New Apostolic Church USA

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

Created

How does each sermon connect to this theme?

As October invites us to consider what we were created to be and to do, November continues that reflection by turning our attention toward the purposes for which God has **created** us. To be created by God is more than simply to exist; it is to receive life as a gift and to discover that our lives can participate in His ongoing work in the world. Throughout November, we will explore the many ways this calling takes shape:

November 1: On the first Sunday of the month, Psalm 130 leads us to the understanding that having experienced the hope of God's redemption, we are called **to share hope** with others, becoming witnesses to His mercy and interceding for those in eternity.

November 8: For the second Sunday, the sermon will interpret Colossians 3, where a metaphor of clothing is used to encourage us **to put on Christ**, and reflect Him in the world.

November 15: On the third Sunday, Isaiah calls us to **arise and shine**, to come from darkness into the light of Christ.

November 22: On the fourth Sunday, the USA celebrates Thanksgiving Sunday (use the relevant DSG and SG, **"Created… to give thanks"**). For those who celebrated in October, the sermon will focus on being created for **new life** - both the new life we experience now and the life to come.

November 29: On the fifth Sunday, we begin the season of Advent with a look at Mary and her calling **for a purpose** which God prepared for her. God also calls us to participate in His purposes.

November midweek: Finally, in the sermon chosen for the midweek, Paul encourages us to follow faithful examples and live with our hearts fixed on our calling **for citizenship** in heaven.

Each of these themes point us to the One who creates, renews, calls, and sustains us. In this Season of Thanksgiving, we give thanks not only for being created by God, but for how He continues to shape our lives through Christ and calls us to live for His purposes.

With thanksgiving,

John S. Schnabel

NOVEMBER 2026

November 1
Created…
to share hope

November 8
Created…
to put on Christ

November 15
Created…
to arise and shine

November 22
Created…
for new life

November 29
Created…
for a purpose

November midweek
Created…
for citizenship

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV 1

CREATED... to share hope

SERVICE FOR THE DEPARTED

Psalm 130:7 (excerpt)

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Psalm 130
1 Timothy 2:4, 1 Peter 3:18-20

Catechism
9.5, 9.6.1

Discussion Questions

Psalm 130 moves from the depths of guilt and despair toward the assurance of God's forgiveness and love. What does this movement teach us about the process of repentance and restoration?

Why can it sometimes be difficult to face our own sin and ask God for forgiveness? What gives us the courage to do so?

Sin may darken our awareness of God's love, but it cannot diminish the reality of that love. How might this truth shape the way you respond to your own shortcomings?

Who in your life might need encouragement to trust in God's forgiveness and abundant redemption? How could you share that hope through your words, actions, or prayers?

How does praying for the departed challenge or broaden your understanding of God's mercy? How might you approach such prayer with both humility and hope?

Where are we in the Bible?

Psalm 130 is one of the traditional penitential psalms, a prayer that begins in the depths of human brokenness and gradually moves toward the assurance of God's mercy. The psalmist cries out from a place of need, acknowledging sin and longing for restoration. Yet this is not a prayer that remains focused on guilt. It is a steady climb from despair toward hope - from the depths toward the assurance that God forgives, loves unfailingly, and redeems abundantly. At the heart of Psalm 130 is profound confidence: our hope rests not in our ability to overcome our failures, but in the character of God. The psalmist waits, watches, and trusts because God is a God of forgiveness and steadfast love. This movement from confession to waiting, and from waiting to hope, offers a pattern for understanding our own experience of redemption. Psalm 130 also turns our attention outward. Those who have experienced the hope of God's redemption are invited to share that hope with others. Our own journey from the depths toward restoration can become a witness to the mercy of God for both the living and the dead. In this way, the psalm is both a prayer for ourselves and a guiding passage for how we intercede for others. We pray that the departed will discover the God whose forgiveness, unfailing love, and abundant redemption give reason to hope.

Summary:

Psalm 130 moves us from the depths of sin and despair, through repentance and hope, to the assurance of God's forgiveness and abundant redemption. Though we cannot escape our brokenness or remoteness from God on our own, He offers His saving presence to the living and the dead through Jesus Christ, the preaching of the word, the forgiveness of sins, and the sacraments. Having experienced this grace, we are called to trust in the God of forgiveness, hold fast to the God of hope, and share the promise of His abundant redemption with others.

Service for the Departed Liturgy: *Following the celebration of Holy Communion, after the chalices have been covered, the minister invites the congregation to stand for a prayer of intercession which includes: • Thanksgiving - that souls in the beyond have received grace through the sacrifice of Jesus; that they are united in fellowship with Jesus and His congregation through the sacraments; that access to the kingdom of God and eternal life is open to them. Intercession - God has called the souls to enter into relationship with Him through rebirth of water and Spirit through the apostle ministry. The divine relationship that God intends can be realized for those who hunger. This is followed by a musical contribution (max. 90 sec), the closing prayer, and benediction.*

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV 8

CREATED... to put on Christ

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Colossians 3:1-17

Where are we in the Bible?

