

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 26th, 2022



"Plow on, no looking back" Luke 9: 62

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
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.

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Prayer: O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, that by Your holy inspiration we may think the things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children’s Message: Children's Messages are held Sundays in the early service. Please be aware that during recorded services the children will be heard but no actual video will be taken as the camera will be focused on a still shot

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE TODAY: Psalm 16:1 <https://youtu.be/nPeKXDYDKXg>

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Acts 6: 1-7 Wed.: Matt. 11: 25-30 Friday: 1 Cor. 1: 20-25
Tuesday: Eccles. 5: 1-6 Thurs: Luke 14: 12-15 Saturday: Jas. 2: 1-9

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE: We know each of us should all be working to memorize God's Word! You are invited to listen to our Children's Messages where we are focusing on understanding and memorizing a Psalm verse each week. This week is Psalm 16: 1

Musician: 9 a.m. – Louise Gondosch
Readers: 9 a.m. – Don Fretz 11 a.m. (at Picnic) – Gloria Meyer

SUMMER 2022: Please note, for July & August, Christ Lutheran returns to a single 10 AM Worship Service. This will be advertised on all forms of communication. Please pass this along to anyone you know might benefit. Thank you!

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION STARTING JULY 2022
Beginning Sunday, July 10, Christ Lutheran Church will offer Holy Communion distribution in the manner which pre-dated COVID Pandemic time. Instead of the single file “pilgrim style” method --

- 1) Worshippers will be directed to the communion rail in the inner chancel and kneel to receive.
- 2) Distancing between worshippers will be considered, for the best interests of our people.
- 3) The communion bread/wafer/host will still be given with silver tongs.
- 4) The common cup [or chalice] will be offered along with the tray of individual glasses. Appropriate handling and cleansing will be considered and applied.
- 5) The pastoral blessing will be spoken after each table [rail] communes.
- 6) Worshippers will return to their pew via the outer aisle.
- 7) As always, facemasks may or may not be worn according to comfort level of worshipper.

While the church realizes this is familiar and yet new, after 2 years without this custom, any worshipper who would rather not receive Communion in this manner yet, please alert Pastor Todd or an elder/usher. Adjustments and modifications can be made for the welfare of all of our people. Any questions, comments or concerns, please let Pastor Todd know. Thank you and peace.

COVID 19 PROTOCOL: With the lifting of essentially all Covid protocols by the Ontario Government, it is a “personal choice” whether or not you continue to wear a mask for Worship Services and activities within the church. We ask that everyone continue to be diligent in monitoring themselves for fever, cold and flu-like symptoms, and if any of the symptoms are present, please refrain from attending in-person services and activities. Services will continue to be available on-line and in the bulletin. Should you have any questions or concerns, please speak to either Judy Slingerland or Pastor Todd

SOUL Slow Down....SOUL for JUNE 2022 was a tremendous success for all involved! SOUL ministry will not be meeting at the church for the next 3 weeks. Heather and Al Simons will host SOUL offsite at the Kiwanis Park with recreation for them for some of July and August. Plans to have TWO SOUL gatherings in the church at the end of July will be offered but more details yet to come. Thank you to all who serve and support this wonderful work.

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING: We are so excited to let you know there are 3 youth attending the gathering this July 14th - 19th in Winnipeg, plus 2 adults as ibods (assisting with the details of the gathering itself) and myself as the youth leader. We ask for your continued prayers on the gathering as committee members work to pull things all together and on us as we make plans to travel.

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING: THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! To our dear church family here at Christ! We are overwhelmed by your generosity. With your help we made a total of \$1,189.25. We also are thankful to the Mary Martha who gave us a donation of \$300. To God be the glory!

<u>Last Sunday Attendance:</u> June 19th, 2022 Attn: 9 A.M. – 46; 11 A.M. – 35; Total: 81					
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current:	283,291.00	5,554.73	3,371.00	98,836.78	(37,360.82)
LCC Missions	20,000.00	392.16	360.00	7,105.50	(2,509.88)
Property Improvement:			79.00	3,503.50	



SILVER SPIRE UNITED CHURCH DONATIONS for the HOMELESS

Silver Spire provides showers and laundry facilities for those experiencing homelessness or anyone in need of those services in the area. Our church has helped them in the past by donating laundry soap, body wash, towels, etc., but now they need:

1. Men’s boxer briefs
2. Women’s underwear
3. Deodorant
4. **\$25 GIANT TIGER GIFT CARDS (for pantry items)**

There will be a laundry basket in the narthex for any of the above items. Judy Mason 905-641-7546 is overseeing this project if you wish to donate, please contact her if you have a gift card.

