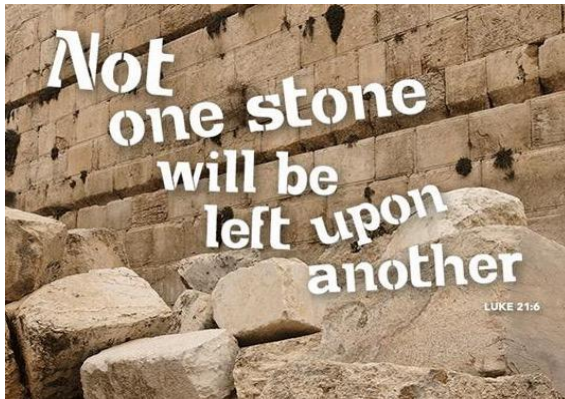


SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LUKE 21:5-19



ST. JOHN
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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture texts
are from the **Common English Bible (CEB)**

*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in **bold** print

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Isaiah 65:17-25 – A vision of a new heaven and a new earth is vividly sketched in this text.

Isaiah 12 – a song of praise that heralds God as strength shield, and source of saving power.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 – addresses the problem of idleness as an erroneous response to the preaching of an imminent Parousia (***Parousia is the time when Jesus Christ will return to judge humanity at the end of the world : second coming.***)

Luke 21:5-19 – Luke’s version of Jesus’ apocalyptic (***this word describes a Jewish literary genre characterized by symbolic imagery to reveal God’s veiled, preordained behind-the-scenes works and future plans***). discourses concerning the end of Jerusalem and the temple, the coming of the Son of Man, and the Eschaton (***this word refers to the final events in the history of the world, often associated with the end times and the fulfillment of God’s ultimate plan for humanity. It encompasses concepts of judgment, resurrection, and the establishment of God’s kingdom, as found in texts like Revelation and the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.***)

In all of today’s texts that speak of God’s judgment, we are reminded that it will be a time of both distress and joy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "How Firm a Foundation" John Purifoy

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Open and Affirming Coalition

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(Inspired by Psalm 98)

One: O Sing to our Creator a New Song,

Many: Make a joyful noise to God, everyone!

One: With trumpets and sounds of the horn

Many: We create joyful sounds for you, God of love.

One: The hills will sing together in bliss.

**Many: Just as the sea roars and the artists rhyme, we
serenade our Creator.**

***INVOCATION:**

Beloved Divine Sustainer,

Like the sunlight, your presence illuminates the world
around us. Like the air, your being invigorates us. Even
when the world seems to be on fire, your quenching rain
soothes our souls. Through your wisdom, we find our
hope and strength. Fill our minds with your peace and
our hearts with fortitude, knowing you will never depart
from us. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 460 "Be Not Dismayed"**

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW
LIFE:**

Holy Strength,

At the signs of conflict in our communities and world,
we cower instead of running towards the needs of our
neighbors. We believe the end is near, but in actuality,
this is another wave of dread coming from our fellow
humans. Unfortunately, we can't simply wish this
conflict away. Instead you call us to walk through the
fire and to use our voices. Forgive us when we want to
stop instead of continuing to follow the way of Jesus.
Give us grace to keep moving forward, even when
betrayal and hate are raining upon us. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Shame and despair will not overtake us. The grace of
God sustains us from dawn until dusk and in the depths
of the night. Amen.

***GLORIA: Glory to the Creator,**

and the Christ and the Spirit so near.

As it was from the start so it shall be forever,

One God always here. (Repeat two more times.)

(end) One God always here. One God always here.

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Isaiah 65:17-25 from "The
Message"**

New Heavens and a New Earth

¹⁷⁻²⁵ “Pay close attention now: I’m creating new heavens and a new earth. All the earlier troubles, chaos, and pain are things of the past, to be forgotten. Look ahead with joy. Anticipate what I’m creating: I’ll create Jerusalem as sheer joy, create my people as pure delight. I’ll take joy in Jerusalem, take delight in my people: No more sounds of weeping in the city, no cries of anguish; No more babies dying in the cradle, or old people who don’t enjoy a full lifetime; One-hundredth birthdays will be considered normal— anything less will seem like a cheat. They’ll build houses and move in. They’ll plant fields and eat what they grow. No more building a house that some outsider takes over, No more planting fields that some enemy confiscates, For my people will be as long-lived as trees, my chosen ones will have satisfaction in their work. They won’t work and have nothing come of it, they won’t have children snatched out from under them. For they themselves are plantings blessed by God, with their children and grandchildren likewise God-blessed. Before they call out, I’ll answer. Before they’ve finished speaking, I’ll have heard. Wolf and lamb will graze the same meadow, lion and ox eat straw from the same trough, but snakes—they’ll get a diet of dirt!

