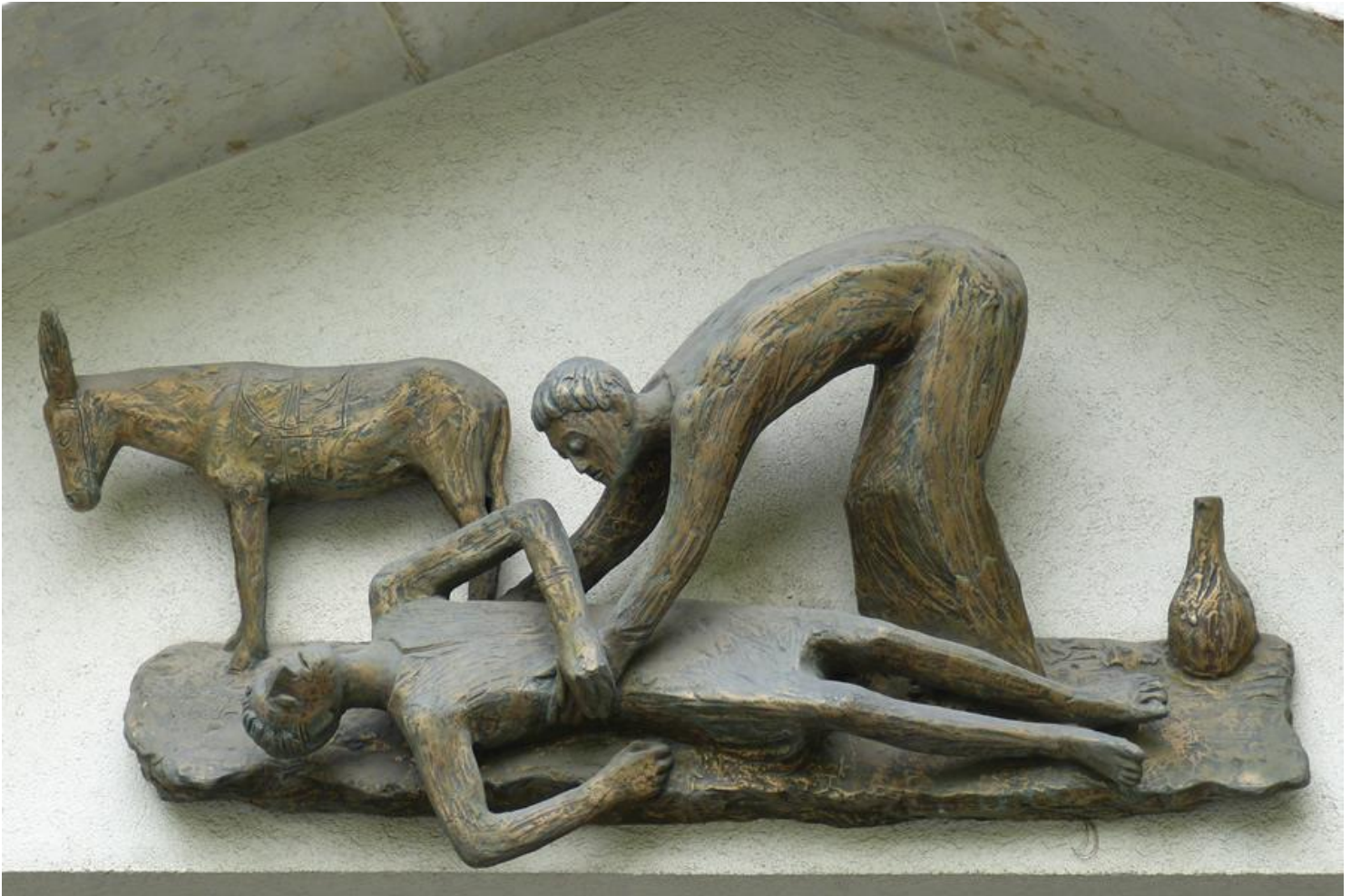


THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 10th, 2022



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.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
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Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

Prayer; Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love: and that we may obtain what You have promised, make us love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: John 8: 1-1 Wed.: Matt. 5: 43-48 Friday: Rom. 15: 1-7
Tuesday: 11 Cor. 2: 5-11 Thurs: Matt. 18: 15-20 Saturday: Gal. 6: 1-5

SCRIPTURE MEMORY MOMENTS: We all agree how important it is for each of us (no matter our age) to know and even be trying to memorize scripture. Each week we will have a short video helping us memorize one verse from the Gospel readings of the week. Feel free to share this with others.