Proverbs 19:17: “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.”

Notice to Church Extension Fund Depositors: The Church Extension Fund (CEF) is winding down its operations and as of now all depositors with current addresses have received their deposited funds plus the interest owing. However, we have a number of unclaimed savings accounts and savings certificates as we do not have current contact information for these. If you or someone you know thinks they may have a CEF account which has not been redeemed, please contact Darryll Holland at: 800-465-8179 ext4 or dholland@lceast.ca. Also if you are in possession of God Bank Savings Stamps or Tracky Stamps, these too can be redeemed by returning the books or stamps to: Lutheran East District, 275 Lawrence Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3.

PRAYER FOR OUR CONGREGATION AND OUR PASTOR:

On Wednesday evening at the Voter's meeting, Pastor Todd presented to us, his desire to go to, and continue with, one blended Service at 10 a.m. even after the summer and going forward into the fall. A handout outlined his rationale, which included, along with 7 other points, the fact that current attendance does not really warrant 2 Services, so let's return to one, where we can work hard at trying to re-connect within our congregation; build up and encourage each other; try to bring more people in, and be a more vibrant congregation again.

During our 3 years of vacancy, at every call meeting, we prayed for God's will and that we remain faithful and patient, as we waited for Him to send us the Pastor/Shepherd that He knew was right for us. Praise God! He did just that. We have been extremely blessed to be given a wonderful Pastor who has worked tirelessly to get to know us all and provide uplifting Services, Bible studies etc. under extremely challenging circumstances. I don't think any of us realize the full extent of what it meant for Pastor and his family to move to a new congregation in a new city in a new province, in the midst of a pandemic. What a challenge for not only Pastor, but for Jennifer, Jonah, Nick and Georgia with new jobs, new schools; and isolation due to Covid. How mentally and emotionally draining! Going to one Service would help him to use his energy to guide us in other areas of Pastoral ministry as well. So whether you are pleased with the idea or disappointed because you really like and wanted your preferred time or style of Service to remain, let us try to remember that it is not about us but about God!!!! We trusted in God's will to send us the Pastor that He wanted us to have, so let us continue in that trust and show our Pastor how much we appreciate and value him, knowing that it is through prayer and discernment that he is leading in what he feels is God's will for us at this time.

As leader of the prayer chain, I regularly send out requests for prayers for the needs of many in our congregation, their families and friends; but praying for the needs of our congregation as a whole, as part of the Body of Christ, is one that we should pray often, that we continue to grow in faith and service, trusting in God's will for us.

Let us pray:

"Gracious Heavenly Father, we give You our thanks and praise for Pastor Todd and for bringing him and his family to us. Please forgive us, if we as a congregation have not fully understood the challenges they have faced these 2 years, and have not shown as much understanding and appreciation as we should have. May they receive warmth and love that lightens their burdens and comforts them. Continue to uphold them and give Your blessing and strength. Keep us all, strong in faith, strong in unity, strong in purpose and mission. Give us a good, right, and proper attitude for worship, not focusing on ourselves, our wants, and desires, but on You. Let there be no division and dissension, among us, but just hearts of gratitude as we listen to Your Holy Word and sing praises to Your Name, thanking You for Your many precious gifts to us. Thank you for loving us; help us to be loving. Thank you for forgiving us; help us to be forgiving. Thank you for upholding and sustaining us; help us to encourage and uplift each other. Thank you for the gift of salvation; help us to share that Gospel with others. Give us Your Holy Spirit and help our congregation to grow and flourish like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit and not withering. Renew us and transform us. Help us to serve You and may our witness draw others toward You and Your everlasting love. Bless us with Your peace. We ask all this because of Your endless mercy and grace and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen,"

Carole Pink

MATINS SERVICE [LSB ADAPTED]

THE 3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 26, 2022 + 9 AM Service

OPENING HYMN: *"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"*

1. **Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.**
2. **Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, Your rule with great might:
Your justice, like mountains high soaring above,
Your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

Words: Walter C. Smith, 1867; Music: St. Denio Welsh Melody www.hymnary.org/text/immortal_invisible_god_only

SPOKEN MATINS RESPONSES:

O Lord, open my lips!