Neither animal nor human will hurt or kill anywhere on my Holy Mountain,” says God.

Isaiah 12 From the Message My Strength and Song

12 And you will say in that day,
“I thank you, God.
You were angry
but your anger wasn’t forever.
You withdrew your anger
and moved in and comforted me.
² “Yes, indeed—God is my salvation.
I trust, I won’t be afraid.
God—yes God!—is my strength and song,
best of all, my salvation!”
³⁻⁴ Joyfully you’ll pull up buckets of water
from the wells of salvation.
And as you do it, you’ll say,
“Give thanks to God.
Call out his name.
Ask him anything!
Shout to the nations, tell them what he’s done,
spread the news of his great reputation!
⁵⁻⁶ “Sing praise-songs to God. He’s done it all!
Let the whole earth know what he’s done!
Raise the roof! Sing your hearts out, O Zion!
The Greatest lives among you: The Holy of Israel.”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 (CEB)

Discipline for the undisciplined

⁶ Brothers and sisters, we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to stay away from every brother or sister who lives an undisciplined life that is not in line with the traditions that you received from us. ⁷ You yourselves know how you need to imitate us because we were not undisciplined when we were with you. ⁸ We didn't eat anyone's food without paying for it. Instead, we worked night and day with effort and hard work so that we would not impose on you. ⁹ We did this to give you an example to imitate, not because we didn't have a right to insist on financial support. ¹⁰ Even when we were with you we were giving you this command: "If anyone doesn't want to work, they shouldn't eat." ¹¹ We hear that some of you are living an undisciplined life. They aren't working, but they are meddling in other people's business. ¹² By the Lord Jesus Christ, we command and encourage such people to work quietly and put their own food on the table. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, don't get discouraged in doing what is right.

***GOSPEL: Luke 21:5-19 (CEB)**

The temple's fate

⁵ Some people were talking about the temple, how it was decorated with beautiful stones and ornaments dedicated to God. Jesus said, ⁶ "As for the things you are

admiring, the time is coming when not even one stone will be left upon another. All will be demolished."

⁷ They asked him, "Teacher, when will these things happen? What sign will show that these things are about to happen?"

⁸ Jesus said, "Watch out that you aren't deceived. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I'm the one!' and 'It's time!' Don't follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. These things must happen first, but the end won't happen immediately."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Nations and kingdoms will fight against each other. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes and wide-scale food shortages and epidemics. There will also be terrifying sights and great signs in the sky. ¹² But before all this occurs, they will take you into custody and harass you because of your faith. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³ This will provide you with an opportunity to testify.

¹⁴ Make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance. ¹⁵ I'll give you words and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to counter or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed by your parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, and friends. They will execute some of you. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because

of my name. ¹⁸ Still, not a hair on your heads will be lost. ¹⁹ By holding fast, you will gain your lives.

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God. Amen

MESSAGE: “Life is a marathon; not a sprint”

Many years ago, when my three children were teenagers in school, I went shopping in J.C. Penneys by myself. I needed to use the rest room and right in front of me was a young mother with three small children. She was trying to maneuver a stroller with a baby and two other children hanging on to her or the stroller just to get into the door of the restroom. I thought to myself “you poor thing. How are you going to manage this circus?” Then I remembered. Hey! Rosemary! You had three kids. You had this same problem not that long ago. Wow! How soon I forgot.

I think as we get older, sometimes we think back on our past and realize we have been through a lot; many years of growing up, going to school, maybe getting married, maybe raising children, cooking three meals a day every day for all those years, having a career, perhaps getting promoted, managing crisis situations, mourning the deaths of loved ones, and the list goes on. How did we do all those things? I guess you could say we managed one day at a time for many, many years. I

think that is what Jesus is teaching us today. Most things in our lives take time. Babies take 9 months. College takes at least 4 years. Promotions at our jobs take years of excellent work. Having the kids move out and start their own lives takes, . . . well maybe they are still at home. Life takes patience and perseverance.

In today’s Gospel lesson, Jesus tells the disciples and those around him what will happen in the future; sometime in the future. He doesn’t say exactly when. According to Jesus, the temple will be destroyed, Jerusalem will be demolished, and other frightening events.

