

**BULLETIN FOR TRINITY MARBURG, ST JOHN'S MINDEN,
OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD.**

24th Sunday after Pentecost: November 19th 2017.

Closed Communion

The A.E.L.C upholds the historical, biblical and Lutheran practice of closed communion. Therefore we ask that only A.E.L.C members come forward for communion.

Reading:

HYMNS:

Old Testament: Zephaniah 1:7-16

197, 485, 153, 337

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Introit: Psalm 90:1-12

O LORD, You have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity You are God.

You turn mankind back to dust, and say, "Return, children of Adam!"

For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes, like a watch in the night.

You end their lives while they sleep. They are like grass that is fresh in the morning.

In the morning it flourishes and is fresh. In the evening it withers and dries up.

For we have been consumed by Your anger, and we have been terrified by Your fury.

You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

For all our days have passed away in Your wrath. We finish our years like a sigh.

The days of our lives have seventy years in them or, if we are strong, they are eighty years.

Their pride is only toil and trouble.

For life quickly passes and we fly away.

Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to You.

Teach us to count our days correctly, that we may gain wise hearts!

Collect:

O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that, being mindful of the end of all things and the day of your just judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living, and dwell with you forever; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Old Testament: Zephaniah 1:7-16

⁷Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near. For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice. He has declared holy those whom He has invited. ⁸"On the day of the sacrifice of the LORD I shall punish the princes, the king's sons, and all who dress in foreign clothing. ⁹On that day I shall punish everyone who jumps over the threshold, and all who fill their masters' houses with violence and deception. ¹⁰"On that day," declares the LORD, "a loud screaming will come from the Fish-Gate, a howling from the Second Quarter, and a loud crash from the hills. ¹¹Howl, you who live in Maktesh! For all the merchant people will be destroyed. All who weigh out silver will be exterminated. ¹²At that time I shall search Jerusalem with lamps, and I shall punish the men who are becoming thick on their dregs of wine, those who are thinking, 'The LORD will not do anything good or do anything evil.' ¹³Their wealth will be plundered, and their houses will become a sinister desolation. Although they build houses, they will not live in them. Although they plant vineyards, they will not drink their wine." ¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near. It is near and coming very quickly. Listen! The day of the LORD will be bitter. There the warrior will scream for help. ¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶a day of trumpet-blowing and battle cries against the fortified cities and against the high corner-towers.

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹Fellow-Christians, you do not need us to write to you about times and dates, ²because you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night. ³When people are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come on them suddenly like labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape. ⁴You, however, fellow-Christians, are not in darkness, that this day should overtake you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, like the rest, but let us keep awake and be sober! ⁷For people who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸However, let us, who live in the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the hope of salvation as a helmet! ⁹For God has not appointed us to His wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He has died for us, so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore, encourage each other and build one another up, as in fact you are doing!

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴"For it [the Kingdom of Heaven] is like a man going on a journey. He called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵He gave one man five talents, another two talents, and another one talent, each according to his ability; and he immediately

went on his journey. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went and put them to work and gained five more. ¹⁷In the same way the one who had received the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸However, the one who had received the one talent went away, dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more talents. He said, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. Look! I have gained five more talents.' ²¹"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter into your master's joy!' ²²"The one who had received the two talents came and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. Look! I have gained two more talents.' ²³"His master told him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter into your master's joy!' ²⁴"When the one who had received the one talent also came, he said, 'Master, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown, and gathering from where you have not scattered. ²⁵I was afraid. So I went away and hid your talent in the ground. Look! Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶"His master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! So did you know that I harvest where I have not sown, and gather from where I have not scattered? ²⁷Therefore you should have deposited my money with the bankers; and, when I returned, I would have received my own back with interest. ²⁸Therefore take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents! ²⁹For everyone who has something will be given more, and he will have plenty. However, he who has nothing will have even what he has taken away from him. ³⁰So throw the useless servant out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"



