

**SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP  
NOVEMBER 19, 2023**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Nurturing God, May the roots of our lives dig deep into the rich soil of your love. Nourish us with word and sacrament that we might be strengthened to carry your love out into the world in all we do and say. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**ISAIAH 5:1-7;11:1-5**

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. <sup>2</sup>He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. <sup>3</sup>And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup>What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? <sup>5</sup>And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. <sup>6</sup>I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

<sup>7</sup>For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry! A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.<sup>2</sup>The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.



## **GOSPEL: MARK 12: 1-3**

Then he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. <sup>2</sup>When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup>But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed."

### **REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER TIM KIRCHOFF**

I was really struck by how well this Isaiah text follows the one we read from Hosea last week. There we gazed into God's vision for his children, and learned of his unconditional love for all of us no matter how we act and behave. Similarly, the Song of the Vineyard from Isaiah explores this boundless love for us by comparing God to a dedicated gardener tending to his vineyard. Some of you may treat a garden casually and strive to make the most of a garden space with minimal effort. I'm beginning to lean in that direction myself. However, the gardener in this story pulls out all the stops in creating the best vineyard possible in order to produce the best grapes presumably for a high quality wine. We wouldn't expect anything less of God in the way He loves us and nurtures us.

But what happens when the garden does not produce to our expectations? Are we disappointed? Do we give up on it? It is clear from the Isaiah text that the vineyard represents the chosen people of Israel, and we are reminded of how humans are sinful by nature no matter how much God gives us. But really, this story applies to our world today. Jesus knew this, and used this same parable against the high priests during Holy Week in Jerusalem as told in Mark 12. We are still God's vineyard, with the expectation we will bear the best fruit to serve God's Kingdom. Obviously we continue to fall flat on our face when it comes to serving God's will by thinking about ourselves more than loving our neighbors. The parable continues by exploring the possibility of destroying the garden. The message here is more about what will happen to us if we turn away from God, rather than how God will punish.

Throughout our history, we've been really bad towards each other but God has never given up on us. God continues tending to His garden, despite the poor fruit that is usually offered. God's love for us is unconditional. I'm reminded of the common phrase "if life gives you lemons, make lemonade". The fruit we offer God may not be perfect, but God makes the best of it when we remember to love one another as God wants us to. Remember, even the smallest of fruits have meaning and a purpose. May God's love for you bear fruit that means more to others than you realize, Amen!

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

With confidence that God's justice is sure, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

God who plants and tends us, you have given us all we need to bear the fruits of your justice and peace, even when we stubbornly refuse to follow in your way. Do not abandon us, but continue to nurture us in our growth toward you. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

You give us a myriad of plants for our nourishment. Help us to engage farming practices which sustain the earth without harmful effects to our planet while making it possible for all to enjoy the abundance of your gifts. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Give wisdom to all who lead at any level, that they might be careful stewards of the communities they serve. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen all who journey with long-term illness, those in need of or recovering from surgery, and the people who care for them, especially Dave and Terry. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Your presence in the midst of our pain is sure. Help all who face the uncertainties of chronic illness or grief to know you are there with them, especially those we lift through our Prayer Chain. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen us to care for those in need through the outreach ministries of our community. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided, especially those seeking help through the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, Rise Against Suicide, and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Provide for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower The staff and parents of children living on the Autism Spectrum. Nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of these children and adults, that they might reach their highest quality of life. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

Encourage and empower those impacted by war, tyranny, and gun violence. Still the sounds of weapons. Teach us to seek security that comes from respect rather than violence. Strengthen and comfort the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, and all those throughout the world whose lives are impacted by violence. Remind us of all that You require of us: That we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

O God, as war in the Holy Land rages, we pray:  
For those who are trapped by blockades and living in fear of attack...  
For those in need of basic necessities and their safe transport...  
For those who are hospitalized and those who provide care...  
For those seeking safety who are separated from loved ones...  
For children surrounded by confusion and chaos...  
For those consumed by the lure of terrorism and control, that they might be filled  
with compassion for all people...  
For the difficult work of diplomats, world leaders, and international organizations in  
this prolonged conflict ...  
For a desire to understand those of different faiths...  
For all who grieve those who have died...God of Justice, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

For all the saints who tended gardens and green spaces with love, we give you thanks.  
May we care for all growing things in grateful memory of them. God of Justice, **hear  
our prayer.**

Merciful God, we turn all these things over to your tender care, trusting that you hear  
and answer all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. **Amen.**

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.**

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.  
Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.  
Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

## SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS: NOVEMBER 19– NOVEMBER 26, 2023

### Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> – Isaiah’s Vineyard Song

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship w/Holy Communion

### Tuesday, November 21st 7 p.m. –

**Gunbarrel Faith Partnership Community Thanksgiving Hybrid Worship at:**

Valmont Community Presbyterian Church

3262 61st Street, Boulder.

*Pie and ice cream social following worship.*

### Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>

11:00 a.m. – Amazing Grace Bible Study

### Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>

Happy Thanksgiving!



### Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>

7:00 a.m. – Men’s Zoom Breakfast Bible Study

5:00 p.m. – Friday Night Perspectives Gathering

### Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> – Reign of Christ Sunday: Josiah’s Reform

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship w/Holy Communion

#### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

PHIL K. 11/4  
WENDALL B  
11/17  
JOHN Y. 11/19

# DAILY NARRATIVE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 19, 2023

## **Monday, November 20, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-11-20-the-wickedness-of-judah2023b>

Isaiah 1:1-20 The Wickedness of Judah

## **Tuesday, November 21, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-21-4-the-future-house-of-god2023b>

Isaiah 2:1-4 The Future House of God

## **Wednesday, November 22, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-25-22-judgment2023b>

Isaiah 2:5-22 Judgment

## **Thursday, November 23, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-61-13-a-vision-of-god-in-the-temple2023b>

Isaiah 6:1-13 A Vision of God in the Temple

## **Friday, November 24, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-71-25-isaiah-reassures-king-ahaz2023b>

Isaiah 7:1-25 Isaiah Reassures King Ahaz

## **Saturday, November 25, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-91-7-the-righteous-reign-of-the-coming-king2023b>

Isiah 9:1-7 The Righteous Reign of the Coming King

## **Sunday, November 26, 2023**

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/2-kings-221-10-231-3-josiahs-reform2023>

2 Kings 22:1-10 – 23:1-3 Josiah's Reform

