A Festival of Festivals:
Celebrating the Reign of Christ in the Seasons of the Church
A *Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival*+
Service of Holy Communion*



Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church
E.L.C.A.

Sunday, November 22nd, 2026

Bulletin Donated By: Mike, Carrili & Tucker "Happy 10th Birthday Holt"

Prelude/Gathering Music

Greeting and Welcome

P: Christ is with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Welcome to this Festival of Festivals, Celebrating the Reign of Christ through the seasons of the Church year. Christmas is one of the most well-known holidays in the life of the church and in our wider culture. Another is Easter, the holiday that brings with it the message of new life, the message that death does not win, the message of hope and resurrection that we as God's children proclaim for the whole world. Christmas and Easter are what we call "high festival days" – Jesus days -- in the life of our faith. There are other festival days in the Church too, and one of them is today, a day that we often let slip by unnoticed. Christmas has its poinsettias. Easter has its lilies, but there is really nothing visually special with which we typically mark today.

So what day is today? Today is Christ the King Sunday, or the Festival of the Reign of Christ. It's the day in which we as the people of God together proclaim that someday – a day known only to God – there will be an end to all that is painful, all suffering, all despair, all sadness, and all death. And from that day on, love will be all and fill all, and Jesus Christ shall reign as the ruler of all heaven and all earth. God will make all things new, and God's children will live forever in God's glorious presence and in perfect communion with God and with one another.

To help us catch a glimpse of that future day of promise, today we move through – step by step – the story of Love that we as Christians proclaim. We will ponder the meaning of what we call the seasons of the church year, and by so doing, we will reflect upon and participate in the story that shapes who we are as people who call ourselves followers of Jesus.

The First Reading: Jeremiah 23:5-6

"Time's coming"—God's Decree—"when I'll establish a truly righteous David-Branch, A ruler who knows how to rule justly. He'll make sure of justice and keep people united. In his time Judah will be secure again and Israel will live in safety. This is the name they'll give him: 'God-Who-Puts-Everything-Right.'

Entrance Hymn: ***All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*** **ELW 634 vs. 1-3**

ADVENT

Commentary Two

L: We begin at the beginning of the church year with the season of Advent. During Advent we prepare for the radical way that Love breaks into this world by coming to us as the infant Jesus. During Advent, we are drawn into calls to wait, and watch, and prepare. As we do so, our minds and our hearts are reminded anew that the God of Love is a God of promise, a God who has looked upon the sinful, painful predicament of this world and promised to do something about it.

During Advent, amid our waiting, we are filled with expectation for what God is about to do. We prepare to receive God's gift of Love for us, and we anticipate the coming of God's Messiah into this world.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

The Second Reading: Luke 1:26-27, 30-33

During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin girl who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is very pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant and have a baby boy. You will name him Jesus. He will be great. People will call him the Son of the Most High God, and the Lord God will make him king like his ancestor David. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Congregational Hymn: ***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*** **ELW 257, v. 1**

CHRISTMAS

Commentary Three

Advent climaxes with Christmas, and in that wonderful festival, we come together to see anew that the God of Love is not only a God of promise, but God is also one whose promises come true. But there is something more to Christmas as well. Love is born. Messiah comes, but none of this is what the world expects. Love breaks into this world to touch humanity like humanity has never been touched before. Love breaks the stillness of sin's dark night, not by the clash of a warrior's spear. Instead, the silence of sin's dark night is pierced clean through by the cry of a newborn babe. Beneath all of the wrappings and trappings of the holiday season is the message that Love will go to any length to enter into the life that you know. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, surrounded by the earthy smells of birth and stock animals, the heir to the throne of the universe enters the world of humanity so that we might experience what Love is and dwell with God forever in God's beloved community.

That is Christmas. It is promise fulfilled. It is Love in the flesh. It is the wonderful surprise of your promise-keeping God.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the virgin's Son, the God incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won which now His brow adorn;
Fruit of the mystic rose, as of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows, the Babe of Bethlehem.