Sermon: Matthew 25:14-30 – The Talents

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

¹⁴For it [the Kingdom of Heaven] is like a man who going away on a journey, called his own servants and delivered to them his possessions. ¹⁵And to one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one, each according to his own ability, and he immediately went away on a journey. ¹⁶Going away the one who had received five talents invested them and gained another five. ¹⁷Likewise the one with two gained another two. ¹⁸The one who had received one, going away dug a hole in the ground and hid the silver of his lord. ¹⁹And after a long time the lord comes to those servants and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And coming, the one who had received five talents produced another five talents, saying, "lord, you gave five talents to me, behold another 5 talents were gained." ²¹His lord said to him, "well done, good and faithful servant, with little you were faithful, I will put you in charge of much. Enter into the joy of your lord." ²²And coming, the one with two talents said, "lord, you gave me two talents, behold another two talents I give to you." ²³And His lord said to him, "well done, good and faithful servant, with little you were faithful, I will put you in charge of much. Enter into the joy of your lord." ²⁴And coming, the one who had received one talent said, "lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping what you did not sow and gathering from where you did not scatter seed. ²⁵And I was afraid, and going away I hid your talent in the ground, behold you have yours." ²⁶Answering, his lord said to him, "you wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap what I did not sow and gather from where I did not scatter seed. ²⁷Therefore you ought to have deposited my silver with the banker, and at my coming I would have received my own with interest. ²⁸Therefore, take away from him the talent and give it to the one having ten talents. For everyone who has, more will be given and he will have an abundance, but the one who does not have, what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And the worthless servant, cast him out into the outer darkness, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Lord sanctify us by your truth, your Word is truth. Amen.

The 25th Chapter of Matthew contains three parables concerning faith and the Second Coming of Christ. Last week we discussed the parable of the Ten Virgins and today we will discuss the parable of the Talents. These two parables are very closely connected, in fact Jesus starts the second parable with for (or because) as a continuation of the parable of the Ten Virgins.

This parable starts with a man who is about to set out on a long journey. While he is away his servants are left in charge of his possessions. So he calls his servants to himself and divides his money among them, giving to each an amount that matches

their ability. To the first he gives 5 talents, to the second he gives two and to the third he gives one. Now, these talents were silver coins, roughly worth 7300 denarii. One talent was about 30 years worth of labour.

After the master leaves on his journey the first two servants take their talents and invest them. Both of them receive their money back with an additional 100% profit. But the last servant, perceived his master to a hard man. We can notice that Jesus never calls the master a hard man, but that this was simply how the servant viewed his master. This last servant took the single talent that he had received and buried it in the ground, a common practice in those days.

Eventually the master returns home and comes to his servants. The first two servants bring to their master the talents that he had given them and the profits that they had gained for their master. The master is thrilled with their work and decides to make them managers of much more. It is important to note at this point that the master does not praise them on the money they received but on the work they did. He doesn't say, "well done, you got me some more money," instead he says, "well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful with what I gave you." Of course the master would have been happy to have extra money but he was more pleased that his servants had been diligent in their work and invested the money, just as he would have done.

Then the last servant comes to his master and gives him back the talent he had received. His master is furious, "you lazy and wicked servant," he says. We may feel that this anger is unjustified. The servant gave back the money that had been entrusted to him. Investments are a risky way of making money and there is no guaranty that you will even get your own money back, let alone profit. This servant was just playing it safe and making sure that he didn't lose the money that was entrusted to him. But the master isn't worried about the money. He's angry because the servant didn't do what he should have done with the money. The master was a business man, he knew all about the gains and losses of investments. Sure he would have been disappointed if the servant had made poor investments and lost all his money, but he would have been happy that the servant had at least tried. The master of this story is not greedy, he's not worried if his servants gained or lost the money through investments. He's angry with the last servant because he didn't even try to make more money. For this master, it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.

So what exactly is this parable about? Of course, it is about the Second Coming of Christ. The master going away is referring to the Ascension of Christ, and the master's return is the Return of Christ. But that is only the surface of this parable. The core of this parable is a message about faith and the use of faith.