For this Sunday: <https://youtu.be/YSWIDFfABSQ> Luke 10: 27

Musician: 10 a.m. – Louise Gondosch
Reader: 10 a.m. – Tom Kuhl
Greeter: Sue Honey

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 today, 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

CHRISTIAN BURIAL: You are invited to attend the graveside service at Pleasant View Cemetery for Lillian Dueck **this Thursday, July 14 at 2:30 p.m.** Lil passed away during the second Covid wave. This is a special date as it would be Peter & Lil's 60th anniversary. Following there will be a luncheon by daughters Deb Dueck & Barb Zacharuk at the social room of their complex 383 Vine Street.

SOUL Ministry will be offered at the KIWANIS Park hosted by Al and Heather Simons this summer. In person SOUL at Christ Lutheran will be offered **July 21 & 28**. More information will be available soon. Thank you for all who help support this vital outreach.

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.

WINNIPEG BOUND: Excitement is building as we get ready for the National Youth Gathering. Early Tuesday morning we plan to leave making a few stops in Sudbury (Big Nickel & Science North) and Wawa (Canadian goose). Wednesday we will travel to Thunder Bay staying at Calvary Lutheran Church with stops at Kakabeka Falls and the Dorian Suspension Bridge. From there we will drive to Winnipeg for the Gathering. Please keep us in your prayers; for good health, safety as we travel, and that God works in each of our lives bringing us closer to Him and each other. Gods Blessings to you, our church family ♥

Last Sunday Attendance: July 3rd, 2022 Attn: 10 a.m. – 68

	<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	

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.



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."

CREATIVE COMMUNION

THE 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 10, 2022 + 10 AM Worship

OPENING SONG:

"Blest Be The Tie That Binds"

1 Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in
2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne We pour our
3 We share our mu - tual woes, Our mu - tual

Chris - tian love; The u - ni - ty of
ar - dent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our
bur - dens bear, And of - ten for each

heart and mind Is like to that a - bove.
aims are one, Our com - forts and our cares.
oth - er flows The sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.
Tune: Johann G. Nägeli, 1773-1836, adapt.

DENNIS
SM

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

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

Amen.

You are my hiding place, O Lord;

you will save me from trouble.

I sing aloud of your salvation,

because you protect me.

Then I confessed my sins to you;

I did not conceal my wrongdoings.

Looking for mercy from the Blessed Trinity, let us confess our sins together, as one people. O Gracious God,

our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and gift us with grace to grow more into the likeness and image of Your dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, in Whom we have life. Amen.

Receive the forgiveness Christ Jesus Himself has won for you by His Passion, His death and resurrection. In the place of Christ and by His holy command, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of David,

Son of the living God, have mercy on us and give us Your peace. Amen.



He is Lord, He is Lord! He is ris - en from the
dead and He is Lord! Ev - 'ry knee shall bow, ev - 'ry
tongue con - fess That Je - sus Christ is Lord.

He is King, He is King!
Someday all will see Him reigning as the King.
And before His throne worship Him alone.
Christ Jesus, He is King!

He is Love, He is Love!
He has shown us God Incarnate, He is Love!
In His earthly days, through His words and ways,
Christ Jesus, He is Love!

He is Life, He is Life!
Through His death He set us free and gives us life.
Risen Lord, in Him we have life again,
Christ Jesus, He is Life!

Text: Based on Philippians 2:11

Tune: HE IS LORD, 6 11 10 6; traditional

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

We pray: Lord God, everything is in Your care. Put away from us all things that are harmful, and give us whatever is truly best for us. 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.

THE WORD

The Old Testament: *Deuteronomy 30: 9-14*

The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: Colossians 1: 1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SUNG VERSE:

“This is My Commandment”

www.hymnary.org

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in a 4/4 time signature. It consists of five lines of music with lyrics underneath. The first line is marked with a '1.' above it. The second line is marked with a '2.' above it. The lyrics are: "This is my com-mand-ment, that you love one an-oth-er that your joy may be full. This is my com-mand-ment, that you love one an-oth-er that your joy may be full, that your joy may be full, that your joy may be full. This is my com-mand-ment, that you love one an-oth-er that your joy may be full."

