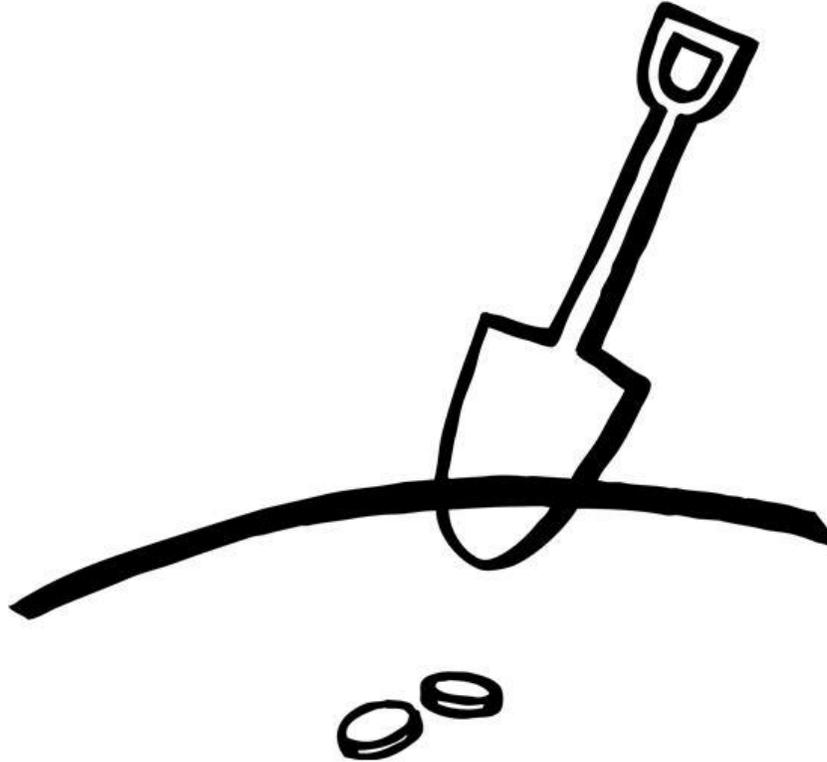


# ***Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost***



## ***The Lihue Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawaii***

*Ka Hale Pule 'O Na Lahui Apau . . .*

*Church Of All Peoples . . .*

*. . . Hele Pu Makou me Iesu Kristo*

*. . . Walking Together With Christ*

**November 15, 2020**

*The Lihue Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawaii*

*4602 Ho'omana Road, Lihue, HI 96766*

*Rev. Joseph Paxton, Pastor – Noreen Javinar, Lector*

*Rhonda Pabo, Organists – Mark Murie, Cantor – Tony Kment, Video/Audio*

*Church: (808) 245-2145 Fax: (808) 246-8626*

*E-Mail: [lihuelutheran@gmail.com](mailto:lihuelutheran@gmail.com) Website: [lihuelutheranchurch.com](http://lihuelutheranchurch.com)*

# Welcome to the Twenty-Fourth Week After Pentecost!

## **Introduction**

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the LORD will be filled with wrath and distress. 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.

## **Overview**

### **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.

## *Announcements*

1. Spiritual Direction – Opportunity to grow in faith and discovery God! Contact Liedeke Bulder
2. Food distribution (LCC + LLC + LMC) – recap
3. Food Bank distribution help – Thursday, November 19!
4. Thanksgiving Yay Worship! – Thursday, November 26 @ 9am – Local and Facebook Live!
5. Donations for Thanksgiving Youth Group Dinner – online or check sent to front office
6. Mobile Muchies needs volunteers – Thursday morning.

