

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; November 16, 2025
23rd Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Fugleberg

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 98

PASTOR: Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things;

ALL: His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

PASTOR: The LORD has made his salvation known

ALL: And revealed his righteousness to the nations.

PASTOR: Let the rivers clap their hands,

ALL: Let the mountains sing together for joy;

PASTOR: Let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

ALL: He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

HYMN #155 “Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending”

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ’s sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Jacob O’Flanagan

EPISTLE LESSON: *2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 21:5-28 Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, 6 "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down." 7 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" 8 He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. 9 When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." 10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. 12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to them. 14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be*

able to resist or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 All men will hate you because of me. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By standing firm you will gain life. 20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD

Forever.

GLORIA PATRI: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

RECOGNITION OF VETERANS

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERING PRAYER

Worship Songs: Chosen by Carol

SERMON: "HOPE FOR THE FUTURE," Malachi 4:1-6, Pastor Tom Olson, 11.19.25 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen*

TREES: When we took Faith and Abby on an outing, they commented on the trees, broken, bending, rotting... crying out for Jesus to come back and help them. They have heard me say that even the trees will be healed when Jesus comes back. There is hope for the dying trees and all of nature.

NEW YORK: New York City is totally frustrated with their corrupt political leaders. The Cuomo family is so corrupt that the people of New York, including many Jews, took a chance on a socialist Muslim who spent his time talking with them about their concerns verses the other candidates who spent their time shmoozing with the wealthy elites all over the world. Our corrupt leaders who waste trillions of dollars and enrich themselves are motivating working class people to make desperate choices. They need hope.

JESUS: My hope is in the Lord. My hope is in spiritual revival. It is happening all over the world. Every day I read reports of thousands of people gathering to seek the Lord. The rise of Islam in the west has them terrified. We know that Jesus can change lives. If revival doesn't come we still have hope because of the promise of Christ to return and set things right one day. The trees are going to get a chance to get well again and so are we. Let's look at "HOPE FOR THE FUTURE" in this world right now. Malachi chapter 4...

I. HOPE COMES WITH REPENTANCE AND SALVATION

Malachi 4:1-2 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

AA: We had an Alcoholics Anonymous group at St. John's Lutheran Church in Newark, Ohio. I was invited to some of their events. At a meeting a person would get up and say, "Hi. I am Tom. I am an alcoholic." They would start by confessing their problem honestly. The healing begins if you admit your problem. One AA person told me that there is nothing they can do to help a person until they admit that they have a problem.

SIN: The prophet Malachi is telling his audience that a day is coming when sin would be named and dealt with. Those who are commit to evil will be removed, like a dry grain field filled with the left-over straw and stubble is set on fire and burned up.

FIRE: One farmer told me that he had a field of dry weeds in a valley that needed to be removed. He set them on fire and the whole valley practically exploded as the mass of dry weeds burned

with a fury he had never seen. He was actually frightened by it. But when the fire was done the weeds were totally gone.

JOY: Can you imagine the joy we will feel one day when God removes all sin and evil from the world? One day there will be no more stealing, no more assault, no more war. Isaiah 2:4 says that ***"they will beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks."*** All of the military equipment in the world will be turned into agricultural machinery and garden tools!

WALES: In the Welsh revival in 1905, almost everybody got saved and there was no crime. The police and judges had nothing to do so they formed gospel quartets and went around singing in churches!

CALVES: The response of the righteous children of God is overwhelming joy, like the joy of a calf being released out into the pasture in the springtime. We will run and jump and laugh and dance for joy. When King David repented of his sin with Bathsheba he prayed, ***"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."*** Repentance ushers in joy.

IMAM: A few days ago, I listened to the testimony of the wife of a Muslim imam. She had a supernatural meeting with Jesus during a car accident and when she woke up in the hospital, she was a Christian. She would not reject Jesus and return to Islam, so she was banished from her family. But she had joy for the first time in her life. The joy of forgiveness, knowing Jesus and having eternal salvation was greater than the loss of everything.

AMERICA: If we as a nation would repent of our sins and cry out to God for salvation, America would be transformed overnight. This can happen in our homes...but we need to let the Holy Fire burn up that evil in our hearts and replace it with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I am reminded of a song we sang in High School choir about our soldiers who died: *"Men who died for freedom, oh,*

bow heads and pray. They shall not have died in vain, for the truth shall prevail!"

