love in community. We remember before you (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A We pray for the faith formation ministries of our church. Give to all children, youth, and adults who study your word the breastplate of faith and love. Shape us by your love and show us how to encourage one another. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A Gracious God, you are faithful in all generations. For the promise of life and rest and for the witness of those who have died in faith (*especially*) we praise your goodness. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

