

Koinonia Year Two—December
Content from *Growing Faithful*
Scripture from the NRSV Bible

Sunday of the Ancestors (Forefathers) of the Lord
(December 11-17)
Twenty-eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Eleventh Sunday of Luke
Colossians 3:4-11 or Ephesians 5:8-19 Luke 14:16-24, Matthew 22:14

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.
Come, Lord Jesus!
(Matthew 28:19b, Revelation 22:20b)

HEAR the Word of God—

(This is one of the Sundays in the liturgical year when the Epistle reading varies. Please check the designated reading for this year and follow below with that passage of Scripture.)

Colossians 3:4-11

⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in the image of its creator. ¹¹In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Ephesians 5:8-19

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

Luke 14:16-24 and Matthew 22:14

(Part of Luke 14:15 is included here for clarity.)

¹⁵One of the dinner guests... said to him (Jesus), "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. ¹⁷At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' ¹⁸But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' ¹⁹Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' ²⁰Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' ²²And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' ²³Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner. Mt. 22:14For many are called, but few are chosen."

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- Who do you identify with in this Gospel reading... the people originally invited? or *the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame*? or the slave who was sent to call people to come to the banquet?
 - Why do you identify with this person/these people?
- Dinner *in the kingdom of God*...
 - What do you imagine the dinner *in the kingdom of God* will be like?
 - How have you been invited to *eat bread in the kingdom of God* (verse 15)?
 - How do you think you will respond when you are told, "Come, for everything is ready now" (verse 17)?
- Holy Communion...
 - How is the Eucharist both the invitation and the bread of the kingdom of God?
 - When we do not prepare to receive AND actually receive Holy Communion, how are we like those in this Gospel passage who were invited and made excuses not to come?

- What does Jesus mean when he says, “*Many are called, but few are chosen*” (Matthew 22:14)?
- In light of this Gospel passage, how should we then live?

If the Epistle reading is Colossians 3:4-11

- Who is your life? (See Colossians 3:4.)
 - What does this reality mean to you and for you?
 - Is this important to you?
- How is greed idolatry?
- Read the Epistle passage again.
 - How can you *strip... off the old self with its practices and... clothe... yourselves with the new self* (verse 9)?
 - What does it mean to *be... renewed in the image of your creator* (verse 10)?

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 5:8-19

- In Ephesians 5:8-14 the contrast between light and darkness is made very clear. Consider this in light of this time of year.
- How do you *try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord* (verse 10)?
- How do you seek—try—to live as a wise person?
- How do you make *the most of the time* given you?

GROW in faith—

- With gratitude, consider God’s great generosity in wanting to have his house filled.
- Prayerfully reflect on this Gospel passage in light of your answer to the following question...
 - Have you ever had good intentions but did not follow through with them when the time came to act on them?
 - ~ Considering your answer, what might God be inviting you to become aware of in your life?

If the Epistle reading is Colossians 3:4-11

- Pondering the Epistle passage... What in you is *earthly* (verse 5)? How can you *get rid of all such things* (verse 8)? What difference would getting rid of these things make in your life and in your relationships? If this awareness is important to you and

touches you deeply, begin changing by praying about the action(s) you need to take in order to change, and then follow through with the wisdom and insight you receive through prayer so you will be *clothed with the new self, which is being renewed in the image of its creator* (verse 10).

- Memorize Colossians 3:11b: *Christ is all and in all!* Say this frequently in your mind and in your heart and let this awareness transform you.

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 5:8-19

- Consider the light and the darkness in you. How are you light now? How are you seeking greater light?

SERVE one another in love—

- “Go out... and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame... compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.”
God (the words of Jesus in Luke 14:21c, 23)

If the Epistle reading is Colossians 3:4-11

- Practice seeing and knowing Christ to be *all and in all* (Colossians 3:11b).

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 5:8-19

- Be light to someone in darkness this week.

PRAY—

God our Father, we thank you for making yourself known to us in your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us always to be growing deeper in Christ, stronger in faith, hope and love. Through living for Christ, in Christ, and through Christ may we always be prepared and ready for dinner with you in your kingdom. You are tremendously generous in inviting us to eat with you in your kingdom. Amen.

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 5:8-19

- Ephesians 5:20, the verse immediately following the epistle reading for this Sunday, tells us how to be in prayer: *giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Practice praying this way.