The "therefore" at the beginning of verse 12 connects the following verses with those that precede them. In order to put on the new self, one must cast off the old (3:5-11). Both of these actions are necessary for the believer to embrace their new identity in Christ.

As the chosen, elect, and beloved, God gives the gift of new life, which we must put on. The new identity which believers have received is tightly interwoven with the obligations of the Christian life. The five virtues of verse 12 parallel the five vices in verses 5 and 8. All of the virtues involve the believer's relations with others (not merely personal qualities). They set the Christian apart from the surrounding culture, then and still today.

Summary:

Colossians 3:12–14 calls believers to live out their new identity in Christ by putting on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness. As God's chosen, holy, and beloved people, we are called to put on Christ, bear with those we find difficult to understand or love, and recognize that love—the bond of perfection—holds us together despite our imperfections. By tying the belt of love around all these virtues, we reflect Christ to the world and strengthen the unity of His church.

Discussion Questions

The virtues in Colossians 3:12—compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience—are all expressed in how we relate to others. Which of these virtues do you think is most needed in the Church today, and why?

Which of the virtues in Colossians 3:12 comes most naturally to you, and which is most difficult to practice? What might help you grow in that area?

How might you distinguish between simply tolerating someone and actively seeking their well-being through Christlike love?

What is one practical way you can "put on Christ" in your interactions with family, friends, coworkers, or fellow believers this week?

The sermon describes love as a belt that holds all the other virtues together. Why is love essential for practicing compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience authentically?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV 15

CREATED...
to arise and shine

Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Isaiah 60

Catechism
1.4, 3.1.6

Where are we in the Bible?

Our Bible verse for this sermon begins the final section of the book of Isaiah, chapters 60-66, which looks ahead to the glorious kingdom that the Messiah will establish when He returns. This hope stood in sharp contrast to what the people of Israel had experienced. After the Babylonian captivity, those who returned found a war-torn land, broken walls, burned gates, and a temple in ruins. Their circumstances offered little reason for celebration. But Isaiah looked beyond what was immediately visible. He saw a future filled with God's glory and the fulfillment of His promises. Chapter 60 begins with that hope of a new day dawning.

Summary:

In a world of sin, falling is a reality. The key is not to stay down, but to rise again with God's help. Through the power of the risen Christ, who reaches out His hand to lift us up, we find new life and strength to arise and shine. As Christ, the light of the world, transforms us, we are called to reflect His light in every area of life and become a source of hope for others.

Discussion Questions

Isaiah's call to "arise" came to people returning to a devastated land with little reason for optimism. Are there circumstances in your life that have left you discouraged or spiritually weary? What might it look like to respond to God's invitation to "arise" in the midst of them?

When have you experienced someone reflecting Christ's light through their presence, encouragement, or compassion? What did that mean to you?

When someone around you is suffering, do you tend to offer solutions, withdraw, or simply listen and remain present? How might Christ be inviting you to support others more faithfully?

The promise of Christ's return gives believers hope beyond present circumstances. How can this hope shape the way we approach daily responsibilities, relationships, and service to others?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV 22

CREATED... **for new life**

Where are we in the Bible?

To understand the words, *"Behold, I make all things new"* (Revelation 21:5), we must see where we are in the larger story of Scripture. The Bible begins with God's good creation, including humanity made in His image and living in fellowship with Him. Sin broke that relationship and brought suffering and death into the world. Yet God did not abandon His creation. Throughout the Old Testament, He revealed His promises of redemption.

These promises find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, Christ reconciled humanity to God and accomplished our salvation. Through faith, we receive this gift of grace. In Christ, we are already a *"new creation"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Yet we also recognize that the new creation is not complete. We live between Christ's resurrection and His return. The Holy Spirit works through word and sacrament, continually renewing us and shaping our lives according to Christ. This renewal does not earn our salvation; it flows from the grace we have already received in Christ.

We therefore live with both "already" and "not yet." Christ has accomplished salvation, but we await the day when God will fully renew His creation. Revelation points us toward that promise: *"Behold, I make all things new."*

Summary:

As we live between what Christ has already accomplished and what God has promised to complete, may the new life of Christ be increasingly evident in the way we live, love, forgive, and serve. God's plan of salvation seeks to restore the perfect fellowship between Himself and humanity, and we participate in this work by living according to His will and embodying the values of the new creation in our words and actions. With confidence in His faithfulness, we look forward to the day when He will make all things new and bring us into the fullness of His eternal presence.

Revelation 21:5

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Revelation 5
2 Corinthians 5:17

Catechism
2.4.3, 3.4.1.4

Discussion Questions

Christians live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet": Christ has accomplished salvation, yet we await the complete renewal of creation. How can we live faithfully and hopefully within this tension?

Our good works do not earn salvation but provide evidence of the new life God is producing in us. Why is this distinction important for how we understand Christian growth?