Text: John 15:11-12
Tune: Traditional

The Holy Gospel: St. Luke 10: 25-37

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 10th chapter: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a

Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

THE NICENE CREED:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life + of the world to come. Amen.

GOSPEL SONG:

"O God Of Mercy"

[Tune: Drawn To The Cross]

1 O God of mer - cy, God of light, In love and
 2 You sent your Son to die for all, That our lost
 3 Teach us the les - son Je - sus taught: To feel for
 4 For all are kin - dred, far and wide, Since Je - sus
 mer - cy in - fi - nite, Teach us, as ev - er
 world might hear your call; Oh, hear us lest we
 those his blood has bought, That ev - 'ry deed and
 Christ for all has died; Grant us the will, and
 in your sight, To live our lives in you.
 stray and fall! We rest our hope in you.
 word and thought May work a work for you.
 grace pro - vide To love them all in you.

6 And may your Holy Spirit move
 All those who live to live in love,
 Till you receive in heav'n above
 Those who have lived to you.

MESSAGE

OFFERINGS *are gathered*

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:

Heavenly Father: thank you for your mercy toward us each day, and for sending Jesus to suffer and die in our place. Expose all self-righteousness and self-justification in the world, and humble us all to admit our sin and cling to Jesus as our only hope of eternal life.

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

We pray for the world and all people broken in mind, body and spirit. Do not abandon them but send them good neighbours to come to their aid. Move us to love our neighbours by feeling for their plight and crossing the road to help them.

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

We pray for the church and for all who've been wounded, ignored or excluded by the church. Do not close your eyes to their need but send them good neighbours to bind up their bleeding wounds and to pour on the ointment of your love. Move us to love our neighbours by embracing them with the love of Christ.

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

We pray for our country and for all people who teach others. Do not be silent in the face of ignorance and error but send good neighbours to speak the truth in love. Move us to love our neighbours by properly using both law and gospel in our conversation.

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

We pray for our community and our families, and for those who suffer trouble and grief, or who are sick and dying. Feel their pain dear Father, and send them good neighbours to comfort and give practical help. Move us to love our neighbours by spending time with them, inviting them into our homes, and sharing your mercy to us with them.

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

We pray for all travelling on the road of growth in the Christian faith. Teach them well, and send them the Good Samaritan of their souls to give them eternal life through faith in him. Make us all active in loving our neighbours to those we know to be in special need, especially remembering before you to day.....

Lord, hear our prayer -- and listen to our call for help.

Father, teach us to see your own dear Son in the face of all who suffer. May we be your instruments of love and healing in the world. 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.**

THE HOLY MEAL

HOLY HOLY HOLY

"Hosanna, Hosanna"

Carl Tuttle © 1985 Mercy Pub.

1. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, Ho - san - na in the high -
2. Glo - ry, glo - ry, Glo - ry to the King of
est; Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, Ho - san - na in the high -
kings; Glo - ry, glo - ry, Glo - ry to the King of
est.
kings. Lord, we lift up Your name,
With hearts full of praise; Be ex - alt - ed, O
Lord my God, Ho - san - na in the high est.

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CCLI Song # 21545 -- Carl Tuttle © 1985 Shadow Spring

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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. 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

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying: "Take, eat; This is My + Body which is given for you, this do, in remembrance of Me. In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying "Drink of it all of you, this cup is the New Testament in My + Blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you**

LAMB OF GOD:

[Tune: Just As I Am]

**O Je-sus Christ, True Lamb of God; the sin of the world You take a-way;
Have mer-cy on us Lord, we pray, and bless us with Your peace;
A—men.**

COMMUNION HYMN:

“Christians Let Us Love One Another”

[Picardy tune]

**Christians, let us love one another,
as we share the true living bread.
Jesus is our God and our brother;
with his flesh and blood we are fed
Everyone who loves is born--- of God.
Jesus is our life, God is love.**

**We who dine upon this table
die and rise again with our Lord,
drawing from our rock, living water
all those thirsting for accord.
Everyone who loves is born--- of God.
Jesus is our life, God is love.**

**We who break this bread as one body,
we who share this cup are one,
children of our Father in heaven,
sharers of the life of His Son.
Everyone who loves is born--- of God.
Jesus is our life, God is love.**

