

## Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



Reformation Day - 10/29/2023

### **SERIES THEME**

#### ***THE TIME IN BETWEEN***

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

Reformation (observed) – A Time for Steadfast Faith

All Saints' Day (observed) – A Time to Focus on Future Glory

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – A Time for Watchfulness

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – A Time for Faithful Service

Last Sunday of the Church Year – A Time to Yearn for the End

*Notes about this series:*

*In 2023, Advent begins as late as it possibly can, with the First Sunday in Advent falling on December 3. That places the Fourth Sunday in Advent on December 24. Hypothetically, there would be Advent worship that morning and Christmas Eve worship that afternoon/evening. Some worship planners may choose not to do that, understanding that perhaps many/most would not attend both services on December 24. That leaves two options. One could omit the Fourth Sunday in Advent, perhaps moving the readings for that day to the Third Sunday in Advent. Some congregations, who find the season of Advent to be one that unchurched are more likely to visit (because they think of it as being "Christmassy"), may wish to begin the season of Advent when it often begins—the final Sunday in November. If that is the case, the recommendation would be to use the readings for the Last Sunday of the Church Year on the Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, turning "The Time In Between" into a four-week series.*

*The Foundation worship plan for this year chooses to follow the recommended readings for the Last Sunday of the Church Year, which focus on Judgment Day. Christ the King is an alternate focus with an entirely different set of readings. The reason this worship plan chooses to focus on Judgment Day on the final Sunday, rather than Christ the King, is because on the First Sunday in Advent for Year B, the worship plan will also use the recommended readings, which includes Mark 11:1-10 where Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king. In summary, the proper for those Sundays discusses Judgment Day on the Last Sunday of the Year and Christ as king on Advent 1, while the alternate readings reverse those themes. It is advised to use either the proper or the alternate readings on both weeks. If one chooses to use the alternate readings, the worship planner could easily fit it into this broad theme: "A Time to Worship the King." Or it could serve as a stand-alone Sunday.*

### **THEME OF THE DAY**

#### ***A TIME FOR STEADFAST FAITH***

Jesus told his followers, "You will be hated by everyone because of me" (Matthew 10:22). Satan and the world hate Christ and anyone who confesses faith in Christ. So, the time in between Christ's first and second coming is going to be perilous for believers. A good example—Martin Luther. All that priest wanted was to share the pure gospel with the world. For trying to do that, both political and religious leaders attempted to end his life. The Festival of the Reformation emphasizes the true Church's unflinching reliance on the Word of God and unflinching testimony to that Word even in the face of harsh persecution. Today we pray that the Lord would keep us steadfast in the faith and give us the peace of knowing that our lives are safe in his hands.

## FIRST READING

\*\*\*Daniel 6:10-12, 16-23 – Even though it potentially meant death by lion, Daniel got on his knees and prayed to the Lord as he always had, demonstrating steadfast faith.

## SECOND READING

Romans 3:19-28 – God justifies those who have been given the gift of steadfast faith in Jesus Christ.

## GOSPEL

Matthew 10:16-23 – Our trust in Jesus doesn't mean absence of persecution, but faithfulness despite it.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### Conservative:

Setting 2

### Ambitious:

### Opening Hymn:

810 - The First Song of Isaiah

or

866 - If God Had Not Been on Our Side

### Psalm of the Day:

46

### Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.

### Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 2 or additional settings

### Hymn of the Day:

864 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

### Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

561 - Before the Throne of God Above

### Closing Hymn:

877 - Reformation Song

### Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

561 - Before the Throne of God Above

877 - Reformation Song

### Notes for the conservative service:

877 would likely still benefit from introduction. 561 may be okay without.

### Notes for the ambitious service:

## Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



All Saints' Day - 11/5/2023

### **SERIES THEME**

#### ***THE TIME IN BETWEEN***

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

### **THEME OF THE DAY**

#### ***A TIME TO FOCUS ON FUTURE GLORY***

Childbearing is an excruciating process. Yet each day countless women, wanting a baby, willingly become pregnant. This shows that pain can be endured if we know it is temporary and that happier times come immediately after. Likewise, the time in between Christ's first and second coming are going to be full hardship, especially for believers. How do we bear it? We remember that this is temporary. Happier times are coming!