The servants are humanity, the talents are faith, the investments are the living out of that faith or good works and the profits gained are converts to the faith. In Matthew

5:16 Jesus says, “*let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.*” Our good works are the living out of our faith, and those who see our good works may see the faith that in us and be won over to the faith. As St. Peter said in his First Epistle (3:1), “*wives, be subordinate to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the Word, they may be won over by the conduct of our wives, even without a word.*”

Like the talents, faith is given to us as a gift from our Master. He wants us to invest that gift, to live out the faith, to do good works and let our light before the world so that others may be won over to the faith. God expects us to serve Him and our neighbour, each according to our own ability. In Lutheranism we talk about service of God and neighbour within our given vocation; that is our place in life. You don’t need to be a pastor or missionary or some form of Church worker to serve God. Each of us can and should serve God as we are able. If you’re an employee then give glory to God to being an honest and trustworthy worker. If you’re a father then give glory to God by looking after your children and raising them in the faith. If you’re a wife then give glory to God by loving and caring for your husband. Whatever you are and wherever you are, let your light shine before men so that your good works may give glory to your Father in Heaven.

We have been justified by Christ’s death, but we have also been sanctified by His death so that we may live out that faith in service of God and neighbour. We have been redeemed in order to walk in newness of life, to strive after holiness and to keep the Commandments of God.

St. James says that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). This is not to say that works grant salvation. What it means is that, as Martin Luther put it, good works follow faith, and that if good works do not follow, then the faith is false and not true (*Smalcald Articles* 3.13.2-3). Faith without works is not the faith that justifies. If a person says that they have faith and yet do not do good works, then they do not truly have faith. This is not because works save us, but because works are evidence of faith. Good works are an outward sign that a person has inward faith in Jesus, just as I said last week concerning the lamps of Ten Virgins. The flame was evidence that there was oil in the lamp. No flame meant no oil.

This is evident in the words themselves. The master calls the obedient servants faithful. Think about that word for a moment, faith-full, full of faith. Obedient servants are called faithful, they are full of faith, while disobedient servants are called faithless, they are without faith.

True faith is a living and active thing that cannot help but do good works. Therefore, if you claim you have faith but do not have works, then you do not actually have faith. As St. James says (2:14-16), if you claim to have to faith and yet when coming upon

someone who is naked or hungry you do nothing to help them, then you don't have faith.

Now I am not saying that a keeping of the Law of God will save you. There's a difference between those who strive to lead a holy life and yet fall into sin and those who indulge in sinfulness. It is the latter that does not have true Christian faith.

Remember that the master was not pleased by the profit gained by the first two servants, but by their diligence to invest the money, and that his anger with the third servant was not over a lack of profit but because of the servant's failure and laziness to even try to invest the money. It is not our good works that please God but the faith behind those works. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and that which does not come from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23).

Investments are risky, there was no guarantee that those servants would get back a profit, but they knew that their master expected them to invest that money, and so they did, faithfully believing that he would forgive them if they lost any of the money. The other servant was afraid to risk the money that was offered him. He was afraid that his master would be angry if he failed, so he didn't even try.

God gives to us faith, and He expects us to live out that faith. He wants us to keep His Law. But He also knows that no matter how hard we try, we will fail. That is why He has already sent His only-begotten Son to die in our place and repaid all our sins. But there is a difference between those who strive to lead a holy life and fail and those who do not even try to keep the Law of God.

True faith sets us free from sin, while false faith uses that freedom as a license to sin. We are no longer slaves of sin but slaves of righteousness. We have been set free to walk in newness of life, to strive after holiness. God has not set us free from the Law but from the Law's condemnation and the Law's demand for perfection. Just as the master did not expect a profit, so too God does not expect perfection. Of course God is pleased when we keep His Commandments, just as the master was of course pleased by the additional money. But what is more important to God is that our good works are done in faith - that we trust in God as our Saviour, knowing that we can do the works of Law not as slaves but as freeman, knowing that God will forgive us when we fail.

Those who claim to have faith but do not have works do not know Christ as their Saviour. They may know God. They may call themselves Christian. They may even know that Jesus Christ died on the Cross to save humanity, but so what? As St. James said (2:19) who think you have faith because you believe that there is a God, so what? Even the demons believe in God, and they shudder in fear.