**Wheat and grape incarnate a mystery;
Jesus is the true living bread.
Let us eat with joy and thanksgiving,
trusting in the word he has said.
Everyone who loves is born--- of God.
Jesus is our life, God is love.**

**Jesus is the vine, we the branches;
we are grains of wheat, Christ the bread.
Those who eat this bread live for ever,
one with Christ, our Lord and head.
Everyone who loves is born--- of God.
Jesus is our life, God is love.**

Words: Armand Nigro & Claudia Foltz

© 1973, Sr. Claudia Foltz, SNJM and Armand Nigro, SJ. Published by OCP Publications

SONG OF SIMEON:

“Let Your Servant Depart”

[tune: Sweet By & By]

**Let your servant depart now in peace,
For Your Word from of old is fulfilled,
Your salvation my eyes now have seen,
Long-prepared as it always has been.
In Your light, you reveal, the world’s promise and Israel’s great joy!
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always may You be adored.**

-7-

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Let us pray: Pour out upon us Your blessed Holy Spirit, O Lord, that we who have shared in this Holy Communion feast of Your Body and Blood may find strength in the Fellowship and Confession of the One True Faith which sends us forth to proclaim Your redeeming love to the world and prepare us joyfully to see You face to face in glory; Who with the Father and the Spirit You live and reign as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord upon you with favour, + and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG:

“For The Fruit Of His Creation”

[Ar Hyd Y Nos tune]

**1 For the fruits of His creation,
thanks be to God.
For his gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.**

**2 In the just reward of labor,
God's will be done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will be done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will be done.**

**3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.**

Words: Fred Pratt Green© 1970 Hope Publishing Company <https://digitalsongsandhymns.com/songs/6971>

SERVICE NOTE: Lamb of God and Song of Simeon adapted and arranged by Rev. Todd Hoeffs based on common ecumenical liturgical texts 2021. Music notations from www.hymnary.org website.

REV. TODD HOFFFS
PENTECOST 5 (series C)
Scripture: St. Luke 10:25-37

July 10, 2022

You see a car accident on the road. You slow down, looking at the car and condition of the drivers. Do you look to be of help, or just fulfill curiosity? Maybe both. Maybe it's a strange attraction drawing you to look at a tragedy? There's such a thing as seeing so much tragedy you get numb to its impact. We see countless horrific acts filmed daily on iPhones, at times to even show the world the degree of the abuse or a brazen discriminating assault. Jesus' parable today which we all know very well involves 3 men who slow down to look at a man hurt by the roadside... ..but only one man goes from watching to helping. That's mercy. Seeing a person in need and willing to help. Active love. Then Jesus says. Go. You do likewise.

We all want to see ourselves as the Good Samaritan, don't we? He's the hero of the story, the one who does the right thing and makes it look so easy. Jesus' hearers of this would be outraged, even angry, that a good act would be carried out by a Samaritan. Imagine how the half dead man felt, waking up in an inn on the Jericho road, learning the ONE who saved his life is a man hated by so many? "And who is my neighbor?" Or to put it more bluntly, *who's not my neighbor? Who is it OK not to love? Asking "Who IS my neighbor?"* implies that there are some who are not my neighbor, people it's okay NOT to love.

After telling the story, Jesus asks, "Who was neighbor to the one in need?" "The one who showed mercy." "Go and do likewise and you will live."

And that's it. Simple, right? Show mercy. Draw close to those in need. Extend kindness. Don't just *think* love, **do it**. Let's start at the beginning. A lawyer asks Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" It's a legit question. He's not a lawyer like we think of lawyers today. He's a keeper of the Jewish law. And he asks, "What's important for living a faithful life?" but he already knew the answer, because he had studied the law. You should love the lord your God with everything you have--with all your heart, strength, soul and mind. And you should love your neighbor as yourself.

People love coming up to Jesus asking him questions. The lawyer's question isn't a trap, but a test. Not the same thing (then). Rabbis often got asked questions in the town, especially this one whose name and reputation is all over many towns.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Honest question. He doesn't mean Heavenly life.

The Greek word for eternal life Luke chose is like our English word EON (Aeon). Long length of earthly time. The meaning is rooted in Adam & Eve's originally intended existence in Paradise. For the Jews is Jesus' day, it means the age of the Messiah Who comes to make all things on earth new again. The Lawyer wants to know how he can get on board the glorious Messiah bandwagon that's going to bring in better government and culture and oust the nasty Romans!