The Third Reading: Isaiah 9:6-7a

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall

grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Congregational Hymn: ***Joy to the World*** **ELW 267, vs. 1 and 4**

EPIPHANY

Commentary Four

Then comes the season of Epiphany. It sometimes gets caught in the afterglow of Christmas. We lump the story of the three sages from the East into the Christmas pageants, and when we do that, we miss a whole segment of the story of Jesus Christ. The wise ones belong in Epiphany because during Epiphany, we are reminded that the light of the star which guided the them was more than a symbol in the sky for them to follow.

Through the star in the east, the message of this Love that had been born for the world in the baby Jesus was for people from faraway lands and faraway places, too. In Epiphany, we look to that ancient star, and we see that the message of God's love knows no bounds: it is a message for people of every color and every tongue, every race and every nation.

In the time after Epiphany, we remember that because of Jesus, the divisions that you and I create in our lives will someday be erased by God who comes to make us all one. Love has come to let us know that there is no such thing as a people from the east or west or north or south. There are only people of God, all created by God, all loved by God, all within the realm of God's redemption through Jesus Christ.

The light of the star brought the sages to Jesus, and Jesus is the light that brings God's love to all – to the poor, the lame, the sick, the hurting, the sorrowful, the outcast, those rejected by the world – even to you, in your own joy and sadness, goodness and brokenness, hope and challenges.

That is Epiphany. It is the fulfillment of God's love-filled promise extended beyond all human boundaries. It is the light of God that breaks down walls and makes the human family one.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the Lord of peace, whose power a scepter sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end, and round His piercèd feet
Fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.

The Fourth Reading: Matthew 2:1-2

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked people, "Where is the child who has been born to be the king of the Jews? We saw the star that shows he was born. We saw it rise in the sky in the east and have come to worship him."

Congregational Hymn: ***Arise, Your Light Has Come*** **ELW 314, vs. 1 and 3**

Commentary Five

So far, we have experienced Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. These are all times when Love fills us with anticipation, hope, and joy. And yet there is more to the Love of God in Jesus Christ, more that leads us to a time of deep reflection and contemplation in the church year.

During Lent, we are reminded that all is not as our God of Love intends, and we are invited and encouraged to intentionally reflect upon and struggle against all that separates us from loving God, loving one another, loving ourselves, and loving God's good creation.

In the process, we are reminded anew that Jesus leads us not to a glorious throne and a lavish crown, but Jesus, in humility and service, leads us to a cross on a garbage heap outside of a town. We watch and listen and weep as we walk with Jesus who walks with us in the way of suffering.

That is Lent. It is Jesus bearing the weight of the world that God so loves. It is the length and breadth of God's Love, extended in Jesus' open arms on an ugly cross because of holy and perfect love.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

The Fifth Reading: Mark 15:25-39

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. There was a sign with the charge against him written on it. It said, "the king of the Jews." They also nailed two criminals to crosses beside Jesus—one on the right and the other on the left. People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. They shook their heads and said, "You said you could destroy the Temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross!"

The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also there. They made fun of Jesus the same as the other people did. They said to each other, "He saved others, but he can't save himself! If he is really the Messiah, the king of Israel, he should come down from the cross now. When we see this, then we will believe in him." The criminals on the crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued until three o'clock. At three o'clock Jesus cried out loudly, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." This means "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

Some of the people standing there heard this. They said, "Listen! He is calling Elijah."

One man there ran and got a sponge. He filled the sponge with sour wine and tied it to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to get a drink from it. The man said, "We should wait now and see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross."

Then Jesus cried out loudly and died.

When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. The army officer who was standing there in front of the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, "This man really was the Son of God!"