## *Weekly Events*

1. Hybrid – Virtual + Local Youth Group
  - a. **Sunday, November 15**, 5:30-7:00pm, @ Fellowship Hall
  - b. **Zoom Link** - <https://zoom.us/j/92234312100>
2. College and Young Adults Ministry
  - a. **Tuesday, November 17**, 5:30-7:00pm @ Fellowship hall
3. Women's Book Study – Molokai'i
  - a. **Wednesday, November 18**, @ 7:30-8:30pm via zoom <https://zoom.us/j/96513446272>
4. Table Talk
  - a. **Thursday, November 19**, @ 5:30-6:45pm @ Fellowship hall + Pupus and BYOB!
5. Centering Prayer with Liedeke Bulder
  - a. **Saturday, November 21**, @ 9-10am via zoom <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9079773456>
6. **Congregational Meeting**
  - a. **Sunday, November 22**, @ 10am via zoom <https://zoom.us/j/96951986352>

## *Prayer Concerns*

Please remember these people in your prayers during the week: Karen Kinoshita, Jake Whisenhunt, Rick Rentz, Stan Weeks, Judy Hoffman, Norman Dibble, Marie Johnson, Minora Higa, Kazue Zaima, Virginia Hines-Aflague, John Mattek, Giraldo II (Bobby Giraldo's son), Kristie Schmid (Tony's sister), Lolli Hagen, Abraham Torres, Sr., Kristy Kahananui, Sonny Koerte, Joan Duarte Ebesu, Mallory Rodriguez, Steve Schantz, Leonarda Cadiz, Peter Alisna, Lea Cadiz, Tirzah Pope, John McIntyre, Pastor Matthew Weber, Joyce Anglemeyer, Stephen Shioi, Peggy Hood, Jason Shimono, Richard Rasay, Nancy Nelson (formely Mandell), Karen & Patrick Pavao, Edward Rasay, Richard Duarte (Friend of Kurt Javinar), Karen Richards (friend of Nancy Mandell), Marcos Larson (Liedeke's son), Dora Jane Rowell, Franklin Parraga, Penny Parraga, Leticia Ancog (Kurt Javinar's sister), Yvonne Shinseki, Al Dressler (Larry's Father), Shirley Hallman (Denese Alcott's Mother), Mercy Ballesteros, Mike LaBerge, Anna Marie & Phil Croghan, Judy Carlson, Caroline Johnson, Sheila Belarmino, Ray Roderick, The Church Council, and leaders in the ELCA. If you have additional prayer requests, please let the church office know. "Ask it in my name . . ." Mahalo for your love.

## *Remembering our Military*

As we gather for worship, please remember those serving us in the military, and the families of our Hawai'i National Guard. These names have been given by loved ones and family members: Navy – TJ, Javinar, Kristian Matsumoto, Coast Guard - Brian Rodriguez, Navy - Kiana Alisna, Coast Guard - Ke'ale Renta Army - Jason Lumacad, Levi Fajardo: Air Force - Steven Javinar, Ikaika Fajardo, Army - Brandon Perkinson, Drew Cox, Tony Garton: National Guard - Benji MacKenzie, Eddie Resinto, Fred Casticimo, Philip Kamakea, Anthony Y. Torres, Master Sgt. If you know of someone you would like added to our prayer list, please advise the church office.

## *Courage, not fear*

The Gospel lesson invites us to consider how fear affects the way we live. As people of grace, we are called to live courageously, and not in fear, because God's love casts out all fear. The question is, will you live free from fear?

## Welcome, Check-In, and Announcements

Type into the Facebook chatbox and respond to one, or more, of the following four check-in prompts

## Moment of Mindfulness

Take a few moments to center your spirit and prepare for worship.

## \*Order for Confession and Forgiveness

P We are gathered in the name of the Father, Makua, and of the + Son, Keiki Kane, and of the Holy Spirit, Uhane Hemolele.

