

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 4th, 2021

10 A.M.



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294 Fax 905-685-7661
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoefts (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoefts@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

WELCOME GUESTS & VISITORS: Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church! May our gracious and loving Lord bless you as you worship Him. **Stay safe & healthy everyone & let's keep our family at Christ safe & healthy.**

Prayer: O God, because You have prepared for those who love You such good things as surpass our understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards You that we, loving You above all things, may obtain Your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You, and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Musician: Mayumi Munoz
Reader: Fran Porteous

Sunday School: "What Can I do to help others?" <https://youtu.be/w6ZdJguCjJE>
Precious Moments - Summer Session: "Sometimes I Get Mad" <https://youtu.be/RDdf6NAS0dc>
Children's Message: "Faith by Actions" <https://youtu.be/QaU00gVgqh0>

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Luke 9: 57b-62 Wed.: Luke 9: 51-57a Friday: Luke 9: 18-26
Tuesday: 1 Kings 19: 15-21 Thurs: 11 Tim 4: 1-5 Saturday: Luke 14: 25-35

WORSHIP NOTE:

In compliance with Ontario Provincial Step 2, effective June 30, we can now offer in-person worship at 25% capacity

We will update information on this as the province-wide plan of opening unfolds by regions and sectors over the next number of weeks. [pastortoddhoefts@gmail.com].

- **Sunday Service will be live-streamed at 10 AM** on Facebook: (<https://www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC>).
- Following the service, a recording will be uploaded to YouTube – "Gathering the Scattered" at: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3a4p6prdJGEyP5S-q-cNSq>).
- A PDF version of the order of service for each Sunday will also be posted on our church website: christlutheransc.ca.

If you have any questions or concerns, please check out our church website (<http://christlutheransc.ca/>), phone the church office or email Judy Slingerland (chairman.worship@christlutheransc.ca) or Pastor Todd or phone the church office. May the peace of the risen Lord be with you all.

LWMLC NATIONAL ONLINE - CONVENTION - July 8-10, 2021: The LWMLC Convention will be online and can be attended from your home, church, or wherever you may be. Registration is now open and is \$80 per person. Please check the LWMLC website (<https://lutheranwomen.ca/>) for more Convention information as well as how to register: <https://lutheranwomen.ca/events/national-convention-information>

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: We will try meeting in person at the church for the month of July and then taking a break until September. Please join us for our new study of **"How to Read the Bible"** with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juarez Olthoff and Jo Saxton. This study will help show connections between the Old and New Testaments and the purpose of each book in the Bible. We will also gain tools to help us better understand and apply Scripture to our daily lives. Please join us on **Friday, July 9th at 7:00 p.m. and Thursday, July 22nd at 7:00 p.m. ****Please plan to bring a lawn chair and your mask!**

Last Sunday Attendance: June 27th, 2021 10 a.m. – 51

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current:	271,175.00	5,214.90	1,150.00	72,234.53	(42,493.35)
Missions	20,000.00	384.62	155.00	7,272.50	(1,189.04)
Property Improvement:			30.00	2,533.50	

COLLECTION NOTE: At this point we are not collecting any materials for the church. This means no milk bags for making mats; no SOUL bingo prizes; no Christmas cards for Sunday School or SOUL; no puzzles for exchange, etc. Thank you.

FLOWERS FOR ALTAR: If you would like to place flowers on the altar, please sign your name at the back of the church or email: secretary@christlutheransc.ca. Cost is \$25/bouquet

THE CANADIAN LUTHERAN: The Canadian Lutheran is available to read online at:
WWW.CANADIANLUTHERAN.CA

SUPPORTING YOUR CHURCH DURING THE PANDEMIC: It's important for members to keep in mind that expenses for payroll, utilities, maintenance, etc. continue to accumulate even when you are not comfortable attending service.