Congregational Hymn: ***Beneath the Cross of Jesus*** **ELW 338**

EASTER

Commentary Six

But then comes God's great surprise! If the baby born at Christmas is contrary to all human expectation, the events of that first Easter morning cannot really be comprehended by any human mind. All that is against Love put Jesus to death, and on that first Easter morning, God said "enough is enough" to all the forces and powers of evil. On that first Easter morning, God burst open the grave of Jesus of Nazareth, and he rose from the dead, Jesus the Christ.

When Jesus' tomb burst open, the new creation began, and the door to your future opened as well. As Jesus rose from the dead, Love transformed the grave that awaits you at the end of your earthly life into a gate that leads to the arms of Jesus and the table of grace. What more can be said? All the powers of evil threw their best punch at God in Jesus' death, and God answered by treading on Satan's head once and for all.

That is Easter – the Queen of Feasts – Love rising for all. It is the most unexpected news humanity could ever receive. Death has been defeated. Jesus Christ has been raised. The future is now. Love wins.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

The Sixth Reading: I Corinthians 15:20-25

But Christ has been raised to life! And he makes us certain that others will also be raised to life. Just as we will die because of Adam, we will be raised to life because of Christ. Adam brought death to all of us, and Christ will bring life to all of us. But we must each wait our turn. Christ was the first to be raised to life, and his people will be raised to life when he returns. Then after Christ has destroyed all powers and forces, the end will come, and he will give the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will rule until he puts all his enemies under his power,

Congregational Hymn: ***Jesus Christ is Risen Today*** **ELW 365, vs. 1,2,4**

PENTECOST

Commentary Seven

And then comes Pentecost. It really goes without saying, but Jesus is no longer with us, and so God had to do something for this "in between time," this time between when Jesus lived among us and the time when all will be as the God of Love intends. Jesus promised that he would not leave his people desolate, and so God, once again, did something to fulfill God's holy promise. After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples. He became living proof that from the moment of his resurrection on, death no longer had free reign on this earth. But the time was not yet for all things to be fulfilled, and so Jesus returned to the realm of heaven.

What then is to become of us? Where does Jesus' departure from this world leave you, you might wonder. It leaves you surrounded and filled with Love -- the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of the Living God whom Jesus sent to lead you into God's truth, to guide you into an everlasting relationship with God, and to sustain you as God's beloved children.
God has given you the Holy Spirit to comfort you when sadness and pain surround you. God has given you the Holy Spirit to fill you with hope in the day of resurrection when Jesus shall descend from the heavens to reign victorious as God has always intended Love to reign.
The Holy Spirit is God's gift to you for this in between time – this time between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the total and complete fulfillment of all that God has ordained.
That is Pentecost. It is God's promise fulfilled again and anew. It is the Spirit of God, blowing through your earthly life to fill you with belief in the Love of God. It is the breath of God coursing through your life to live as God's beloved ones today. It is the Love of God sustaining you now and preparing you for the fulfillment of eternity.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the Lord of Heav'n, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to whom is giv'n the wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is King of all.

Acts 2:1-11
When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.
There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were blown away. They couldn't for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, "Aren't these all Galileans? How come we're hearing them talk in our various mother tongues?
Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene; Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; Even Cretans and Arabs!
"They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!"

Congregational Hymn: ***Spirit of Gentleness*** **ELW 396, vs. 3 and 4**

ORDINARY TIME

Commentary 8
The Holy Spirit is a wonderful and marvelous gift of Love from our gracious and merciful God, but that still is not all there is to what God has to tell us. As Paul says to the Corinthians, "if for this life only we have hoped, we are of all people most to be pitied." There is something more beyond this life.

The day is surely coming when all of God's promises will be fulfilled once and for all. The day is surely coming when Love will reign and God's beloved community will be fully realized. The day is surely coming when all in which you and I hope will find fruition. Do we know the day or the hour? By no means! That is known only to God, but we do trust and believe that the day is coming when it shall be so.

That is the last promise of God, yet to be fulfilled. As God's people, we live in hope and anticipation for that day when the heavens shall be opened and Jesus Christ the Lord shall descend to gather together the children of God, forever.