And my mouth will declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Make haste to help me O Lord.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son + and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Praise to You, O Christ;

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Blessed be God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Oh come, let us worship Him.

PRAISE PSALM VENITE

COME, LET US SING

Psalm 95: 1-6

© Australian Lutheran Church 2001

**Sing out, sing out, all voices, shout to the Rock Who saves!
With thanks, bow down before Him, Come near and praise the Lord!
For He, our King has blest us; from mountain top and hill-side,
The heights and depths He fashioned, and we belong to Him.**

**Bow down, in faith, before Him, for He has made us all!
As sheep of the Great Shepherd, He feeds us as we go.
All praise to God the Father, All praise to God the Son,
And praise to God, the Spirit, Eternal Three in One!**

(Hymn version of Psalm 96; Tune: "Stand Up For Jesus!" LSB # 660)

Blessed be God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Oh come, let us worship Him.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 25 [selected verses]

spoken responsively

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame;

do not let my enemies exult over me.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD,

and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

He leads the humble in what is right,

and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

We pray: Gracious Father, our Rock and Fortress, Your Word brings life to whole creation and salvation from sin and death through Your dear Son, Who is the very Foundation of our existence. Nourish our faith in Your promises, and ground us in Your holy strength. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

GOD'S WORD

The Old Testament: *1 Kings 2:1,2, 6-14*

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel.... Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: *Galatians 5: 1, 13-26*

[St. Paul writes:] For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery....For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the

flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL VERSE:

"You Will I Love"

**You will I Love my strength, my tower,
 You will I love, my hope, my joy,
 You will I love with all my power,
 with ardor time can ne'er destroy.
 You will I love, O Light divine,
 so long as life is mine.**

*Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke; Johann Scheffler (Angelus Silesius), 1657
 Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt. Source: Sts. 1, 5, Lutheran Service Book, 2006, No. 694*

The Holy Gospel: St. Luke 9: 51-62

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 9th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Forever, O Lord, Your Word is firmly set in the Heavens!

**Lord, I love the habitation of Your House
 and the place where Your glory dwells.**

OFFICE HYMN:

"God Will Take Care Of You"

Canadian (Nova Scotia)



1. Be	not	dis -	mayed	what -	e'er	be -	tide,
2. Through	days	of	toil	when	heart	does	fail,
3. All	you	may	need	He	will	pro -	vide,
4. No	mat -	ter	what	may	be	the	test,



God will take care of you; Be - neath His wings of
 God will take care of you; When dan - gers fierce your
 God will take care of you; Noth - ing you ask will
 God will take care of you; Lean, wea - ry one, up -



love a - bide, God will take care of you.
 path as - sail, God will take care of you.
 be de - nied, God will take care of you.
 on His breast, God will take care of you.



God will take care of you, Through ev - 'ry day,



O'er all the way; He will take care of you,



God will take care take care of you.

Text: Civilla D. Martin, 1866-1948

Tune: GOD CARES, CM with refrain; W. Stillman Martin, 1862-1935

www.hymnary.org

MESSAGE

PENTECOST SEASON PRAISE SONG "God We Praise You" www.hymnary.org



1. God, we praise You! God, we bless You! God, we name You sov-'reign
 2. True a - pos - tles, faith - ful proph - ets, Saints who set their world a -
 3. Je - sus Christ, the King of glo - ry, Ev - er - last - ing Son of
 4. Christ, at God's right hand vic - to - rious, You will judge the world You



Lord! Might-y King whom an-gels wor-ship, Fa-ther,
blaze, Mar-tyrs, once un-known, un-beed-ed, Join one
God, Hum-ble was Your Vir-gin Moth-er, Hard the
made; Lord, in mer-cy help Your ser-vants For whose
by Your Church a-dored: All cre-a-tion shows Your
grow-ing song of praise, While Your Church on earth con-
lone-ly path You trod: By Your cross is sin de-
free-dom You have paid: Raise us up from dust to
glo-ry; Heav'n and earth draw near Your throne, Sing-ing,
fess-es One ma-jes-tic Trin-i-ty: Fa-ther,
feat-ed, Hell con-front-ed face to face, Heav-en
glo-ry; Guard us from all sin to-day. King en-

"Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, Lord of hosts and God a-lone!"
Son, and Ho-ly Spir-it, God, our hope e-ter-nal-ly.
o-pened to be-liev-ers, Sin-ners jus-ti-fied by grace.
throned a-bove all prais-es, Save Your peo-ple, God, we pray.

