

have given the Gospel to the people who hungered for the Word, those who gave the Living Water to those who thirsted after righteousness. We serve God by teaching faith to others. Along the way we may consider an empty tummy and a hand to the homeless—still the primary concern is the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation. It is one thing to enter Heaven hungry. It is quite another to go to Hell having just eaten. All our work with our time talent and treasure extends the kingdom of Heaven to all. This lesson was moved from its historic place (the Second Last Sunday.) Now we read Matthew 25 in order.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

℟ O God, You have saved us and called us with a Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to Your own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began. We thank You for the abundance of Your mercies, especially for the gift of Your Son, in Whom, through His sufferings and death, You have abolished death and, through His Resurrection, brought life and immortality.

Grant that by Your grace we always live our life based on the things we have learned through Your Word, and of which we have been assured by the Holy Spirit. Let us be wise to salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus, that we may receive, on the day of His coming, the crown of righteousness which He has laid up for us and for all who long for His appearing. Save us from following after sin, lies, deceptions and vain philosophies. Help us always listen only to Your Holy and Eternal Word of Life.

Give strength to Your Church, that with a fervent spirit we may fight the good fight of faith. Raise up a faithful Ministry in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Call messengers who will endure hardship as faithful workers in carrying His Gospel to all lands. Bless the schools of Your Church with active, healthy, and strong, ideals and leadership, that the young people may be prepared to serve You and everyone in useful and honorable vocations.

Govern the nations of the Earth, and send Your Word among the multitudes of the people, so that they can be turned from their darkness to Your marvelous light. Hear the cry of the afflicted and give them Your compassionate aid. Make straight paths for all Your chosen, strengthening the weak, upholding the feeble, and healing the sick.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Preserve us in our faith, as we continue to look for the blessings to come in the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes as our victorious king. To Jesus we give glory and honor forever and ever.

© Amen.

PROPER TWENTY NINE

Chant Tone



Introit

We are waiting for new heavens and a
—new Earth*
in which righ | teousness dwells.

O Lord, make me know my end and
what is the measure | of my days;*
let me know how fleet | ing I am!
Behold, You have made my days a few
handbreadths, and my lifetime is as
nothing be —fore You.*

Surely all mankind stands as a
—mere breath!
And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?*
My hope is —in You.

Deliver me from all my trans —gressions.*
Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!
Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear
| to my cry;*
hold not Your peace | at my tears!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy —Spirit;
as it was in the be —ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. —Amen.

We are waiting for new heavens and a
—new Earth*
in which righ | teousness dwells.

(Antiphon, 2 Peter 3:13b;
Psalm 39:4-5, 7-8, 12a)

Collect of the Day

Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

These are the ones coming out of the great tribu — lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.
Blessèd are those whose strength is —in You,*
in whose heart are the highways to —Zion.

(Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: We bring our prayers and petitions to You, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the God of our faith and Life. We wait, we watch and we pray for You to send forth Your Son into the world in His Second Advent at the end of all time. Send Him in His perfect judgment so He will lead to her eternal home, His bride the Church, and all who belong to her, that we and all the redeemed, from where ever we may come, will enter into the blessed bliss of an eternity in Your presence; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

HAPPY NEW YEAR! "Too early," you say. Today is New Years Eve in the Church Year. We end the Church Year today and begin a new one next Sunday. We use the Church calendar to remind ourselves of the rapid approach of the end of the world. We are living in the end times. Jesus is coming again, very soon. Our only effort is to be prepared. We do this by listening to God speak in His Word so that we are able to worship Him for the wonder of salvation and eternal life. We welcome all who have been called out by the Love of God to worship and praise our Savior. It is a pleasure to blend our voices together with those from all over the world. It is also a wonder that God would give us works to do, accomplishing His will through our life (at times without our even knowing it is happening) and credit the works to us as righteousness.

THEME OF THE DAY:

How Will We Use Our Time

INTROIT—(Antiphon: 2 Peter 3:13b;) Psalm 39:4-5, 7-8, 12a
Psalm 39 is a hymn of great suffering. It is used for funeral services. David was in great pain. This was written after his great sin with Bathsheba and he was in fear for his salvation. (The end of the story is that their first son died (as a type of Christ for David's sin.)

COLLECT

This is a rewrite yet very similar to the historic prayer. We pray the wonder of looking forward to the coming of the return of Christ. (In fact we are praying for the fulfillment, for we live in the kingdom now, just not in its final form.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

The church throughout history has used this lesson for what we now call "Good Shepherd Sunday." (Until 1969 it was Misericordias Domini, which is in fact the Third Sunday of Easter, whose name was changed to the Second Sunday after Easter and, in 1969 the lessons were moved to the Fourth Sunday after Easter and we started using lessons from the book of Acts in the place of the O.T. Lesson, so, this lesson was dropped. Perhaps the committee felt sorry and placed it here.) Ezekiel made the prophecy of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who would come (and will come again) to bring His sheep to their home with him.

GRADUAL—Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

Those who have come out of the tribulation of this world praise God for all the blessings given. Revelation 7 tells us the number of the saved. Psalm 84, tells us there is a highway to Heaven in the faith of our heart.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Historically this lesson was 2 Peter 3:3-13, which is the historic Introit. This lesson was an alternative selection in the 1969 three year cycle. I do not know why we changed a lesson that has been read on this day for most of 2,000 years. We are in the Last Sunday of the Church year. We turn to thoughts to the return of Christ. Paul wanted us to know that God is Sovereign, (that He controls all things.) This is an important thing for us to remember because our life often seems mostly out of control. We wait patiently for the return of Christ.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 25:31-46

As the church year ends we are aware that we are living between the First and Second coming of Christ. We are asked, "How we will use the time?" Jesus clarified how He will recognize who are His sheep. Those blessed by His Father, who are called the righteous ones, are those who