1. THROUGH EFT DONATIONS: Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation continues to facilitate this service for us. To assist you in continuing your financial support to your church, we encourage you to fill out the form that is available for printing at:

http://christlutheransc.ca/?page_id=96 and then mail the form along with a voided cheque to:

Lutheran Church-Canada, East District Corporation
275 Lawrence Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3
Attn: Darryll Holland

2. BY MAIL: cheques can still be mailed to:

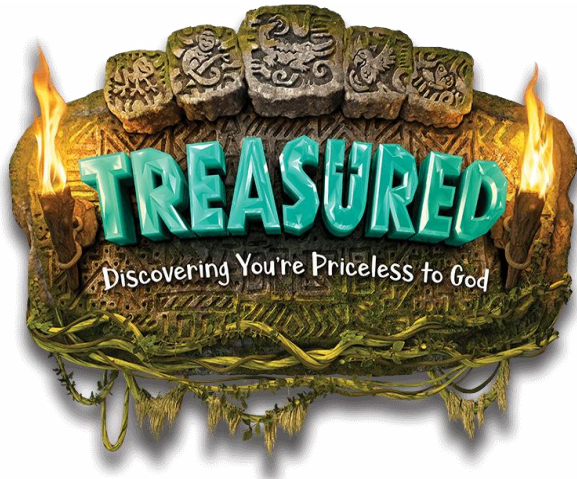
Christ Lutheran Church
140 Russell Ave. St. Catharines, ON L2R 1W1
or dropped in the Church mailbox at the East entrance.

3. ONLINE VIA LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA: Lutheran Church-Canada has opened a web portal that allows parishioners to donate directly to their home church:

<https://lutheranchurch-canada.tng-secure.com/?pageId=donation-edit&categoryId=10972>

select "St. Catharines-Christ Lutheran-30950" from the drop down menu, enter the amount of your donations and LCC will transfer your donation to Christ. Donation is via VISA or Mastercard. Tax receipts will be issued by LCC (not Christ).

This opportunity will be in effect until the COVID-19 emergency is over.



YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR "ONLINE VBS"
"TREASURED:
Discovering You're Priceless to
God"

You'll discover God's greatest treasure isn't gems, silver or gold
- IT'S YOU!!

Join us online for Bible learning activities, catchy songs, games
and crafts.

Collect Bible Memory Buddies that help remind us of God's love.

Videos will be released starting the week of July 12th-16th and will stay online until August 30th.

To register please fill out the form (below) and drop off in the church mailbox (east side of church),
or email to: secretary@christlutheransc.ca
or call the church office at 905-685-8294 or Louise at 905-329-8579

Child's Name: _____ Grade in Sept. _____

Grade in Sept. _____

Grade in Sept. _____

Grade in Sept. _____

Parents Names: _____

E-mail: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Home Church: _____

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SERVICE OF THE WORD AND PRAYER

The 6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 4, 2021

GATHERING SONG:

“Oh How I Love Jesus”

There is a Name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in my ear,
The sweetest Name on earth. *Refrain:*
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me!

It tells me of a Savior's love,
Who died to set me free;
It tells me of His precious blood,
The sinner's perfect plea. *Refrain:*
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me!

It tells me what my Father hath
In store for every day,
And though I tread a darksome path,
Yields sunshine all the way. *Refrain:*
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me!

F. Whitfield, 1855 public domain

INVOCATION:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

You are a people for the Lord's treasured possession, as He has promised you;

a people holy to the Lord our God!

(Deut. 26:18-19)

You shall therefore lay up these Words of Mine in your heart and in your soul;
teach them to your children.

**Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when
you lie down and when you rise.**

(Deut 11:18-20)

Man does not live by bread alone;

But by every Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

(Deut. 8:3)

PSALM 123:

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

**As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until he has mercy upon us.**

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough of their harmful hurt.

Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the disdain of the proud.

SCRIPTURE SONG: “Come and Praise The Lord Our King” [Michael Rowed tune]

**Come and praise the Lord our King, Alleluia—
Raise your voice, in worship sing, Alleluia!**

**He will cleanse us from our sin, Alleluia—
As we live by faith in Him, Alleluia!**

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The Lord be with you:

And also with you.

Let us pray: Lord God, the Author and Giver of all good things, in our baptism You call us to proclaim the coming of Your Kingdom. Give us courage You once gave the Apostles, that we may faithfully witness to Your Word of love and peace in every circumstance of life. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

The Old Testament: *Ezekiel 2: 1-5*

Then He, the LORD, said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Epistle: *2 Corinthians 12: 8-10*

[St. Paul writes:] Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL VERSE: "To God Be The Glory"

www.hymnary.orgAGPS

The image shows the musical notation for the Gospel Verse "To God Be The Glory". It consists of four staves of music in a 4/4 time signature, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics "To God be the glo - ry, to God be the". The second staff contains "glo - ry, to God be the glo - ry for the things He has". The third staff contains "done. With His blood He has saved me; with His pow'r He has". The fourth staff contains "raised me; to God be the glo - ry for the things He has done."

