

THE 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 25, 2023



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH IN BURGOYNE PARK
ST. CATHARINES, ON

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

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
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

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw

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, who lives and reigns with You and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

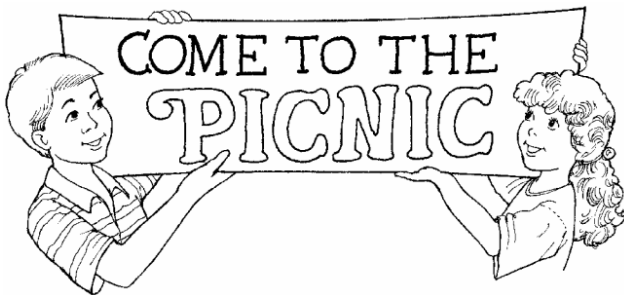
DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday: Mark 2: 1-12 | Wednesday: Mark 2: 13-17 | Friday: Rom. 5: 1-5 |
| Tuesday: Judg. 10: 6-16 | Thursday: Rom. 4: 1-8 | Saturday: 1 John 2: 1-6 |

Musicians: 9 a.m. – Mayumi Munoz Picnic: The Band
Reader: 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. (Picnic) Paul Wachs
GreeterS: 9 a.m. – John & Louise Gondosch

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 9 a.m.: Service of the Word & Hymns at the Church
11:00 a.m. Contemporary Service lead by the band, followde by Annual Church Picnic and fellowship at Burgoyne Woods
Thursday: 10:00 a.m. SOUL – last program until September



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

PICNIC 2023

Sunday, June 25, 11:00 am
Burgoyne Woods, Section "C"

(9:00 am Service at the Church for those unable to attend the Picnic)

Activities: Games, Fun and Action for all

Food: Hamburgers, hotdogs and pop provided.

Necessities to Bring: Lawn Chairs, salads, dessert, plate & utensils

PLASTER THE PASTOR! For a \$2 donation to our SOUL Program, you will be entered for a chance to pie Pastor Todd at our annual church picnic. The winner will be drawn at Burgoyne Woods after the service.

YOUTH: The YOUTH are headed to FOOTGOLF (at the Brock Golf Course) on **Wednesday, July 12 at 6 p.m.** Meet at Christ Lutheran Church. \$10 per person. Footgolf is a fun blend of soccer and golf. Played with a soccer ball on a 9-hole footgolf course, you kick off (instead of tee off) toward special sups designed to fit a soccer ball. If you can kick a ball, you can play footgolf!! Please let Louise, Elizabeth or Valerie know if you can attend!!



Vacation Bible School

July 17-21

9 a.m. – 12 noon

Registration - email: parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
secretary@christlutheransc.ca

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: "Shine Jesus Light" VBS July 17 – 21, 9:00 am - 12 noon.

Come meet 'RINGO' and other friends at VBS. "When life feels dark, Shine Jesus' Light!"



We are still seeking small group leaders, your job would be to take about 5 students from station to station & shine Jesus light into their lives. Even if you can assist for 2-3 days that would help greatly! Whether you can help out as little as 1 day, or as many as 5 days, your support might be just what one of these children needs. If you can assist us please fill out a Volunteer form in the narthex.

(Sign-up Sheet for VBS SNACKS is now posted at back of church—please sign-up if you can help)



July 2023 Worship Schedule

- July 2 - Pentecost 5/Canada Day Creative Worship Service
- July 9 - Pentecost 6 Divine Service 4 Communion
- July 16 - Pentecost 7 Gospel Melodies Service of the Word
- July 23 - Pentecost 8/Mary Magdalene Day Communion LSB Setting One
- July 30 - Pentecost 9 Creative Morning Praise



August 2023 Worship Schedule

- Aug 6 - Pentecost 10 LSB Setting 3
- Aug 13 - Pentecost 11 Creative Worship Holy Communion
- Aug 20 - Pentecost 12 Scripture & Song Service
- Aug 27 - Pentecost 13/ Communion LSB Setting One

OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES to the family and friends of Lois Evelyn Johnson, who passed away on June 19th in her 87th year. She was given Christian burial on June 22nd in Utica, Ontario.

