

NORTH VALLEY LUTHERAN HOME CHURCH – NOVEMBER 22, 2009
CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY
(thank you to Don & Mryna Anderson for sponsoring the missionaries today)

1. Determine when you will have the service and who you will invite. What day? Morning, afternoon, or evening? You will need a Bible and a candle (optional) for the home service.
 2. Find a place in your home for an altar where you can put a Bible, a candle, and perhaps a cross.
 3. Determine who will lead the service, who will read scripture, who will light the candle, and who will lead the singing (singing is optional). Try to include as many people as possible, including children!
-

Leader (background on today's readings): We proclaim Christ our king as he goes to the throne of the cross. We acclaim him our ruler as he sheds his blood. Christ is our king as he reigns from the tree, sharing our fears and experiencing our frailties. In the reign of God, the powerful one does not intimidate the weak, but cares for them, and, the person of authority does not use others, but seeks them out and crowns them with mercy.

Leader: The candle will now be lit to signify that the presence of Christ is in our midst. We begin our service in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn: "I Love to Tell the Story" – I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love, I love to tell the story, because I know it's true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do. Chorus: I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Prayer of the Day (Leader): Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things to your beloved Son, whom you anointed priest forever and king of all creation: Grant that all the people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture (the Leader can read the introductions to the readings)

1st Reading – Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14 *To the community for whom this passage was written, it seemed as though the oppression they (God's people) were experiencing would never end. Daniel's message is: Indeed, it shall end. The Ancient One who is judge will call all nations to account and will give dominion to God's people who are represented by "one like a human being."*

Psalm 93 *-Ever since the world began, your throne has been established. (Ps. 93:3)*

2nd Reading – Revelation 1:4b–8 *The book of Revelation begins with a series of messages addressed to seven churches. John's greeting to these churches extols God as one who controls their past, present, and future.*

GOSPEL - John 18:33–37 *In John's gospel, the story of Jesus and Pilate presents two different ways of exercising power: through force or with love.*

Devotional Sermon

Truth is hard to come by these days. The very nature of truth seems situational, individual, and contextual. Our society has lots of competing ideas for what real "truth" might be.

Leo Rosten tells a story about Yuri Smolenski, a Jewish engineer in the former Soviet Union. Yuri had been ordered to move to a minor position in a faraway, frozen Siberian outpost. His parents, in tears, were watching him pack. "I'll write every day," said Yuri. "But the censorship," wailed his mother. "They'll watch every word." Yuri's father said, "I have an idea. Anything you write in black, we'll know is true. But anything you put in red ink, we'll know is nonsense!" A month passed; then from Siberia came a long letter, all in black ink! "Dear Mama and Papa," the letter began. "I can't tell you how happy I am here. It is a workers' paradise! We are treated like kings. I live in a fine apartment and the local butcher has meat every single day! There are many concerts, theater, movies, all free. And there is not one tiny bit of anti-Semitism! Love, Your son, Yuri. P.S. There is only one thing you can't find here: red ink." In our lesson for the day, Jesus says that for one purpose did he come into the world "to bear witness to the truth."

IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT IS TRUE IN TODAY'S WORLD. Isn't that your experience? We see the outcome to a trial and we shake our head and say, "How could it come out like that? Couldn't that jury see he was as guilty as sin?" Evidently they saw some side of the truth that you and I didn't see.

Complicating the problem is the fact that it is equally hard to know who to trust. There are few heroes anymore, few authority figures. Everyone seems to have his or her own agenda. There are so many ideas in the religious marketplace today. Even within the Christian community there are so many versions of the truth. Jesse Jackson and Jerry Falwell are both ordained ministers of the Gospel, and yet their versions of the truth are wildly different.

When all is said and done, though, there is only one truth by which all spiritual practice should be judged, and that truth is this: What would Jesus do? What would Jesus say? Is this in keeping with the spirit of Christ? Scholars debate which of the teachings of Jesus are authentic and which have been added by tradition. That is of little consequence as faithful believers early in the life of the church selected this body of information that we have collected in the Four Gospels, and said that for us this is the Way, the Truth and the Life in that God is revealing Good News for our world. They concluded that this is an accurate account of the life and ministry of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. This was their testimony.

Steve Brown tells the story of a British soldier in the First World War who lost heart for the battle and deserted. Trying to reach the coast for a boat to England that night, he ended up wandering in the pitch black night, hopelessly lost. In the darkness he came across what he thought was a signpost. It was so dark that he began to climb the post so that he could read it. As he reached the top of the pole, he struck a match to see and found himself looking squarely into the face of Jesus. He realized that, rather than running into a signpost, he had climbed a roadside crucifix. Brown explains: "Then he remembered the One who had died for him...who had endured...who had never turned back. The next morning the soldier was back in the trenches."

You and I are looking for signposts to help us determine what is true and what is not. and what is worth giving our lives to and what is not. Truth is elusive and misinformation abounds. Perhaps what we need to do is to strike a match in the darkness and to look on the face of Jesus our King. Amen.

Hymn – Beautiful Savior vs 1 – "Beautiful Savior, King of creation, Son of God and Son of Man! Truly I'd love thee, truly thee I'd serve thee, light of my soul, my joy, my crown."

vs 4 – "Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise adoration, now and forevermore be thine!

Prayers of the People (ask if there are any prayers that should be included)

A Claimed by Christ and filled with God's grace and hope, let us offer our prayers for the world, the church, and for all people according to their needs. *A brief silence.*

A Let us pray that the whole church on earth might be a faithful witness to the eternal reign of God by our acts of charity and mercy. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

A Let us pray for those places on the earth torn apart by violence and war, that all people of faith would strive for justice and peace. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

A Let us pray for those who are poor, homeless, hungry, or abandoned, that their suffering would be replaced with joy through gifts extended to them by the community of faith. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

A Let us pray for the sick and dying (*especially*), that they would experience the love of Jesus, and that we might be for them agents of grace. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

A Let us pray for the coming of that day when Christ will come to judge both the living and the dead, and that our hearts would be ready to welcome him as Lord of all. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A Claimed by Christ, let us pray in thanksgiving for all who have died in faith, and that we also would have the hope of joining them in the realm of heaven. God of love, **C: hear our prayer.**

P Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. who taught us to pray.... **"Our Father, who art in heaven....Amen."**

Offering – Bring on Thanksgiving Eve or following Sunday.

Benediction - "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." Amen.

Closing Hymn – "He's Got the Whole World" (vs 2 – little tiny baby, vs 3 – wind & the rain, Vs 4 - you & me, brother/sister)

Dismissal – **Leader:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **ALL: Thanks be to God!**