Those who do not have true faith, those who do not know Christ as their redeeming Saviour, only know God as judge. The faithful servants knew that their master would forgive them if they failed. But the lazy and wicked servant only knew his master to be

a harsh man.

Faith is a gift that is given to us. There are people who think that as long as they give back to God the faith that He gave them, they will be fine. Just like the servant who thought that as long as he gave back the original talent the master would be happy. Just as the servant refused to invest the money, so too these people refuse to do good works. These are the people who don't strive to keep the Law of God and do not repent of their wickedness. They are lazy and wicked servants who think that God will just love and tolerate their sinful lives and accept them for who they are. As Zephaniah said (1:12) they say in their hearts, "the LORD will do neither good nor evil."

They call themselves Christian but they do not heed the Word of God. They indulge in sin and live a life of wickedness. God has set them free from the slavery of sin and yet they refuse this gift and instead wish to remain bound to sin. Just as the servants freely received the talents and yet the last servant refused to even bank the talent. Just as the bridegroom gave the Ten Virgins the oil as a free gift and yet the foolish ones refused to take it with them and use it in their lamps.

These people do not have a true faith in God. When their Master comes to them, He will rebuke them and call them lazy and wicked servants. The lazy servant in the parable blames the harshness of his master for his failure to invest the money. So too these "Christians" do not blame their own sinfulness and failure to keep the Law but they blame the Law itself for being too harsh. They claim that since God is loving, He can't possibly expect us to keep those Commandments. These people do not have faith.

Jesus closes this parable by saying that those who have will receive more, but to those who do not have, even what they have will be taken from them. Those who do not have faith will lose everything, even the blessings they have in this life will be taken away from them in the Final Judgement. They will be eternally separated from God and will have nothing.

But as for those who have faith, who believe in Christ as their Saviour, who trust in the forgiveness of God, and who use that trust to strive after holiness, who use that trust to come to Christ in repentance after they have failed, they know that God will have mercy on them. They will be given more and will receive blessings in abundance. The Lord will come to them and say, "well done, good and faithful servant, with little you were faithful, I will put you in charge of much. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Brother and sister in Christ, we are not in darkness, and the Day of the Lord will not overtake you as a thief. You are sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. For God did not appoint us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that we should live together with Him. (1 Thess. 5:4-5,9-10) Amen.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Prayer of the Church for the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of faith, through which we have received the grace won for us by Your Son on the Cross. We pray for the strengthening of our faith and the renewal of our lives so that we may live out our faith.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we thank You that You have called us to You in faith. We ask that You will work through us to bring others to You in faith. Help us to let our lights shine before the world, so that we may give glory to You and that people may be won over to the faith.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for the leaders of this nation. We pray for the local mayor, Graham Lehmann, the state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, the national Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, and the head of the Commonwealth Queen Elizabeth II. Bless our nation and all the people who dwell therein. Help all those in government and positions of powers to maintain justice, peace, honesty, integrity and courage. Help our leaders to be guided by the truth of Your Word, we pray that all members of government may be lead by Your Scriptures and guided by Your truth.

As we approach the upcoming State Election, we pray that you will guide all citizens of this State to vote wisely and in accordance with your Word. We pray that whoever is elected as the Premier of Queensland that they lead in accordance with Your will.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, following the announcement of the Same Sex “Marriage” postal survey on Wednesday the 15th, and the announcement of a majority “Yes” vote, we pray that Your Word will be upheld in this country. As we await the upcoming governmental vote on the matter we ask that You will frustrate the plans of all those who seek to go against Your Word and against Your institution of marriage as between one man and one woman. We pray that the leaders of this country will vote in accordance with your Word.

We pray that you will protect the families of this nation and that you will grant children the blessing of being raised in a home with both a mother and a father.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for our brothers and sisters in the ULMA as they suffer the loss of Pastor Matthew Schmidt. We pray for his family, friends and flock and all those who mourn his passing. We pray for all the members of the ULMA, particularly those of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church who are now without a pastor. Strengthen your people Lord and comfort them in their grief.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for all those who are sick and injured at this time, we ask that Your healing hands will be upon them. We pray for all those who are in need of Your healing at this present time.