The new creation is described as God dwelling with humanity, with death, mourning, crying, and pain finally overcome. Which aspect of this promise do you find most meaningful, and why?

Where do you find it difficult to believe that renewal is possible, either in yourself, in a relationship, or in the world around you? How might the promise of Revelation 21:5 speak to that situation?

What is one practical way you can embody the hope of the new creation this week by bringing patience, forgiveness, encouragement, or care into a situation that feels broken?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV 29

CREATED...
for a purpose

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Luke 1:30-31

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus."

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Luke 1:26-56

Catechism
3.4.8.1

Where are we in the Bible?

Few scenes in the Gospels rival the announcement ("annunciation") from the angel Gabriel to Mary for its capacity to inspire the imagination. Over the centuries, theologians, musicians, painters, and others have been drawn again and again to the message of Jesus' birth.

The announcement directly follows the prophecy of the birth of John the Baptist and can be linked to that prophecy in two ways: first, it is dated to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (1:26, 36), and second, it is constructed out of similar components:

- the appearance of the angel Gabriel,
- the perplexity he causes and the assurance not to fear,
- the announcement of an unlikely pregnancy,
- the divine mandating of the child's name,
- and promises made and kept by God, revealing His divine purposes for these women.

The annunciation to Mary reveals that God creates and calls people to participate in His purposes. Mary's story invites us to consider our own calling: to receive God's direction with faith, trust His purposes even when it conflicts with our purposes, and faithfully use what He has given us to participate in His work.

Summary:

God creates and calls each of us for a purpose. As Scripture's promise of a coming Messiah became personal for Mary through the angel Gabriel, she responded with faith, humility, and adoration, trusting God's purpose despite what she could not fully understand. We have also received a promise that surpasses human reason, and we are called to trust God and use our lives and gifts to fulfill the purpose for which He created us.

Discussion Questions

Gabriel tells Mary, "Do not be afraid" (Luke 1:30), even though what follows is difficult to comprehend. Why might God's calling sometimes challenge our expectations, plans, or understanding?

Mary responds to God's message with faith, even though she does not understand everything that will happen. What is the difference between trusting God and needing to understand every detail before taking the next step?

God's purposes extend beyond a single moment or individual. How can remembering that we are part of a larger story of God's redemption shape the way we approach our responsibilities and service?

What gifts, abilities, or opportunities has God entrusted to you that you could use more intentionally to serve others and build up His kingdom?

Mary's response in the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) expresses humility and praise. How might you cultivate these attitudes when you recognize God working through your life?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOV MIDWEEK

CREATED... for citizenship

Philippians 3:20-21

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Foundational Readings:

Scripture
Philippians 3:17-21

Catechism
3.4.7.1

Where are we in the Bible?

Paul's brief but powerful letter to the Philippians is marked by warmth, affection, and mutual acceptance. The theme of joy runs throughout the letter, even though Paul writes from prison. His prayer of thanksgiving expresses genuine affection for the Philippians and appreciation for their participation in the gospel. He later calls them his "beloved and longed-for brothers and sisters," his "joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1).

This warmth reflects the close relationship between Paul and the Philippian church. The Philippians had repeatedly supported his ministry through gifts, most recently one delivered by Epaphroditus. Unlike Paul's letters to Corinth and Galatia, where he responds to serious challenges to his ministry and teaching, Philippians contains no indication of a major conflict between Paul and the church or of a widespread departure from the gospel. Although Paul warns against "the dogs" and "the enemies of the cross" and addresses a disagreement between members of the congregation, the overall tone remains encouraging and affectionate.

Paul writes for four primary reasons. First, he updates the Philippians on his imprisonment, reassuring them that his circumstances have actually contributed to the advancement of the gospel (1:12–26). Second, he expresses gratitude for their recent gift (4:10-20). Third, he commends Epaphroditus for his service and encourages the Philippians to welcome him with honor (2:25-30). Finally, anticipating that the Philippians will face persecution, Paul encourages them to remain united and stand firm in their faith amid opposition (1:27-30).

Summary:

Paul encourages believers to follow faithful examples, beware of influences that make them enemies of the cross, and live with their hearts and minds fixed on their true citizenship in heaven. As citizens of heaven, we are guided by God's standards rather than earthly values, experience inner renewal through the sacraments, and look forward to receiving a glorified body at Christ's return. Until then, we are called to bear witness to our heavenly citizenship through our words, choices, and way of life.

Discussion Questions

Who has been a faithful example in your journey of faith, and what have you learned from their life?

How can we learn from others without comparing ourselves to them?

Paul warns against setting our minds on earthly things when they conflict with the gospel. What are some everyday values or influences that can quietly pull our attention away from Christ?

What does it mean that our "citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20)? How might this identity shape our priorities, relationships, and decisions while we live in the world today?

Paul points toward the return of Christ and the transformation of our earthly bodies. How does the promise of resurrection and eternal life give believers hope amid suffering, uncertainty, or the limitations of this life?