C. M. Idle, b. 1938

NETTLETON
J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music, Part II*, 1813

THE PRAYERS

SPOKEN KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Eternal God, Whose reign extends from sea to sea and whose care endures throughout the ages, hear our prayers for our country: give wisdom to those who govern Canada and respect for human life and dignity to every citizen, so that justice may flourish and all peoples live in unity and peace.

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

Dear heavenly Father, you have freed us from the condemnation of your law, and from slavery to sin by the saving work of your Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep us in step with the Spirit, always trusting in Christ for our salvation, rejecting sin and struggling against our sinful natures, and showing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

We pray for the church throughout the world, that you would keep it in step with the Spirit in truth and love. Strengthen the resolve of all who have given up things to follow Christ, and open ears everywhere to his call.

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

We pray for the people of the world, that you would free them from hatred and violence and from every evil. Bring peace and good government where there is unrest. Move all rightful authorities to perform their duties properly in obedience to your will so that you may bless the world through them.

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

Have mercy on all who suffer oppression and injustice. Feed the hungry, house the homeless, and give worthwhile work to all who need it. We pray for those with whom we share our daily lives. Bless them all, and keep us in step with the Spirit so we love even the unlovely and live by contentment with simple things and generous giving to those in need.

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

We pray for those in trouble or distress, the lonely, the sorrowing, the sick - especially (*insert names*). Release them from anxiety and pain, and heal them, together with others we know to be in need and whom we now name silently in our hearts... (*brief silence*)

Lord, hear our prayer: **and free us to follow Christ.**

Heavenly Father, when the time us right release us from the struggle of discipleship and bring us with all your saints into the freedom of everlasting life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

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. And 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.

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER:

I thank You, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger. And I pray that You would keep me this day, also, from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe have no power over me. Amen.

BLESSING & BENEDICTION:

Let us praise the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father 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,
Oh, 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,
Oh, 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;
Oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!**

REV. TODD HOEFFS
Pentecost 3 [Picnic service]
Luke 9:51-62 [57-62]
June 26, 2022

The 1st time I heard this reading about Jesus having no place to lay His head, I couldn't help but think, "It's Jesus. Couldn't someone get Him a pillow!?" We sing how Jesus "laid down His sweet head" in a manger with no crib for a bed. Maybe it shouldn't be so surprising that GOD would come down To our little earth Which HE designed, decorated and delivered, without a home or a chair or a table. Birds have nests, foxes have holes in the ground, But not the SON OF MAN.

A title Jesus often used of Himself. Not in religious or political terms of a new King or an overthrower of Roman rule. He is SON of MAN for He is one of us, Yet highly placed to be our Redeemer and Saviour. So then Jesus makes it His ministry that every life on earth He touched He made His home and His chair and His table. Every home he entered to heal a person Every time He sat down to listen Every time He ate and drank with people He had their heart His dwelling.

As He so graciously does with us, and will continue through the Holy Spirit And the gathering of His church. At times it seems easy to follow Jesus. But Luke's Gospel records Jesus' own way of challenging this ease. He's basically calling into question the direction of our life, the values we claim to hold, and how we're living and embodying those values. He is asking us to look at ourselves rather than the sum total of our existence. Jesus won't let us turn away from the people and situations that are right in front of us or the future that is coming to us. Jesus recognizes and holds before us the tension in which we live. On the one hand we say to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

On the other hand we say to him, "But first let me go and" You probably know what that's like. We all do. In one sentence we pray for reliefand yet deep-down hope it doesn't cost me too much of anything to dig up or give up or live without. Part of that tension is a constantly changing daily life. Even if you're bored its somewhat worse because life moves right by you, without you. The Jesus' mission entourage is moving again. They are "going on the way." (In all 4 gospels, Jesus mission is always written as "on the way.") Specific places are not identified today – Luke demarcates history, not geography. The point is on movement and commitment [faithfulness].