(The congregation sings together)

Crown Him the Lord of lords, who over all doth reign,
Who once on earth, the incarnate Word, for ransomed sinners slain,
Now lives in realms of light, where saints with angels sing
Their songs before Him day and night, their God, Redeemer, King.

Commentary 9

While we wait, because we have faith that death does not win, we walk this life's earthly journey through Ordinary Time – ordinary days, ordinary moments, ordinary lives. We live as children of Love in Ordinary Time, following the example of Jesus, doing justice, lovingkindness, and walking humbly with our God. To sustain us on this journey, God has given us the means of grace – the gifts of God's own hand to draw us into God's love, to declare God's forgiveness that is personal and real, to recreate in us new life, and to bestow upon us salvation.

Through the waters of baptism, you are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life. In the Lord's Supper, you hear the words "given for you" and "shed for you" for the forgiveness of sin. With these words and by the heavenly food of bread and wine you are fed and nourished in Love and by Love for your journey through this life – feasting at Jesus' table and dining upon Jesus' grace so that you might bear witness to Love in all that you do, all that you say, and all that you are.

The Words of Institution and Lord's Prayer

P. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which he was handed over, took bread, gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P. Praying now in whatever language or translation is the language of your heart, we pray as children of God:

C. 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 the evil one. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

P: Love comes to you in grains of wheat gathered into one. Love comes to you in blessing outpoured.
C: Feed us at this holy table, and send us out in Love.

P: Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
C: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN.

The Distribution
Communion Distribution (All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

Offering: *As you come forward for Holy Communion, please bring your offering with you and place it in the offering plates located near the front of each outer aisle.*

Revelation 21:1-4
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

Commentary 10
There you have it. That is the good news of Love that we claim as ones who seek to follow Jesus. That is the story that God has to tell the world. Love has come as the baby Jesus. Love lived among us to bring hope to the world. Love suffered and died. Love has been raised from the dead, and Love sent the Holy Spirit so that Love might cover and fill all the earth.
So what do we do with this story? Do we sit quietly at home, every once in a while, peering sheepishly out the window, waiting for that day when Christ will come again? Do we sit safely by ourselves, taking no risk to live the story? Do we keep the story as a buried treasure for our eyes only to see?
By no means! Go from this place, renewed and revitalized with the remarkable Love that God has made known to you. Go as the shepherds did when they returned from Bethlehem on that ancient night – glorifying and praising God. Go as the women did when they went to the tomb on that first Easter morning and found it empty. Go as the disciples did when the Holy Spirit first fell from heaven and filled them with the powerful Love of God.

Go – with the eyes of faith that God has given you and live the story that Love has revealed.

AMEN and AMEN!

The Blessing
P: Receive this blessing: And now may Love Surround and sustain you, Fill and renew you, Send and keep you Now and forever, In the name of God – Lover, +Beloved, and Love. **C: AMEN**

Sending Hymn ***All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*** ***ELW 634 vs. 4-6***

Postlude

Mission Statement of Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God's Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

++

We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord's real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ's name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and live streamed by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35904. CCLI# 3138595 and #21256999

+ "Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival" liturgies are part of the Nourishing Vocation with Children Project at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. This liturgy was originally created by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox in 1991. It has been updated and adapted to this context. This full attribution must be included, along with the logos below, on any reproduction or distribution of this material, along with the attributions below about the readings.

Jeremiah 23:5-6, Holy Bible, The Message
Luke 1:26-27, 30-33, Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version
Isaiah 9:6-7a, Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.
Matthew 2:1-2, Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version
Mark 15:25-39, Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version
I Corinthians 15:20-25, Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version
Acts 2:1-11, Holy Bible, The Message
Revelation 21:1-4, Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version

**If the service does not include Holy Communion, adjust the service note about how the offering will be received and following Commentary Nine, move directly to the Revelation 21:1-4 reading.*