



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person

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Parish Administrator	Barbara Bash
Sexton	John Bryant

✧ *In Worship Today* ✧

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector and Intercessor	Joan Kavanaugh

This service of worship can also be listened to online. Go to queenannelutheran.org and click on "WORD OUT" to find audio, video, and print resources for worship at home, as well as resources to use with children.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 8, 2020

"Word Out" audio transcript



Prelude

Chorale prelude on HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG
Jeffrey Blersch (b. 1967)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. Wherever you are listening, however you may be struggling, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news in proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God. In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids, reminding his listeners to be ready for his return. Christian life is thus a paradox: we await the fullness of Christ's presence, yet affirm, as he promises, that he is *already* among us when we gather, now virtually, in his name.

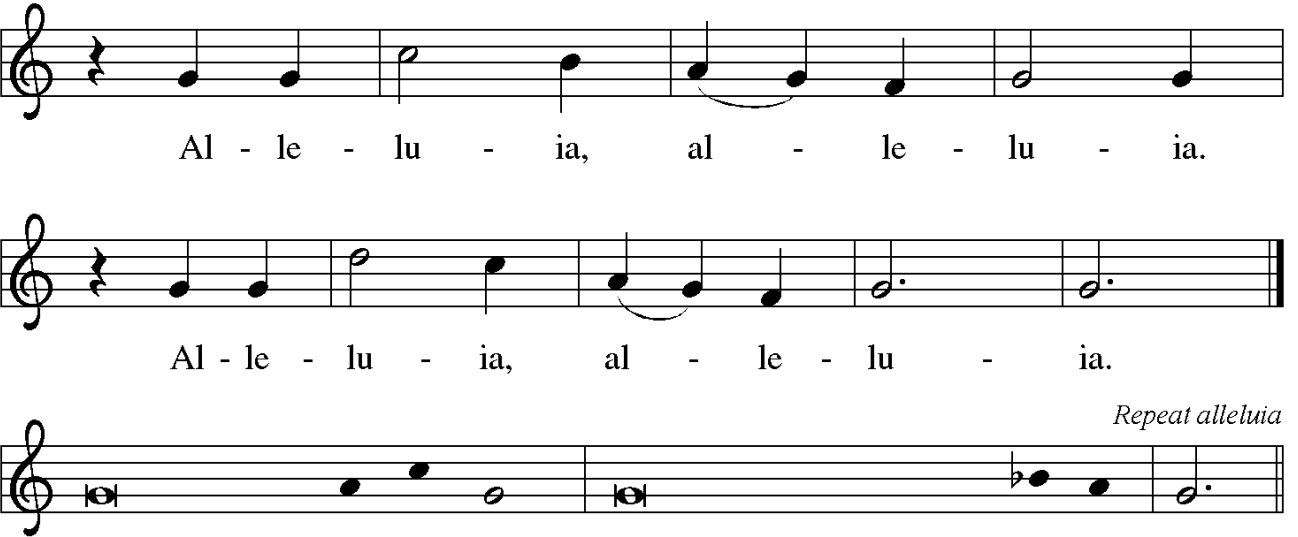
Greeting

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

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 24:42,44

☐:



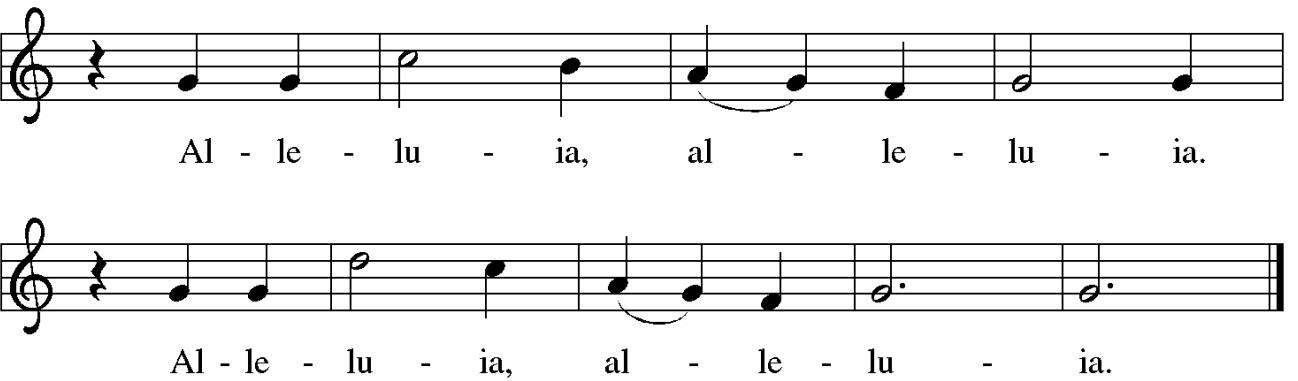
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia

☐: Keep awake and be ready,
for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

☐:



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



The Holy Gospel:

Matthew 25:1-13

A: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

G: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A: [Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

A: The Gospel of the Lord.