This is why Jesus asks him about the law. He's not a legal lawyer like we may think, but a lawyer in God's Biblical law. Like the commandments and laws of Moses, who's in and who's out in relation to God's Kingdom. Religious lawyers are careful and exact about what they think God would want from His people. So he gives Jesus the "right" answer: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." A very common confession of their faith (and for us as Christians today as well). The 1st part comes from Deuteronomy, the neighbor part from Leviticus. This kind of thing would be like us reciting part of the Apostles creed if asked what we believe.

Great answer. Now, go do it. Live it. And you get the kingdom. But that teaching as much as it remained the core of Israel's faith, was not terribly visible. No one cared for neighbors because that

included non Jews and strangers and refugees and runaways. All labeled unclean by religious rite. Which is how Jesus' parable unfolds.

Who is my neighbour? Asks the lawyer. Now that's a trick question. He SHOULD know. But does Jesus' know?

How much love are we talking here, Jesus? Can you be specific? Where can I draw the line? Outside my front door? At the edges of my neighborhood? Along the cultural and racial boundaries I'm raised with? LOVE God and LOVE my neighbor, it's truly impossible, right? As long as this lawyer is 'loving' God and 'loving' his neighbor SO THAT he might inherit eternal life – it's all about what's in it for HIM. And that's not LOVE. It's only LOVE when it's all about GOD and my NEIGHBOUR which means doing all I have in my power to do to help. Because it's the good and right thing to do.

Afterall, God's law says a neighbour is anyone who is near, Jew, Gentile, any race, gender, stranger, enemy, anyone.

But the religious leaders placed the rites of purity above actually being of good use to people of the community. Rather than draw the unsavory folks into the presence of God, they pushed them out. Jesus shows anyone we encounter in our daily walk of life is a neighbour we can help. What's impossible for the lawyer (and for us, too, because we prefer helping out people we choose), is POSSIBLE for God.

The lawyer asks, "who is my neighbor," wanting to justify himself. We follow the story from his perspective, wondering the same for ourselves, thinking it's about stopping to help someone, who we might see as neighbor. But something happens at the end of the parable. Jesus ends it with a question to mirror the one at the beginning, but makes clear the narrative turn – "which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" Wait a minute – we hear this as who is "my" neighbor" and then at the end you realize that that means that I am not the objective watcher of this story, or the people passing by – but Jesus' question puts us solidly as the one in the ditch. It's the only way out. We must admit that we're sick to get better. This story was never about the others, and whether we call them neighbor, but about us. Realizing how much we need to be rescued. Only there might we find mercy for others – through the truth that we received it ourselves. It is only in dying that we rise. In naming our sin, we receive unlimited forgiveness, that we might offer it to others. This is the good news – this is the parable of the man in the ditch. Thanks be to God. Amen.

But the next question is where it gets tricky.

Hence – the parable. An unidentified person "goes down" from Jerusalem (elevation 2500 feet) to Jericho (elevation -800 feet). The route is a windy, treacherous and ideal for robbers & murderers. Sure enough, the man is met with violence. He's stripped, beaten, and left for dead.

A priest passes by, but doesn't help. In consideration of Leviticus purity code, I'm sure he's afraid of ritual defilement by touching a dead person. The man, however, is not dead, but "half-dead". He didn't see that or didn't want to chance it. If the man is dead and the priest touches him, he's gotta walk back into Jerusalem and get ritually washed up for a week which will keep him away from his family longer than he'd like. Since he's going from Jerusalem, he's done for the day and wants rest. Like us. Who really wants to stop and help fix someone's flat tire when you can taste that BBQ steak in your mouth waiting at home!? Sadly, it's the ritual of cleanliness getting in the way.

God absolutely never intended for any prescribed rituals to keep people away from helping others – that would go against God's own merciful heart. That's what Jesus is teaching here. Helping people in need is as old as the Scriptures themselves.

Then a Levite, who, just like the priest, "comes," "sees," and "passes by on the other side." Levites also perform priestly and religious duties. Moses comes from the same tribe. No doubt he can see the priest not helping, who is his superior. Why would a Levite stop then? The man could be dead?