**C Amen**

P Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

P Holy One,

**C we confess that we are not awake for you. We are not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least 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.**

P Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through † Jesus Christ you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

## Gathering Song

ELW 668

### O Zion, Haste

1 O Zi - on, haste, your mis - sion high ful - fill - ing,  
2 Pub - lish to ev - 'ry peo - ple, tongue, and na - tion  
3 He comes a - gain! O Zi - on, ere you meet him,

to tell to all the world that God is light;  
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;  
make known to ev - 'ry heart his sav - ing grace;

that he who made all na - tions is not will - ing  
 tell how he stooped to save his lost cre - a - tion  
 let none whom he has ran - somed fail to greet him,

one soul should per - ish, lost in shades of night.  
 and died on earth that we might live a - bove.  
 through your ne - glect, un - fit to see his face.

*Refrain*

Pub - lish glad tid - ings, tid - ings of peace,

tid - ings of Je - sus, re - demp - tion, and re - lease.

Text: Mary A. Thomson, 1834–1923  
 Music: ANGELIC SONGS, James Welch, 1837–1901

**\*Apostolic Greeting**

- P The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- C And also with you.**

**\*Prayer of the Day**

- P Let us pray. 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.*

<sup>7</sup>Be 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.

<sup>12</sup>At 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."

<sup>13</sup>Their 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.

<sup>14</sup>The 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.

<sup>15</sup>That 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,  
<sup>16</sup>a day of trumpet blast and battle cry  
against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.

<sup>17</sup>I 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.

<sup>18</sup>Neither 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.

A      The Word of the Lord C      Thanks be to God.

*Psalm (to be read responsively)*

*Psalm 90:1-12*

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

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

<sup>10</sup>**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.**

<sup>11</sup>Who regards the power of your wrath?  
Who rightly fears your indignation?

<sup>12</sup>**So teach us to number our days  
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.**

*Second 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.

A      The Word of the Lord      C      **Thanks be to God.**

### *Gospel Acclamation*

*Refrain*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give thanks to the ris - en Lord;  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give praise to his name.

### *\*The Holy 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.*

P    The Holy Gospel according to  
Saint Matthew, the twenty-fifth  
chapter.

☞ Glo - ry 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.'"



*Refrain*

It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.  
It is well with my soul.

Text: Horatio G. Spafford, 1828–1888  
 Music: VILLE DU HAVRE, Philip P. Bliss, 1838–1876

## *Commissioning of Social Media Ministry*

After prayerful deliberation, we want to support and encourage Arielle Flourette to steward the Instagram account for Lihue Lutheran Church.

P Our Lord, who came among us as a servant, calls us to faith and a life of service to the church and to our neighbor. You stand among us as one willing to serve and represent us, a gift from God to inspire us to love and good works.

*A reading from Romans:* Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given to us. If your gift is prophecy, then use it as your faith suggests; if administration, then use it for administration; if teaching, then use it for teaching. Let the all those who work, work diligently and cheerfully.

P Will you assume this social media ministry in the confidence that it comes from God?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you carry out this ministry in accordance with the teaching and practice of the Lutheran Church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and faithful in your use of social media?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you trust in God's guidance, and the Holy Spirit, to speak words of truth, encouragement, and affirmation?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Almighty God, who has given you the will to do this work, graciously give you the wisdom, knowledge, and compassion to steward this ministry.

**C Amen.**

## *\*Apostles' Creed*

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**



*English Translation*

1. O Lord thy Loving Mercy,  
Is high as the Heavens.  
It tells us of thy truth.  
And 'tis filled with holiness

3. For thy grace I beseech thee.  
Bring us 'neath thy protection.  
And peace will be thy portion  
Now and forever more. Amen

### *Sharing of the Peace*

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C And also with you.**

P Let us share peace in the Facebook live chatbox with one another.

### *\*Offering Prayer*

P God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around you table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gift from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign Servant.

**C Amen.**

### *Offertory*

Pastoral ministry might seem like something that *one person* does: the pastor. In our tradition, we are all pastors. This is the doctrine of the priesthood of *all* believers. While you may not be an ordained pastor, you are still a leader in ministry, called and baptized and sent to do great things. Your first vocational ministry is where God has called you to work. And sometimes, work becomes so fulfilling (or just time filling) that we aren't always able to get involved in the church in the ways we would like. Here is where you can partner with us in the ministries we support, so that, even though you're not carrying out the ministry, you support our work in your way.