That truth is made crystal clear on this All Saints' Day. On this day we remember every saint who has gone before us—all those who had faith in the Lamb of God: the heroes of faith in Scripture; our faithful Christian family members, now fallen asleep. They all endured hardship and pain. But no more. Now they enjoy perfect glory, peace, and joy. As we journey through this time in between, how do we endure? We remember all the saints. We focus on the future glory that waits for us.

### **FIRST READING**

\*\*\*Revelation 7:9-17 – St. John's vision lets us see all the saints in heaven so that we might remember the future glory that waits for us.

### **SECOND READING**

1 John 3:1-3 – In love God the Father adopted us as his children, making us heirs of future glory.

### **GOSPEL**

Matthew 5:1-12 – Sorrow, hardship, and persecution are temporary. Future glory and eternal blessings are coming, a gift from God to all his saints.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### **Conservative:**

Setting 2

### **Ambitious:**

### **Opening Hymn:**

837 - When Will I Walk

or

882 - What Joy to Join the Chorus

### **Psalm of the Day:**

149

### **Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:**

Alleluia. They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. Alleluia.

### **Gospel Acclamation setting:**

Setting 2 or additional settings

### **Hymn of the Day:**

880 For All the Saints

### **Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:**

\*883 - Behold a Host Arrayed in White

### **Closing Hymn:**

889/890 - Jerusalem the Golden

### **Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:**

### **Notes for the conservative service:**

### **Notes for the ambitious service:**

## Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 27) - 11/12/2023

### **SERIES THEME**

#### ***THE TIME IN BETWEEN***

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

### **THEME OF THE DAY**

#### ***A TIME FOR WATCHFULNESS***

Imagine you are planning to take the family out to dinner. You all have to wait on someone to get ready. Minute after minute passes. What can happen in that situation? It is easy to focus on something else and completely forget the original goal. When that family member is finally ready, you've become immersed in a movie. Or perhaps, as you were waiting, you grew drowsy and fell asleep.

As we wait for Christ to return, as day after day passes, it can be easy to get distracted, to lose vigilance, to become spiritually drowsy. God forbid that Christ should return and find us spiritually asleep. Today we are reminded that the time in between Christ's first and second coming is a time for watchfulness. The Church prayers, "Lord God, keep us every watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven."

### **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 52:1-6 – The nation of Israel was sleepwalking through life, exhausted by their present problems. "Awake!" the prophet cries. Israel is to watch for the coming redemption.

### **SECOND READING**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 – St. Paul teaches how we should wait for Jesus to return. Be watchful. Don't fall asleep. Live as children of the light.

### **GOSPEL**

\*Matthew 25:1-13 – The wise, those who are watching and ready for the Bridegroom, enter into the great wedding banquet.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### **Conservative:**

Setting 2

### **Ambitious:**

### **Opening Hymn:**

870 - O Church, Arise

or

493 - Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

### **Psalm of the Day:**

90

### **Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:**

Alleluia. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. Alleluia.

### **Gospel Acclamation setting:**

Setting 2 or additional settings

### **Hymn of the Day:**

486 Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

### **Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:**

713 - I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

### **Closing Hymn:**

884 - Lord, When Your Glory I Shall See

or

492:1,4,5 - A Few More Years Shall Roll

### **Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:**

870 - O Church, Arise

492 - A Few More Years Shall Roll

### **Notes for the conservative service:**

### **Notes for the ambitious service:**

## Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 28) - 11/19/2023

### **SERIES THEME**

#### ***THE TIME IN BETWEEN***

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

### **THEME OF THE DAY**

#### ***A TIME FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE***

As we wait for Christ to return, we are not to be sedentary. The reason Christ has not yet returned is that there is still work to be done. And Christ carries out his good work through us, his Church. So, until Christ comes again and says, "Stop!" believers will be busy with faithful service. Christ has given every believer gifts and talents. And when Christ entrusts us with those gifts and talents, he calls us to use them all for his glory. In the time between Christ's first and second coming, we use everything the master has given us to live according to his will and to carry out his mission.