Last Sunday Attendance: June 18th, 2023 Attn: 10 a.m. – 105 SOUL:

| | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Weekly Need</u> | <u>Last Sunday</u> | <u>Year To Date</u> | <u>+ or - (--)</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Current | 297,841.00 | 5,840.02 | 3,180.60 | 97,107.91 | (34,629.46) |
| LCC Missions | 17,000.00 | 333.33 | 255.00 | 6,741.50 | (777.73) |
| Property Improvement: | | | 125.00 | 2,807.50 | |

GREETERS: A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board and we would ask that anyone who is interested in assisting for the coming year to please sign up. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know everyone in the congregation.

PRAYER WARRIORS: Please keep in your prayers our VBS program and the children and families we will impact. We thank God in advance for bringing families to us that we can share the Good News of Jesus with them and help SHINE Jesus light of truth in their lives.

2023/2024 SUNDAY SCHOOL: The Christian education of our children is important to all of us. We are looking for people to help "team teach" our Sunday school children this year; September - December; January - June. If you are excited to share God's Word with inquisitive minds we invite you to speak with our Parish Education Chairman, Brandon Kemp, or Louise.

POWER POINT VOLUNTEERS: – The Worship Committee is urgently seeking four (4) volunteers to assist with the preparation of the weekly PowerPoint projection. Frequency of PowerPoint preparation would be on a rotating basis and dependent upon the number of helpers. PLEASE give prayerful consideration to serving our Lord in this capacity. For more information, please speak to Kathy Kuhl, Judy Slingerland or Pastor Todd.



Granny Squares needed: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The response has been overwhelming and extremely heartwarming that there have been so many Granny squares contributed. We have already completed 3. However, since this is an ongoing project we will gratefully accept more completed 6 inch knitted or crocheted Granny Squares in any pattern or colour. We would also appreciate any yarn that you may have, leftover yarn or full balls of yarn. In the narthex there is a white cube with yarn and hooks that you are welcome to take (or donate). There is another basket for completed squares. Once there are enough, we will make a Caring Squares blanket for whoever may be in need of a hug. On behalf of the Caring Squares, if you have any questions,

call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP? We are setting up a schedule to take meals to Eduardo and Daniela to help them out during Daniela's very challenging recovery from childbirth and surgery. If you would be interested in helping with a meal, please email Carole (carolepink121@gmail.com) Thanks :)

GIRLS UNIFORMS: If anyone is in need of size small girls uniforms for Eden Christian High School for September, please call Doris Harmer at 905-646-2788.

OUTDOOR SERVICE & PICNIC – BURGOYNE WOODS

June 25, 2023, 11:00 am

WE CALL UPON OUR TRIUNE GOD

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

This is the day the Lord has made!

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

From the rising of the sun to its setting,

The name of the Lord is to be praised!

SONG:

He's Got the Whole World In His Hands

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole wide world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the little bitty baby in His hands

He's got the little bitty baby in His hands

He's got the little bitty baby in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got you and me brother in His hands

He's got you and me sister in His hands

He's got you and me mister in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got everybody here in His hands

He's got everybody there in His hands

He's got everybody e'vrywhere in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands [repeat...]

He's got the whole world in His hands...!

African American Spiritual

PSALM 69: 9-13, 16-17: *[International Children's Bible Translation]*

My strong love for your Holy Place completely controls me.

When people insult you, it hurts me.

When I cry and go without food,

they make fun of me.

When I wear rough cloth to show my sadness,

they joke about me.

They make fun of me in public places.

The drunkards make up songs about me.

But I pray to you, Lord.

I pray that you will accept me.

God, because of your great love, answer me.

You are truly able to save.

Lord, answer me because your love is so good.

Because of your great kindness, turn to me.