PERSONAL: Do you want a fresh move of God in your life today? It comes with repentance of sin and restoration of your relationship with Christ. SECONDLY...

II. HOPE THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Malachi 4:3-4 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty. 4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

WORD: Malachi said that obeying the WORD OF GOD would give them hope. That is why the sick woman reached out for the hem of Christ's garment. The Jewish garment tassel with 613 knots to remind them of the 613 laws of God...the "hem" or "tassel" of Christ's garment that the unclean woman touched to get healed. She wanted to touch Jesus, who was the very WORD OF GOD IN HUMAN FLESH.

BENEFITS: The Law gives us a better life on earth. If you have ever plunged into sin, you know what a horrible place it takes you. Stealing, adultery, killing, anger and bitterness rob us even of our health. King David said that his sin caused ***"his bones to rot."*** But, if we follow God's path's outlined in the Word of God, it will bring us into a new and better life.

EMPLOYMENT: Businesses are always searching for employees who have integrity. Sharon used to clean houses and always had good job offers because the people knew she would not steal their jewelry.

SALVATION: The Law brings us to Jesus for eternal life. The law also convicts us of sin and shows us our need of a Savior.

Before I got saved, the commandments of God terrified me because I could not obey them perfectly. It exposed my need of a Savior. The law leads us to Christ for forgiveness and new life.

TONGUE: We studied the tongue and our words this week in OK Bible study. I think we all agreed that we have said things we should not say. We all agreed that our tongues have uttered harsh words that hurt others. That knowledge forces us to flee to Christ for His abundant forgiveness that he freely offers all who believe in Him.

TRANSFORMATION: My brother once installed a CB radio in the car of an anesthesiologist who had a long commute from his farm to the hospital where he worked. My brother said that this good and godly man had sticky notes all over his dash board with Bible verses on them so he could grab one and memorize the Word of God while he commuted to the hospital. His life reflected the value of that.

DEEP: The Word of God is what transforms us as we let it do a deep work in our hearts that leads us to Christ. When people immerse themselves in the Word of God, hope is born in their hearts. The Word creates faith. ***Psalm 119:130 "The entrance of Thy word gives light."*** Finally...

III. HOPE STARTS IN THE HOME

Malachi 4:5-6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

DAD: I had a good father who worked hard and supported our family. He was a good example of integrity. He taught us right from wrong. But I could never get close to him. I tell people that we talked at each other but not with each other. My grandmother

said that World War 2 scarred him and changed him. We paid the price by having a distant father. I think we talked better after he got dementia and forgot some of his nightmares. I wish so much I could have been closer to my dad.

CURSED: Malachi said that the move of God comes when fathers turn their hearts to their children and the children respond. He says that a land of absent fathers is a cursed land. America is a cursed land today because so many young people grow up without a dad. Or they grow up with a dad who they can't speak to. No matter how old we are, our children need us. My son loves to show me all he is doing when I visit him. I wish it could be with him more often. That is one thing I want to do after I retire.

PODCAST: I recently listened to a man who is in a business of helping people regain their health. He said his great joy is that his children are in the business with him. He gets to work with them every day. Two are getting their doctorates in nursing and that brings him such fulfillment to see it. His eyes twinkled as he talked about his children. He felt blessed by God.

OSTHUS: The Osthus family kind of apologized that they were going to Seattle to be with their daughter and her family for Christmas. I will be sad to not have them here leading our singing on Christmas Eve but I will be equally as happy that they are singing with their Seattle family in the little church their son in law serves as pastor. **STRONG CLOSE FAMILIES GIVE US HOPE. GOD'S WORD GIVES US HOPE. REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN CHRIST GIVES US HOPE.**

MEN: I am thrilled that following the sermon, the men will sing a song of commitment to these things. You know the words well. As they sing it, you can make it the prayer of your heart: **“Let the cross be our glory and the Lord be our song ‘til the likeness of Jesus through us be made known.”** *May the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

Special Music: Men's group “Let it Be Said of Us” (men's group led accompanied by Jan Ellingson, hopefully their first of more upcoming specials.)

LORD'S PRAYER: *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, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG: Chosen by Carol. (Note that “Let it Be Said of Us” is going to be sung as a men's groups song after the message, led by Jan Ellingson. She thought it would be a good, familiar song for the first, unison performance of a men's group we can't use it to end the service this time. The Edelweiss benediction or the other song you use would be fine. Let me know what you decide.)

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson