

Sebastopol United Methodist Church
Sunday, November 8, 2020 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

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Order of Worship, including Scripture

Seasonal Theme:

The teaching and ministry of Jesus the Christ.

Theme for the day:

Choices have consequences. Choosing to follow God changes everything.

Call to worship:

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: Our ancestors have led us here.

People: **We are witnesses of their faith.**

Pastor: The wisdom of the ages has called us here.

People: **We are children of its call.**

Pastor: The choice to follow God lies before us.

People: **We are heirs of its promise.**

Pastor: The Lord of life has called us here.

Unison: **We are here to worship the Lord. Amen.**

Centering & Prayer of Illumination:

(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)

O God, we long to have the courage to choose you each and every day. We yearn for the forbearance to wait patiently through the long watches of the night -- for we long to be found ready when you appear in your glory. Fill our lamps with your grace, that we might share your light with our children, and with the generations to come. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Readings from Scripture: **Joshua 24:1-3a; 14-25** **Matthew 25:1-13**

[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 2]

Message: **BE DILIGENT WITH YOUR CHOICES!**

Pastoral Prayer

With thanksgiving for God's gifts to us, let us offer ourselves and the fruits of our labor for God's work in the world. Thank you for continuing to send your offerings and pledges by mail.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:

(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)

God of Giving, we come before you with gifts in your name, in service of the world. We bring you this offering as a symbol of our choice to follow you. Receive these gifts of love, that they may go forth as your blessing and wisdom for the world. In Jesus's way we pray. Amen.

Blessing and Benediction:

Stay connected. Keep your lamps lit. Shine with God's light. Let your heart blaze with God's love. Stay safe, maintain social distancing, and live your lives kindled with the call to serve.

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Scripture Readings – November 8, 2020

first reading -- **JOSHUA 24:1-3a; 14-25**

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.

"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God." But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

second reading -- **MATTHEW 25:1-13**

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! There will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who

were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

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Thank you for worshipping with us today.