This text is Jesus’ apocalyptic discourse. It constitutes our lesson which falls into two parts; the signs of the end in verses 8-11 and the time of testimony to precede the end in verses 12-19. The signs of the end are threefold: the appearance of false messiahs and false calculators of time and place (verse 8); wars, tumults; and international conflicts (verses 9-10); and natural disasters with cosmic terror in verse 11. Concerning these signs the disciples are advised that the end is not yet, and therefore they are to be neither led astray nor terrified.

Preceding these signs is the time of testimony (verses 12-19). This part is the point of primary importance. It is the call to faithful witness under great duress and pain. Because of their faithful witness, the disciples will be

delivered up before synagogues, as written Acts 4-5, and before governors and kings (fulfilled in Acts 24-26). They are assured, however, that in those crises they will be given “words and wisdom” (v. 15) that no opponents can withstand (fulfilled in Acts 4:8-13; 6-10). The Holy Spirit will provide what should be said.

Christians are warned that they will be betrayed by relatives and friends, that some of them will suffer death, and that all will be hated because of their devotion to Jesus. Although the persecutors can kill in a physical sense, in a far more important sense the faithful will be kept safe. In any case, endurance and faithfulness are the keys to life.

(As an aside; when destruction started happening around all the people in Jerusalem and Judea, the non-jews and non-followers of Jesus blamed Jesus for what seemed to be the end of the world. The citizens thought none of this destruction would have happened if Jesus had not come.)

The time of Luke’s writing and our time right now fall within verses 12-19 – the time of testimony. The end is not yet. During the time of testimony, disciples will experience suffering. They are not exempt. There is nothing here of the arrogance we sometimes see and hear in modern apocalypticists, an arrogance born of a doctrine of a rapture in which believers are removed from the scenes of persecution and suffering. No one is

exempt. There are no scenes here of cars crashing into one another on the highway because their drivers have been blissfully raptured. Jesus doesn’t say anything like that. The word of Jesus in our lesson is still forceful however: “This will give you an opportunity to testify . . . By your endurance you will gain your souls.”

Just as we live day by day and year by year, we are guided by Jesus to be faithful, constant, unswerving. We should be patient. Just as a whole life takes time, so does God’s plan for the world. We need to stay with God who is always by our sides. If we don’t have God, we will have nothing to hang on when life gets tough and when the end times come, whenever that will be. Amen.

CHANCEL CHOIR: “Shout to God” David A. Gerig

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Patient loving God, we mortals are always in a hurry. We want fast food and fast relief from problems and pain. Help us learn that good things take time. We don’t know why we are in a hurry. Maybe we are afraid that your love will disappear if we don’t grab on now. Dear God, we know that’s not how you work. Your love and caring is continuous and forever. No matter if we give up and leave because we think we don’t deserve your attention. You remain. That’s why we can pray. We know you hear us.

Sustain all those who are giving assistance in the areas that were recently hit by the hurricane and storms in Jamaica, Puerto Rico and other southeast areas. Bless all those who help during disasters around the world.

Merciful physician, heal all your children, young and old, who are ill, injured, depressed, and mourning. We pray for all those on our prayer list.

Please quickly send food to those in our country who have been without nourishment due to the SNAP slow down. May all types of relief be restored as our government struggles to agree on how to help the basic needs of the people of this country.

We pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus.

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 774 "Shepherd Lead"

Shepherd lead, lead me in your righteousness,
make your way plain before my face.
For it is you, God, you, God only,
who makes me to lie down in safety.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

What are the best ways for us to share what we have?
How can we best use our gifts when our neighbors hurt
and our systems attempt to limit the well-being of God's

children? Through our gifts, we are able to bear your strength and boost the hearts of many.

OFFERTORY: "We're Marching to Zion" Robert Lowry

***DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

***UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Creator God, Source of All Energy,
We see how your gifts transform the hearts, minds, and
souls of this world. May your wisdom continue to
strengthen our spirits. Through our gifts of treasures,
talents, and time, we can serve your children, ensuring
no one goes hungry and all are thriving. Through our
endurance and compassion, may we build God's Realm
here on earth. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 543**

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"

***BENEDICTION:**

As we work to faithfully follow God's call,
May the Christ illuminate the road ahead,
May the Spirit invigorate us throughout each day,

May our Creator soothe us and instill hope.
Beloved siblings, even as waves of fear crash over us,
God never leaves nor forsakes us and brings us courage
as we journey together.
Amen!

BENEDICTION RESPONSE:

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: “Praise” Stephen Otis