A would-be follower asks to follow Jesus. He will follow Jesus no matter where he goes. Jesus responds by talking about the difficulties of itinerant life of following. Message: Be aware. If you want to follow, you might be homeless. This was a terrorizing thought in the ancient world. No home, no family, no culture, no community, no identity. Total isolation. Today, people can be all alone in the home and be happy or miserable. Then, it was death. In pastoral work, with movement all over [as we've done],

Every place is home and yet no place is home. In the early days of the church pastors in training [by the disciples] Made people return to their home of origin to "do church" While at the same time journey far on monthly trips to reach ALL with the Gospel. Home was a safe hub, but not the only ministry centre. That's why when I left the Seminary they flung as far west [so they said]. But this passage isn't about ministry families, It's about believing families. Following Jesus can leave you without a true sense of home. Or this life of faith may ask other things of you that are tough to give up. We easily let our preconceived ideas that "were so good" and all the others are so bad

Or they all go to church so why bother seeing if they follow Or why bother acting like a Christian....?! It's a tension. But an easy tension. Love God Love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Easy. Love God by having faith in Jesus and following. Which is a gift from God anyway.

Love others. Be patient. Listen. Help. Encourage. Re-direct, correct, serve, befriend.

Things we know. Things we think are easy, But if you really think about it we don't do them.

Not always. Not willingly. That's the tension, the stress we feel when we don't want to do it.

BUT being on the side of people in need is at the core of our Lord Jesus' values.

Jesus doesn't dominate the other, avoid the other, colonize the other, intimidate the other, demonize the other, or marginalize the other. He incarnates into the other, joins the other in solidarity, protects the other, listens to the other, serves the other, even lays down his life for the other.

Brian D. McLaren
#DROPTHESTONES

He's going the way for this very mission. The direction is facing —head on, face first -- Down the Jerusalem Road. Sounds easy enough. Seat of God, the Temple, the ancient faith. Like following Jesus means just going to church...But it's so much harder and messier to follow Jesus in real life.

We're all in favor of love, hospitality, forgiveness, and mercy until we meet the unlovable, the stranger who scares us, the unforgivable act, the one who throws the first punch, or the person who makes our life bitter. Then it's a different story and that story usually begins with, "Oh, but first...."

Jesus puts no qualifications, limitations, or exceptions on where he's going, who is included, or what he's offering. He doesn't care

who we are, where we're from, or what we've done or left undone.

And that goes for ALL of His followers. In Christ there's no why, no conditions, attached to love, hospitality or forgiveness. There's absolutely no room for BUT FIRST.... "But first" is our condition on the unconditional. But first – let me bid farewell to family...let me bury my dead father....In God's kingdom, traditional loyalties get all re-arranged. Even one's family, and one's obligations to them, takes second place. This should not be surprising. The family is the tradition par excellence. Each person is the product of generations upon generations of ancestors. Each person is the living face of old family trees and investments and legacies. We are contemporary embodiments of "the past." But In God's kingdom, we're not defined by our past –but by our future.

This is why focusing on the past—maintaining strict duty to traditional practices, placing one's tradition above "the way of the Lord"—does not leave one "well-placed" for following Jesus and having life in His name. For Jesus, "the way" only goes forward. Elijah and Elisha had been allowed to pass on the prophetic mantle. That was then. In Jesus, the now is to look to His road and no more "looking into the past." We honour those who've gone before us best by honouring God and in doing so, honouring His Son Who calls us to partner with Him and honour the true Christian FAMILY – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit --And all the faithful He abides in. There's no more room for backing our way into the Kingdom while keeping an eye on the door. We can't walk backwards into our future, not wanting to see or deal with what is before us. We're plowing a row in a field, looking back – which makes a very crooked mark in the soil. Jesus makes straight what LONG has been crooked.

He is the Son of Man. Exalted as a man for all humanity on the cross, lifted high for all to see.

Paying for ancient debts and future sins by His ONE death. His Blood gives us access to His way.

Baptism into His Body makes us His followers. Eating and drinking His Body and Blood makes us little Christs to the world. All according to faith. Not steps up the Christian ladder Not looking back to see what was. Not keeping track of who's deserving and who isn't – God sees us ALL the same in the view of His Son's cross. This is what Jesus' GOSPEL IS ALL ABOUT – resolving ourselves, resolving our heart, in the way of our Lord. Living in this world, enjoying the light of Jesus shine from behind our faces and through the work of our hands, relating to others, letting the Spirit lead our steps.

We know the path. We know the end of the journey. We know there's no other way. We follow best when we travel in Him. It's the Footprints poem so well known that completes this message – when we see just one set of footprints in our life of faith, it's never that we're alone or following by ourselves, IT IS THEN THAT CHRIST IS CARRYING US.

Amen.