To God be the glo - ry, to God be the
glo - ry, to God be the glo - ry for the things He has
done. With His blood He has saved me; with His pow'r He has
raised me; to God be the glo - ry for the things He has done.

The Holy Gospel St. Mark 6:1-13

The Holy Gospel, according to Saint Mark, the 6th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SONG RESPONSE TO THE WORD: "Will You Come & Follow Me" The Summons

**Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown
In you and you in me?**

**Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
In you and you in me?**

Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
And do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean
In you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
If I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound
In you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
When you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
And never be the same.
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In you and you in me.

Words: 1987 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland, G2 3DH (Admin. By Wild Goose Resource Group), Music: David Peacock – The Jubilate Group (Admin. By Hope Publishing Company)

MESSAGE:

THE APOSTLES' CREED:

God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess the faith.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the + life everlasting. Amen.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith -

praying in the Holy Spirit.

(Jude 20)

Keep yourselves in the love of God,

waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that leads to eternal life.

(Jude 21)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!

(2 Cor. 5:17)

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another:

(Brief silence for reflection and self-examination)

Most Gracious Father, we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in our thoughts, words and deeds. We have committed sins against our neighbour and against You, O Father. Have mercy upon us. In Your compassion forgive us our sins. Those sins which are known to us, and those which are unknown. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that by faith we may be sorry for our sins, repent of them and serve You in newness of life to the honour and glory of Your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always:

And also with you.

PRAISE RESPONSE “Come and Praise”

[Michael Rowed tune]

Jesus died on Calvary, Alleluia—

Rose again triumphantly, Alleluia!

We will live with Him one day, Alleluia—

And forever with Him stay, Alleluia!

THE PRAYERS

Heavenly Father: thank you for Jesus' ministry by which he casts out sin and brings healing and holiness. Strengthen our faith so that we do not reject him, especially when we are made aware of our own sin. Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

Thank you for the Christian companions you provide for our journey, through whom you bring judgment and grace to us. Help us be worthwhile companions to others, loving and true. And build up the fellowship in this congregation so we may be well equipped for service and mission in the world. Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

Gracious Father, protect those who are rejected for their faith, and provide Christian companions for those who journey alone. Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

Help us and the whole church understand the sins of our age, to speak where silence needs breaking, to comfort where terror threatens, and to support where courage falters, all with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

We pray for our nation's leaders - the Queen, her representatives, the parliaments, the prime minister and cabinet, and departments, the opposition and the whole system of government. Help them understand the complexities of life and bring them to govern in a way which pleases you, promotes the well-being of all, and which allows the extension of the gospel. Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

We pray for each person in need today, and especially the poor and the sick, that those who have grown weak may find the power and strength of Christ at work in their weakness. Take care of those we know personally to be in need and whom we now name silently in our hearts... *(brief silence)* Good Lord,

have mercy and hear us.

Merciful God, you sent your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to walk among us. He heard the cries of the people and shared with them the good news of the kingdom. Hear our prayers this day and answer them so that your greatness may be known by all. This we ask in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

BLESSING & BENEDICTION

Let us praise the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, + be with you all.

Amen

SENDING HYMN: ***“My Faith Looks Up To Thee”***

**1 My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!**

**Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
be wholly Thine.**

**2 May Thy rich grace impart - strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire;
as Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee
pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire.**

**3 While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread,
be Thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from Thee aside.**

**4 When ends life's transient dream, when death's cold, sullen stream
shall o'er me roll,
blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul.**

Reprinted from: <https://www.godtube.com/popular-hymns/my-faith-looks-up-to-thee/>

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD AND PRAYER is an adapted version which is contained in the *“With One Voice”* Hymnal Supplement to the Lutheran Book of Worship. Published by Augsburg Fortress in 1998. All music is reprinted with limited permission from www.hymnary.org.