Sadly, these spiritual leaders wind up being heartless and hypocritical. Just as we can be. If we try to be good and do right in one aspect of our life we feel we can do what's wrong or easy or think less than charitable thoughts about others in another aspect of life. Sometimes we feel our faith gives us a free pass privileged. Not so. We still are called to do likewise and fail when we do not. So by saying a "SAMARITAN" stopped and helped is a real shocker. Samaritans and Jews are enemies. Centuries of insults and provocations make them so disgusted with the other that they both avoided passing each other on the roads and took alternate routes. No Jewish woman could marry a Samaritan. They worship on different mountains. They believe "fake news" about each other. They demonized each other. No Jew would expect a Samaritan to help anyone. He "comes to the man" and "sees him." Instead of passing by, with no emotion, the Samaritan is "moved with compassion". Literally, its gut wrenching seeing this sight! That's the same kind of compassion Jesus has for all of us and our world. He feels the concern deep in His body, where He takes all our faults AS His own and destroys them in the death which destroys Him. He dies that we can truly live and in our living, do likewise as the Samaritan – who really is JESUS in this story. He is the Great Physician, Healer of Body and Soul.

Jesus is pointing to Himself here. Who as the Saviour IS THE TRULY GOOD SAMARITAN who comes to earth and receives the treatment of an enemy. Priests and Levites are the great religious leaders who decide on people's salvation. To the Jewish lawyer, and his mainly Jewish audience, Jesus says that it's their perceived enemy, the Samaritan, who feels compassion, acts as a neighbor, and helps the man in need. The hated Samaritan is the hero. The Samaritan who helps is good. Jesus is this good guy. So go and do likewise. This Samaritan is touching a man presumed dead, who might be Jewish like they are, binding wounds, pouring oil and wine, and setting him on his own animal. All of the uncleanness and ritual concerns melt away in contrast to the GREAT HELP AND COMPASSION given to this nameless victim. The Samaritan has placed himself at personal risk both physically and financially. So God is the one on the hook for the whole world. Paying for our half-dead lives of sin with the blood money of His crucified Son. Oil and wine is poured on our lives. The oil of prayers answered, healings given. Wine from the communion chalice, providing a whole body transformation as His Holy Blood and Precious Body fully takes up residence inside of us. Oil is soothing, oil is blessing, oil is baptismal. Wine heals, brings joy and brings Jesus' presence so very close. And in this place, the church, like the inn, we rest, we are at peace, we are safe from the robbers and murderers of sin, death and Satan. They are no longer a harmful threat along life's road we travel. So we are made whole. This is how Jesus can say "Go and do likewise and you will live." Don't jump on the Messiah bandwagon, go help, serve, love, welcome, embrace. Grow in faith. And faith comes first. That's how we are able to do as Christ does. For in church life, even in our personal faith lives, we can RECITE all the right Bible passages and hymn verses...but they are only truly meaningful when they propel us in confident faith to see every person we encounter as worthy of love and acceptance and help. Only by faith, believing and trusting that Jesus is with us and in us we CAN go and do likewise. And we inherit His promise of eternal life, which involves peace now in times of trouble and heaven later when we die. This sets us totally free to actually SEE our neighbour and have COMPASSION for them and allow our JOURNEY to be interrupted to love our neighbour as ourselves. In Jesus, we move from looking to doing. Thanks be to God. Amen.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

The. GOOD. Samaritan.

Try on this retelling of the story... A seminary professor who knew the Bible, and church history and church doctrine inside and out asked, "What is required for someone to inherit eternal life? How do you know if someone is a "Good Christian?" And she answered her own question correctly. "Love God with everything you have." Then she asked another question, "Well, who is my neighbor?" *In other words, she was asking 'who do I have to love? Who can I hate, ignore, or be justified in rejecting?*

So, someone told her a story,

There was a person who was going about living their life, but they were beaten down, exhausted, worried that they weren't good enough for anyone to love, wondering if life is worth living, if what they did and who they are mattered. Some had left them for dead, or at least didn't pay attention to them anymore.

One time a bishop was with them at a worship service but he was so busy mingling with people and making plans for the future that he didn't notice the one who was hurting and kept on going about his business of preparing to transform the church and make it intentionally mission focused.

And then there was this pastor; she was bright, engaging and fun. People knew that she was a compassionate, loving person. But she also has her own family to worry about, her own insecurities', and besides that she was getting ready to go on sabbatical--a much needed time of rest and rejuvenation. But in her haste, she did not notice the one in her midst that was hurting and in need of compassion.