Dear friends, in the times of COVID we invite those who are financially stable and able to move into a greater partnership with us in this season do so through the giving of gifts, tithes, and offerings. This work *is not possible without your support!* We invite you to pray in this season and discern how God might be inviting you to grow in your giving and support to Lihue Lutheran.

If, in this discernment, God puts it on your heart to give, donations can be made online, mailed in, or given on our website [here](#) or you can copy and paste the weblink below @

[https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=tYgT1GfNxRUldiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydskSODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3)

[bin/Vanco\\_ver3.vps?appver3=tYgT1GfNxRUldiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydskSODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=tYgT1GfNxRUldiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydskSODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3)

*Offertory Song (next page)*

*Lord of Aloha*

God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma - ker of beau - ty and source of the breeze,  
 5 King of Cre - a - tion, an - cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.  
 9 Auth - or of mer - cy, Giv - er of grace, Bles - sed Re - deem - er who died in our place, Fath - er of one O  
 14 ha - na are you, Lift - ing our voic - es we sing "Al - le - lu" Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.  
 19 God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma - ker of beau - ty and source of the breeze,  
 23 King of Cre - a - tion, an - cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.  
 27 Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

## Sacramental Remembrance of Communion

### \**Lord's Prayer* (spoken in unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### \**Blessing*

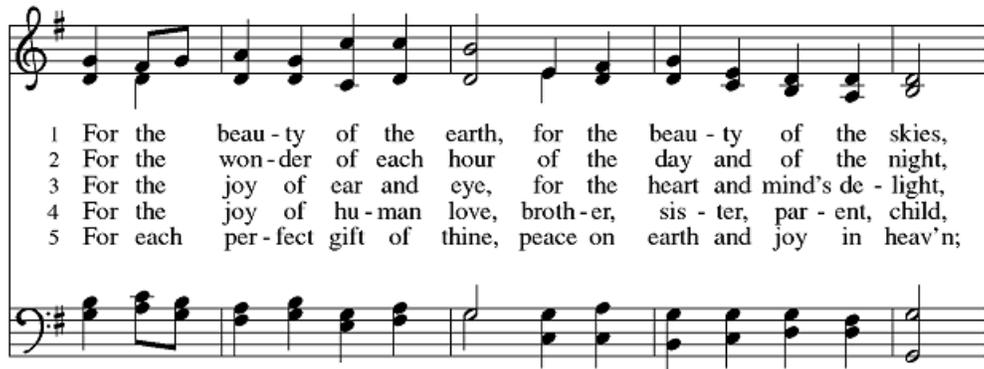
**P** May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad. The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

**C** Amen

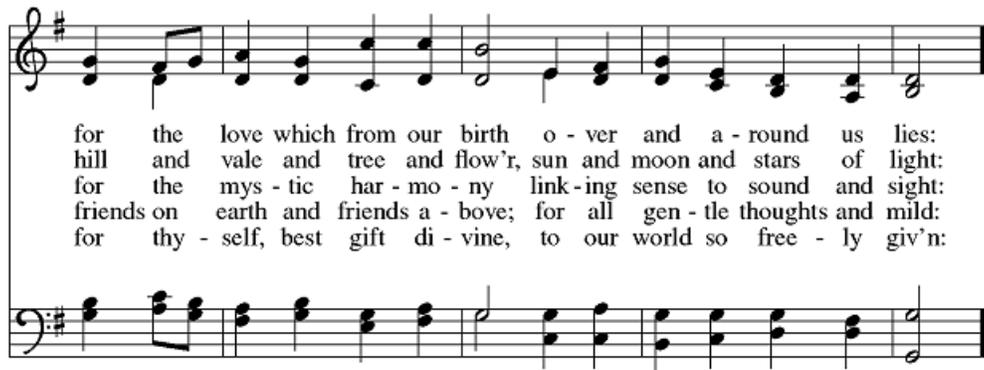
*Sending Song* (next page)