SONG:

“Just A Closer Walk With Thee”



1. I am weak but Thou art strong; Je - sus, keep me from all wrong.
2. Thro' this world of toil and snares, If I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?
3. When my fee - ble life is o'er, Time for me will be no more;



I'll be sat - is - fied as long As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.
Guide me gen - tly, safe - ly o'er To Thy king - dom shore, to Thy shore.

Chorus



Just a clos - er walk with Thee, Grant it, Je - sus, is my plea;



Dai - ly walk - ing close to Thee, Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

WORDS: Anonymous
MUSIC: Anonymous

CLOSER WALK
Irregular meter

WE CALL UPON GOD IN PRAYER

We pray: Creator God, you reveal yourself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so as we gather in this space, come and remain among us. Help us to discern your Spirit in the world around us. Let us find joy in the world that you created. Help us to worship you with all our being, and to hear and receive your word and your gifts. As we think about our local community and the glory of the natural world may we respond to you in love for our neighbours and for your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE WORD

The Old Testament:

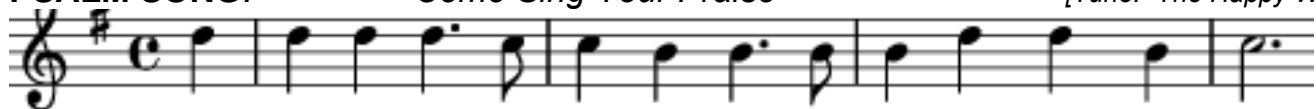
Genesis 22:1-14

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.’ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.’ Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, ‘Father!’ And he said, ‘Here

I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together. When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

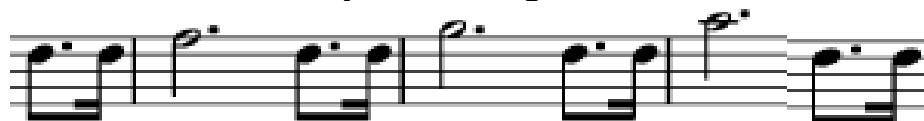
PSALM SONG: "Come Sing Your Praise" [Tune: "The Happy Wanderer"]



Come, sing your praise to our great God, Who made the earth and skies,



He formed them both by His strong Word and called them Paradise!



CHORUS:

Clap your hands! Cheer His Name! Shout His praise! For



He remains your God alone. He rules! He reigns! And gives us His own Son!

**We are His people, His blest sheep. Christ is our Rock of faith.
He shaped us as one family, each one of equal worth.**

**CHORUS: Clap your hands! Cheer His Name! Shout His praise!
For He remains your God alone. He rules! He reigns!
And gives us His own Son!**

© 1975 Wheatridge Lutheran Ministries Camp Songs

The New Testament Letter: *Romans 6: 1b-11*

[St. Paul writes:] Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have

died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL VERSE:

**Earth and all stars, loud rushing planets, sing to the Lord--- a new song.
O victory, loud marching army, sing to the Lord--- a new song:
He has done mar---velous things; I, too, will praise Him with a new song.**

© 1977 Herbert Brokering.

The Holy Gospel: *St. Matthew 10:29-39*

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

[Jesus says:] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before other people, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before other people, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

GOSPEL SONG:

"Will You Come & Follow Me"



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



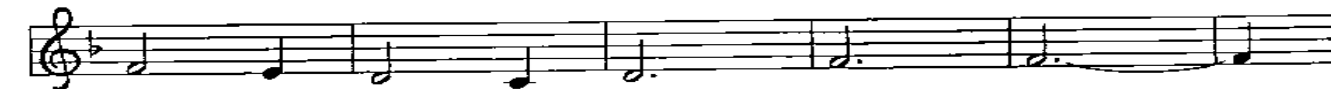
know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life ar -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949
 Music: Scottish traditional
 Text © 1987 Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc.

KELVINGORE
 13 13 77 1.