G: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hope for the World: A Late-Night Meditation

Pastor Dan Peterson

It's late. The clock ticks in my kitchen as gusts of wind brush through the trees outside. I hear my neighbor's windchimes. For some reason they remind me of the ocean. It's comforting.

The dining room table where I work is covered with papers: notes from the clergy Bible study I attended to prepare for this sermon, a stack of Bible commentaries I read earlier this afternoon, and an array of false

starts: sermons you will never hear, a homiletical graveyard of efforts that never made it beyond my (loud) inner-critic.

I feel exasperated. I don't know what to say or share with you today. I pick up my notes. Here's an idea. One of my fellow pastors at the Bible study made an intriguing point about how Advent used to be eight weeks long. I couldn't find confirmation of this online, but it's a neat concept: in November, he pointed out, all of our readings are about the end-times. "Keep awake therefore," Jesus says in v. 13 of today's Gospel, "for you know neither the day nor the hour." The first half of Advent here focuses on watching, anticipating the end of things as they are now.

I think of a Dave Matthews song. "When the world ends," he sings, "collect your things, you're coming with me." It's sanguine. A love song. But Dave Matthews and Matthew's Jesus are speaking of the end in two very different ways. For the latter, the end is coming and there will be tribulation.

But this is what I love about the Christian faith. The end prefigures a new beginning. Now, I think to myself as I listen to the clock, we're on to something.

The second half of Advent focuses on waiting for this new beginning. Having watched, we now wait. We anticipate first the end of the present age, and then, with respect to Christ's birth, we wait for the new beginning that will follow. Something old is passing away. Something new is coming.

Here's what I learned from one of my commentaries about waiting, about finding oneself in-between the old and the new. According to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, our Gospel for today is "an apocalyptic parable that exhorts the community [to whom Christ is speaking] not to lose hope or patience and remain prepared." So how does one prepare for the Lord's arrival? I recall asking my colleagues at the Bible study. "Don't be complacent and think it's far away," one responded. "We prepare for the Lord by doing justice, by loving our neighbor."

I like that answer. It works. And it connects to our reading. In today's parable the bridegroom is Jesus. This is how the early Christians described him. It's a metaphor. He was the bridegroom of the church. When he speaks of how the wise among his followers keep their lamps lit with oil, this too is a metaphor. The lamp represents the good deeds shine forth in our lives. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:115).

Now, we can put it all together. Advent has two parts (if we think of it as eight weeks rather than merely four). The first focuses on *watching*, preparing for the end by living a life for others, a life of good deeds and loving your neighbor. Keep your lamp lit. Let it shine! That's Advent 1!

Advent 2 focuses on waiting, hoping, slowing down. This will be our focus beginning on Sunday, November 29th when we formally begin the season of Advent.

But here's my issue. I lack hope. It just seems like things right now are going to get worse before they get better. Do you ever feel that way? On Friday I was in a car accident. I already had neck pain thanks to a botched surgery. Now my neck aches more, even though (fortunately) nothing was broken. I was driving back from seeing my eye doctor because of an eye-infection that won't go away. I have never lived a healthier life, yet my body keeps succumbing to disease and pain. I lack hope.

It gets worse when I think about my mom. This morning, after a sleepless night following the November 3rd election, I got a call from my dad. My mom, as many of you know, has cancer. She also has developed a heart condition. She was supposed to have surgery in late October or early November. But now, inexplicably, the surgeon is putting off the procedure. What are we supposed to do? Without the surgery her chances of withstanding chemotherapy decrease substantially.

Hope, especially in a time of colossal uncertainty about everything from the health of our loved ones to the duration of this pandemic to the outcome of the election – hope is our most precious commodity. I

remember a philosopher named Ernst Bloch. He said to be human is to hope. I guess it's just that sometimes hope is extremely hard to find.