But there was a third person (*and this is where any good ancient story comes to its full conclusion. We expect someone to do the right thing. But we've become so used to hearing the story as "Good Samaritan" that the shock value has worn off, so much so that we don't even notice how repulsive the phrase "Good Samaritan" is to those who first heard Jesus tell the story.*)

There is a third person (*and imagine putting "good" in front of their name/title*)

A leader of Westboro Baptist Church

An illegal immigrant

A sex worker

A person who is homeless

A white supremacist

· This one, who would likely never be labeled "good" is the one who took notice of the suffering one's woundedness, who drew near to their suffering and had compassion. With mercy, love and tenderness that is unimaginable, they helped the one who was forgotten, weary, and nearly dead; and brought them back to life. Now, I ask you? Which of these three was a neighbor to the one in need?

Though we are inclined to love the Good Samaritan and want to be more like him, Jesus' choice to make him the hero of the story was nothing less than shocking to the first hearers. The Samaritans were the other. The enemy. It's not one of their own who saves the day, but the hated Samaritan. Think about it this way, who is the last person on earth you would ever want to deem the good guy? The one you'd be most surprised, or even offended, if they touched you and supported you in your healing?

The great thing about parables is that there's never just one entry point. Never just one way to see yourself in the story. On any given day we could be the lawyer asking the question, the one who shows mercy, the one who passes by on the other side of the road. And sometimes we are the one in the ditch who desperately needs the compassionate presence and help from a stranger, the enemy, or the one you'd least expect.

Debbie Thomas writes, "Who is my neighbor?" Your neighbor is the one who scandalizes you with compassion. Your neighbor is the one who upends all the entrenched categories and shocks you with a fresh face of God. Your neighbor is the one who mercifully steps over the ancient bloodied line separating "us" from "them" and teaches you the real meaning of 'good.'"

Mother Teresa was once asked, "What is the most difficult thing you've ever had to do?" and she responded, "See Jesus in his most disgusting disguises!"

And maybe that's exactly what Jesus was trying to do with this parable--show that God comes in and through the most unexpected people. God's compassion and love is so extraordinary, so out of the

box, so surprising and even offensive to some, yet God comes to us in our brokenness, and restores us to life.

We've become used to hearing this Good News that it's lost its scandal. But for those who are beaten up and left for dead because of racism, homophobia or oppression of any kind, who've been told in one way or another "You don't belong, you're not one of us, you're not worthy," God calls us to meet them in the ditch, shower them with love in action. God calls us to be a good neighbor to those who might see us as the enemy and bring a compassionate presence and restorative justice that leads to healing.

Maybe we're the ones in the ditch ourselves, paralyzed by anxiety about the future, or broken by abuse and unhealthy relationships, or beaten up by disease and illness. God comes to us in our ditches of despair, stoops to our side to tend to our wounds and wash us with the baptismal waters of grace. God feeds us with a meal that brings healing; and entrusts us to each other's care.

"Who is *my* neighbor?" the lawyer asks. Anyone. Everyone. For all bear the fresh face of God who is Good.

There's so much in this story – a lot of important, life-giving details and pearls of wisdom. This is the third week in a row that we have a story about border crossing, foreigners, and hospitality. All too fitting for our times, and with something very relevant to hear. I know we hear this story and pretty automatically internalize it as guilt for every person we walk by and don't help. This passage broadens the definition of hospitality beyond the passive if you come to my place I'll let you in and put the coffee on, but expands it to the radical gesture of stopping and helping. This is active hospitality – coming into his space, not asking questions like have you been drinking or what were you wearing or were you walking too late at night, but just helping. The Samaritan gives the man his place on his donkey, takes him to an inn – a community – and gives his VISA card with no credit limit to the innkeeper – says take care of him.

That Samaritan isn't us – it's Jesus.

The Samaritan sounds a lot like the God who drags us from the wreck of our week, even the little exhaustion that makes you feel like you're in the ditch, and deposits us in this inn – with this ridiculous, no credit limit, forgiveness – of ALL your sins – abundance for all, over and over, no questions asked – gives what he has, oil [marked in the sign of the cross at our baptism], wine [like on our communion table], water, food.

We cast the story all wrong.

The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" The question is, "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?"