REV TODD HOEFFS
PENTECOST 6 (series B)
Sermon: St. Mark 6:1ff
July 4, 2021

Reputation is everything.

Someone's good name can be viewed as bad very quickly.

A negative word or 2 spoken about a person can undo the good of their past & ruin their future. Look at celebrities & politicians. A long-forgotten past can come back to haunt & destroy them. Sometimes this is good. When it reveals the truth.

When it sheds light on something abusive. Like the light being shed on the atrocities in residential schools--A piece of history which is uncomfortable and which many would like forgotten. IN this era of cell phone cameras with video it's easy to put anything out there in the world. It's almost as if we can't hide, that privacy is long gone and we are public people. Jesus was very public. He ministered to many with little or no fanfare and yet everyone seemed to know about it.

His family isn't as happy about this. Familiarity breeds contempt as the saying goes. Families don't always like it when a member of their family does well and becomes important.

American Blue Grass musicians have a saying they pass down through the generations....don't get above your raisin'....IOW

Don't forget your roots and how you arrived at where you are.

Jesus' popularity makes his family think he's too good for them. But that couldn't be farther from the truth. In Biblical days when a family member, especially the 1st born son, made good, It spoke well of the entire family. Certainly Jesus' family must've known or believed that He was not just another sibling? He returns home with his growing entourage of disciples. The local son's good "Word spreading" around has arrived in Nazareth. He teaches with authority. As if He is God. He heals the diseased, casts out demons. He's the complete Saviour everyone's expecting or looking for.

And who would have thought it? Jesus, Mary's son. Joseph the carpenter's boy from Nazareth in Galilee. The 1st time I preached on this text I was in my 2nd year of seminary education & I was at my own home congregation. Talk of childhood reputation and recollections!? As proud as they had been that day To see me preach the 1st time since I left home they also reminded me of being a 3 year old "Toddy" looking back in my pew, making funny faces at worshippers years earlier....ah, some have terribly long memories....You'd think Jesus' family would've been impressed, but no. He was an offence! He ignited their anger and resentment. Who does He think He is, anyway? What's this wisdom given to Him? Where did that come from?

He certainly didn't pick that up in the carpenter's shop? And what about those miracles? Aren't these His older brothers and sisters here from Joseph's side of the family? James, Judas, Joses, Simon, and the girls. We know where He comes from...! God stepping down from out of Heaven and becoming a human is offensive...to many. It disrupts what is known & settled. Like hearing news of change when life is easy.

It causes people to stumble over their own expectation of how God is supposed to work. Familiarity with God breeds contempt from us. We think we have Him all figured out to get what we want. We expect Him to move when we say move, Or let us do as we please no matter who it upsets so long as we do as we like. If God comes down to us in the flesh, we hardly expect Him to be a carpenter in a no-place town called Nazareth, in the outskirts of Galilee, the older brother to a bunch of sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary [who gave birth to him as a virgin]. That alone should've made them think Jesus was unique... Other times we want God just to be Godlike, at least on our terms. Not some woodworker with splinters under his fingernails and calluses on his hands. The closer you are, the worse it is. This was Jesus' hometown. His people. The crowd who watched Him grow up along with His brothers and sisters. And while He no doubt was a really great kid, there apparently was nothing so unusual that made Him stand out. God as a human became normal. No shining halo around His head. No glowing face or holy glow. Just this ordinary kid named Jesus who grew up in a carpenter's shop, learned the trade, and then went off to Judea, got baptized by His cousin John, and came back with a following. His relatives are naturally suspicious. We don't really expect God to be like us. We're the ones who want to be like God. And when God comes into our life like one of us, we're put off. Disappointed. He's supposed to swoop into our messes, quickly save us & place us on our own to create even more messes. Because we know we can't be like Him. God isn't supposed to descend down to us and join us in our work, our life, our wedding parties, our funerals, our laughter and joy, our death. That's so "not like God." He's not supposed to cleanse us and make us new, just let us be us.