My thoughts at this point turn back to the sermon. Sure, I can share with you the things in life that make me feel hopeless. I dread the day when, wishing to talk with my mom, I pick up the phone and there is no one on the other line. I fear what's happening to our country, how divided we are, and I worry about the even bigger problems, say, of climate change. I feel hopeless. But I can't stop there. I'm called to preach the gospel, the good news. Jesus tells me not to lose hope in these uncertain times. He says be patient and watchful. But I want something a little more concrete to hope for. Maybe, I think, I can find it elsewhere.

Recently, leaders of the tech industry here in the Pacific Northwest were asked what gives them hope. Their answers ranged from new forms of collaboration within the industry to the way society has "reorganized itself to protect the most vulnerable." There was talk of the human spirit and its resilience, of progress, of young people driving change. These are the things they hope for. Nobody, however, mentioned God. Sure, this is the Northwest (largely unchurched) and this is the tech industry, not a Bible institute. Maybe believing in God is too much a stigma in this context. But the interviewees included Bill Gates and he's a churchgoer! Why didn't he say anything about God?

It really makes me wonder. What would Melinda say?!

I look across the table now, still covered with papers, searching for a word of hope. Sure, we can hope in each other when we collaborate to solve problems, and we can place our hope in the next generation, although I sometimes feel it places an undue burden on young people to fix problems we created. But should we not ultimately hope in God? Or is it—I pause before it comes to me—is it that *God hopes in us*? Stop and consider that for a moment. *What if we are God's hope for the world?* It's a wild, late-night idea. But then again, we're the ones who say, "God's work, our hands!"

I stop. I reflect on my role as a son, as a pastor, and as a Christian. It's strangely empowering to think of God hoping in me! Try it on for yourself. How, through you, can God bring hope to others? How might *you* be God's hope for the world?

The thought lingers as I sip the last of my cinnamon tea. I am God's hope for the world. I want to be the best son I can be to my mother, the best pastor I can be to you, my congregation, and the best neighbor I can be in my community.

It's late. The clock ticks in my kitchen at the parsonage as gusts of wind brush through the trees outside. Once again, I hear my neighbor's windchimes. For some reason they remind me of the ocean. It's comforting.

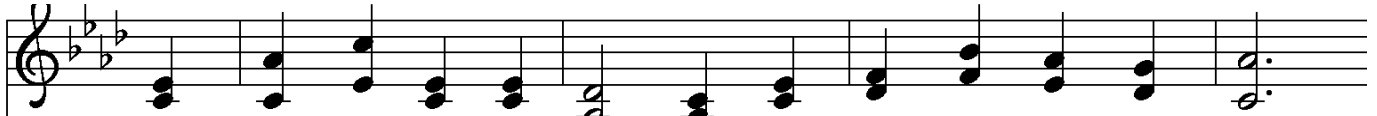
Amen.

Hymn of the Day

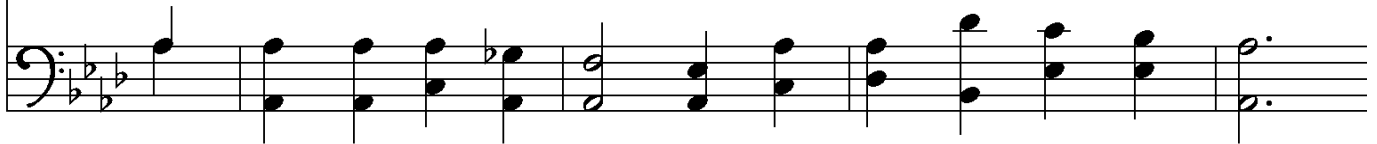
Stanzas 1, 2, 3

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

ELW 244



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



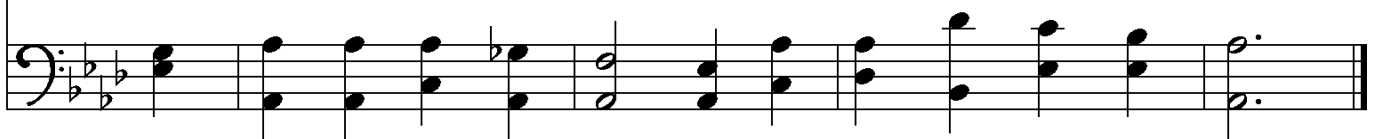
the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!



Prayers of the Church

A: Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A: Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

G: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

G: **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.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

P: Receive now the blessing:

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

G: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

G: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Chorale prelude on WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME
J.S. Bach (1685–1750)