Lord, we ask that you will watch over Pastor Owen and Dot while they are on holiday. Keep them safe from all harm and may You return them safely to us.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, as we await the Second Coming of Your Son we pray that you will strengthen us in the faith that we may stay awake and alert, prepared for His Return.

We ask all this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Article: Obituary of Rev. Matthew Schmidt of the ULMA



Reverend **Matthew** Justin **Schmidt**, 46, Decatur, IL, formerly of Aledo, IL, died on Sunday, November 12, 2017, at his home. Funeral services will be 7 p.m. Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at the Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Decatur, IL with Reverend Brock Abbott and Reverend William Abbott officiating. Visitation will be 4 pm to 6:30 pm Wednesday, prior to services at the church.

A second visitation will be held 4 pm to 7 pm, Thursday, November 16, at Fippinger Funeral Home in Aledo, IL. Graveside service will be 10 am Friday, November 17, at the Aledo Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Walther Theological Seminary or for the family's discretion.

Wilson-Park Funeral Home, Rochester, IL, is assisting the family with funeral arrangements in conjunction with Fippinger Funeral Home in Aledo. Matt was born September 16, 1971, in Aledo, IL, to Vaughn and Pauline (Williams) **Schmidt**. Matt graduated from Aledo High School in 1989.

He received a BA degree in Theology in 1997 from Concordia University, River Forest, IL. He attended Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, and graduated in 2016 with an MDiv from Walther Theological Seminary in Decatur, IL. Matt began working at the family Coast-to-Coast Hardware Store in Aledo and later in other retail settings.

He then worked in various positions in the food service industry, including as a sou chef at Jumer's in Rock Island. He was currently serving as pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and as Field Education Supervisor/Professor for Walther Theological Seminary. He is survived by his mother, a brother Rev. Scott (Patricia) **Schmidt** of Princeton, IL; Linda (James) Lee of Chatham, IL; and Lisa (Jeffery) Friday of Rochelle, IL. He is survived by a niece and nephews, Nick Lee, Quincy (Amanda) Lee, Corey Lee, Adam **Schmidt**, Alex (Lauren) **Schmidt**, Benjamin Worthington, Joseph Worthington and Faith Worthington. He was also proud of his newborn great-nieces, Charlotte Lee and Elouise **Schmidt**.

He is also survived by three aunts and many cousins. **Matthew** was preceded in death by his father Vaughn **Schmidt** in 1991, his grandparents, several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Date of Birth : Sep 16 1971

Place of Birth : Aledo, Illinois

November 23rd Christ is King Sunday Minden	December 3rd First Sunday in Advent Minden	December 10th Second Sunday in Advent Minden
Readings: Psalm 95:1-7a Old Testament: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Readings: Psalm 80:1-7 Old Testament: Isaiah 64:1-9 Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Gospel: Mark 11:1-10	Readings: Psalm 85 Old Testament: Isaiah 40:1-11 Epistle: 2 Peter 3:8-14 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8
Hymns: LSB 510, 532, 851, 991	Hymns: 696, 332, 350, 335, 618, 331.	Hymns: TBC

News and Notices:

- Next Bible Study (bring/share lunch) on December 3rd following the Divine Service at Minden
- Just a reminder to those who have copies of the LSB hymnal to bring them to the Minden Services on November 26th and December 3rd to help out with numbers.
- Vicar Jake Zabel will be taking services on Sundays November 12th at Marburg, November 19th at Lowood and November 26th at Minden

WHILE PASTOR IS ON HOLIDAYS.

JAKE CAN BE CONTACTED ON 0458251132.

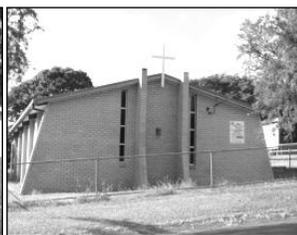
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