Mark's Gospel records Jesus saying "a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." We distrust God as ordinary because we expect an extraordinary superhero God. Because a superhero God will come quickly, remove pain & want nothing from us. But that's not a Saviour. A Saviour lays down His life for you. He makes sure everything standing against you is utterly destroyed and you're set free! A Saviour takes the beating, you and I get the free pass. HE makes you a new way, a new start, a plan to live counter to the way you had been. This is painful. It hits us where it hurts...our fragile egos and images we want to portray. But this hurt is worth cost. That's what the Nazareth crowd missed. That's what the religious crowd always misses. That's what we all can miss when our stubborn sinful self gets the best of us. God is certainly above it all, higher than the highest heavens, outside and beyond this world of ours. But He is also right here, very near, dwelling among us in ways so ordinary you'd walk right by if the Word didn't point you there. "Jesus couldn't do any mighty work" in his home town. Remember that woman we heard about last week with a bleeding problem for 12 years, the one to whom Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well." Jesus felt power go out of Him when she touched Him in faith. But no power was going out of Jesus in His hometown of Nazareth because no one truly believed Him.

Faith draws on Jesus; unbelief gets in the way of what Jesus gives.

God wants to give you salvation in Christ, but unbelief says, "No, I don't want any part of it!" He could do no mighty work there because there was no mighty faith.

And yet a few did believe. God always has his little remnant of believers.

A few looking beyond the ordinary and familiar face of Jesus and seeing the powerful, compassionate face of God. They trust Him, they take Him at His Word, they believe Him. And He heals them, all the while marveling at the unbelief of His own home town and synagogue. The people who know Him best believed Him least.

Christ HAS come to us His way, so our familiarity does not breed contempt, but grows into gratitude and joy. We trust in God's good name, His promises kept and the saving work of Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord and brother. This is why we begin our life in Jesus with Baptism. Our old ways are drowned and killed so that the new person forgiven and redeemed rises up anew filled with the Holy Spirit. This kind of familiarity means God the Father, Son and Spirit lives in our bodies and we live on as His holy temples. Jesus will always bring an offence to some, or many.

Jesus faced even more anger and opposition and conflict with the people around Him, family, friends and religious leaders. Today, our culture has either forgotten or never known what forgiveness is all about. I'm sure it's viewed as weak to seek reconciliation when it's clear that you're the one who's been wronged. The Christ-like way for any baptized disciple like us is to listen and offer loving service. Making amends where there's been a falling out because none of us are perfect. Only perfectly forgiven in Christ. He says to go out and preach the good news. Speak of repentance.

Which is recognizing who you are as a sinner and who you are as a forgiven person in Him. This renewal is important. For to everyone is given a new hope, a new start, a new faith. In our faith journey, we will find Christ-like faith in the strangest of places. We'll see family members grow away from faith and yet meet perfect strangers who believe as passionately as you believe. Jesus is so much more than family origins. No one is saved by biology, but rather by an ancient adoption plan by God as our Father through the Saviour Jesus Christ. His family members weren't important because they were family, but because they lacked faith. Jesus faced yet more treacherous conflict and offence when His own people made sure He died on a cross. The highest, most horrific criminal offense was for a Jewish man to get nailed to a Roman cross. That's the scandal of the cross. By its very painful image are we and the world rid of all pain, sorrow, sin and death. Jesus on the cross will either inspire greater belief or severe disbelief. In between there will always be questions, doubts, uncertainties, worries and all kinds of anxiety. But by remaining close to Christ, by being familiar with His and His Gospel, such uncertainties will grow more certain, trust replace anxiety and hope erase fear. We care about Jesus, our faith, one another, the church, and even those in our community and in the world, with the urging on by the Spirit. We do care about the mission, the Lord and our future hope.

The Gospel, the love of God in Christ for all, shown at His hometown, delivered on the cross, made perfectly clear on Easter morn, shows that our faith in Jesus moves us into the world to witness this saving good news.

We are, after all, Jesus' Body in the world. We have His Body and His Blood in us everywhere we celebrate Holy Communion.

We proclaim His death until He returns one day.

We are His nail-scarred hands in the community.

We are His beautiful feet bringing good news to every corner of our lives.

We are His mouth speaking words of reconciling peace.

The Spirit will ensure that what we show is not failure or fear but the good name of Jesus.

We are comforted to know the Almighty God has become one of us, Mary & Joseph's son with siblings in disbelief.

For we who are His siblings adopted into the family by faith

And we find hope in our struggles.

Even when we fail. For we trust that our walk is in the good way and good reputation of Jesus Christ our brother and Saviour.

Amen.