### **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 1:10-18 – How did Israel respond to all of God's gifts? With grudging service, which is not faithful service. How does God respond to Israel? By promising to make them as pure as newly fallen snow.

### **SECOND READING**

Romans 12:1-8 – When we keep God's mercy in view, we understand and appreciate the gifts he gives us in Christ, and we use those gifts faithfully.

### **GOSPEL**

\*\*\*Matthew 25:14-30 – Through a parable Jesus calls his followers to faithful service in grateful response to the gifts that the master has given and in joyful anticipation of the master's impending return.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### **Conservative:**

Setting 2

### **Ambitious:**

### **Opening Hymn:**

734 - How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

or

739 - Forth in Your Name, O Lord, I Go

### **Psalm of the Day:**

128

### **Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:**

Alleluia. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. Alleluia.

### **Gospel Acclamation setting:**

Setting 2 or additional settings

### **Hymn of the Day:**

751 O God, Your Hand the Heavens Made

### **Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:**

735 - Before You I Kneel

### **Closing Hymn:**

930 - Go, My Children, with My Blessing

### **Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:**

734 - How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

735 - Before You I Kneel

### **Notes for the conservative service:**

734 - REPTON may still need introduction

### **Notes for the ambitious service:**



**Worship Plan - Church Year A**  
**2022-2023**



Last Sunday of the Church Year - 11/26/2023

**SERIES THEME**

***THE TIME IN BETWEEN***

In the great timeline of human history, there are only two ultimately significant points: the first time Christ came to our world to win salvation by his life, death, and resurrection; and the second time Christ will come to consummate his everlasting kingdom. We live in the time in between those two points. It is a time of tension. We know that peace and perfection are ours already because of what Jesus did the first time he came. Yet we do not enjoy a peaceful and perfect existence now already. We will not know such a life until Christ comes again. And so we wait and watch, living in the time in between. As the church year draws to a close, Scripture points us toward the end of time when Christ will come again. Until then Christ teaches us how to live in the time in between.

**THEME OF THE DAY**

***A TIME TO YEARN FOR THE END***

Consider the Christian man whose body aches from both the cancer and the chemo. Look at that faithful old woman, back arched by time, fingers twisted by arthritis, eyes close to blindness. These believers may pray for death, precisely because they know that for the children of God, death is not the end of life. Death is the end of sorrow and pain. They yearn for the end of those things, and the beginning of their perfect eternity with Jesus.

We have come to the end of the Church Year. It is time to talk about the end of this world on Judgment Day. That day does not scare the believer. The first time Christ came he saved us from our sin and the accusations for the devil. The second time Christ comes, he will save us from everything else. On that day, disease, gone. Abuse, gone. Heartache, gone. Even death is ended. None of those things will exist ever again. But we will exist forever with our Lord Jesus. Until then we live in the time in between. As we look at all Christ did at his first coming, we yearn for him to come again to end this broken world and to usher all the saints into everlasting glory.

**FIRST READING**

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 – The prophet Daniel sees a vision of the Last Judgment that is filled with fire and thrones and books...and a Savior who will establish an everlasting kingdom.

**SECOND READING**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – St. Paul gives us the encouragement that when Christ comes again he shall raise the dead, and death shall be forever ended.

**GOSPEL**

\*\*\*Matthew 25:31-46 – Jesus describes the end of days, when he shall come in glory and separate sheep from goats.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### **Conservative:**

Setting 2

### **Ambitious:**

### **Opening Hymn:**

494 - See, He Comes, the King of Glory

or

492 - A Few More Years Shall Roll

### **Psalm of the Day:**

95

### **Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:**

Alleluia. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Alleluia.

### **Gospel Acclamation setting:**

Setting 2 or additional settings

### **Hymn of the Day:**

487 Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

### **Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:**

547 - At the Name of Jesus

or

840 - All Men Living Are but Mortal

### **Closing Hymn:**

850 - It Is Well with My Soul

### **Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:**

494 - See, He Comes, the King of Glory

492 - A Few More Years Shall Roll (if not used two weeks prior; if used, this reinforces the tune)

### **Notes for the conservative service:**

494 would need introduction

### **Notes for the ambitious service:**