*ELW 879*

## For the Beauty of the Earth

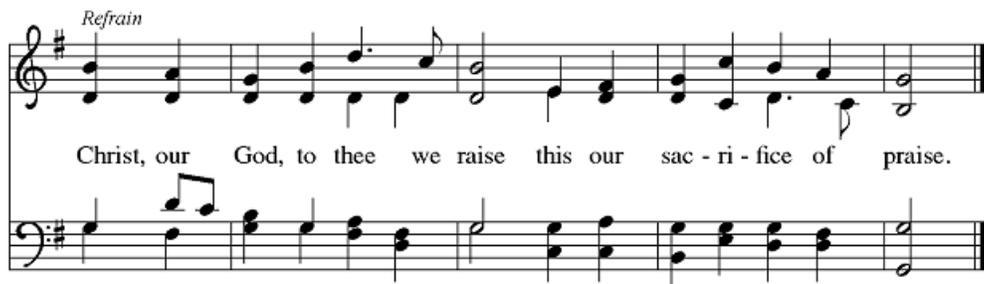


1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,  
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,  
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,  
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,  
5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:  
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:  
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:  
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:  
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

*Refrain*



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Folliot S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.  
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872

### *Dismissal*

A Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord !

C Thanks be to God

# FREEDOM FROM FEAR

The Bible *does* talk about sin and punishment. This is a reality we have to address, whether we like it or not. Can we just *explain away* judgment, hell, and punishment in ways that honor what Jesus has actually said? Or do we take *those* words of Jesus and just sweep them under the rug of grace and forgiveness? This isn't an easy task, and it's one that the Gospel lesson doesn't help us with today. However, I think a different way to look at the Gospel lesson is to see what it says about fear.

If you notice, a difference between the individuals who were given 5 and 2 talents is that they were fearless. They weren't worried or anxious about whether or not they would lose their master's money or make a bad decision, and they certainly weren't worried that the master would punish them for making a wrong decision. Therefore, they didn't sit, agonizing over what to do, worried they might make a bad decision. They just went and lived freely.

But the individual who was given 1 talent was stricken with fear. I would even say they were paralyzed by fear. This individual wasn't just afraid of losing the master's money, they were *afraid of the master*.

Which servant are we like? The one who lives freely in their love for and relationship with God or are we afraid of making mistakes (that might send us to hell) and afraid of the master himself?

1 John 4:18 says, "Perfect love casts out all fear." If we love God and know that God loves us, then fear of punishment won't be a part of our relationship; and fear won't motivate what we do in our religious lives or relationship with God. Yet, for some people, that is how they live their religious lives: in fear of God and in fear of failure or the consequences of failure. Everything they do is done out of fear. They aren't really sure if God loves them. Therefore, they aren't really certain that God's grace is sufficient to forgive their sins. And some struggle to believe that God *wants to forgive them*. I think some people see God grace, mercy, and forgiveness are somehow burdensome, frustrating, or reluctantly given to them; as though forgiving them is an irritation. Here's the truth:

- God loves you
- God likes you
- God forgives you (not because God *has to* but because God *wants to*)
- God's love for you is not a burden, it is a blessing, and something God delights in

If we struggle to believe in God's love, then I think we can quickly become motivated by God's punishment. When we do this I think we can begin to look more like the servant with 1 talent, instead of the servants who were given 5 or 2 talents. Here, we might live our lives motivated by:

- Avoiding punishment, failure, or disappointing God
- Seeking favor or trying to please and placate God
- Trying to prove that we're good enough or worthy of God's love

Today, don't live in fear of God's wrath, live in light of God's grace. God loves you; God likes you; God forgives you; and God takes joy in loving you. Live in light of this love and let go of fear or anxiety that might be holding you back from living more fully.