MESSAGE

OFFERING *is gathered.*

OFFERING SONG:

“Give Thanks”

**Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks, to the Holy One
Give thanks -- because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks, to the Holy One
Give thanks-- because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son
And now let the weak say, "I am strong", let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"
And now let the weak say, "I am strong", let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us". Give thanks --Give thanks !
*Henry Smith b. 1952 © 1986 Hosanna Publishers***

PRAYERS:

Creator God, Father Providing all that we need,
In bright light and dull darkness; In the energy of each day and the rest that comes with night

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

In the heavens high above our heads; In waters that run deep around the world

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

In solid land and flowing seas; In vivid flowers and fruit laden-trees.

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

In the rising and setting of the sun and the rhythmic cycles of the seasons; In the patterns of the shining stars and endless universe,

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

In oceans teeming with fish; In skies filled with birds

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

In a world filled with animal life and in ourselves as fellow human beings, one to another; In rest and reflection, in wonder and worship

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

God of creation and Lord of life, you entrusted us to care for our environment, but in many parts of the world there is neglect. Help us to realise how fragile and unstable our surroundings are, because we are not looking after creation. Help us be good, true stewards and to understand how the most insignificant of creatures has value and every person of the world makes this all part of a wondrous whole. May our faith witness to your hand in creating and your peace is sustaining. For You looked and saw all that You made, and indeed it was very, very good.

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

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.

We remember Your goodness dear Lord;

For our unwillingness to feel the suffering of others, and our readiness to live comfortably with injustice.

Forgive us, O God.

For our self-righteousness that denies guilt, and our self-interest that strangles compassion.

Forgive us, O God.

For our abuse of Your gifts and all the harm we tolerate to carelessly;

Forgive us, O God.

For our failings in community and our reticence to become involved.

Forgive us, O God.

For the times we were too eager to be better than others, when we were too rushed to care, when we were too tired to bother, when we were too preoccupied to listen, when we were too quick to act out of motives other than love.

Forgive us, O God.

May God forgive us all our sins, through Christ Jesus Who has redeemed us, and in His name with His Spirit move us by grace to grow in repentance and love. **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.**

WITNESS THE FAITH PRAYER:

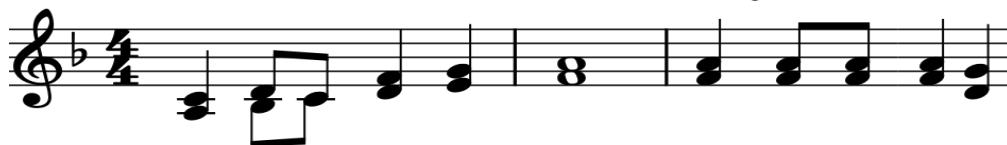
Almighty Father, Who has called Your Church out of the world that we might bring the world to You: make us faithful, we humbly ask of You, in the work You have entrusted to our hands. Stir up the hearts of Your people here and everywhere, that by prayer, gifts and labour, we may have our due part in the spreading of Your Gospel of Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world, until the time comes when all ends of the earth from every nation will worship before You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

CLOSING BLESSING:

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you today and always. **Amen.**

"This Little Light Of Mine"

Harry Dixon Loes



This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it



shine, This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it



shine, This, lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it



shine, Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Public Domain

**Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine!
Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine!
Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

**Hide it under a bushel NO, I'm gonna let it shine!
Hide it under a bushel NO, I'm gonna let it shine!
Hide it under a bushel NO, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

**Don't let Satan blow it out [PUH], I'm gonna let it shine!
Don't let Satan blow it out [PUH], I'm gonna let it shine!
Don't let Satan blow it out [PUH], I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

**Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine!
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine!
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

*African American Negro Spiritual 1750
<https://www.songsforteaching.com/vitamin/thislittlelightofmine.htm>*

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TABLE GRACE – prayer by Pastor Todd

Close singing --

“Be present at our table Lord; be here and ev’rywhere adored.

Thy mercies bless and grant that we, may feast in paradise with Thee. Amen.”

REV. TODD HOEFFS
PENTECOST 4 [9 AM PICNIC SUNDAY]
Matthew 9
“I’ve Lost It!”
June 25, 2023 [9 AM]

If someone seems mentally unstable, we say “he’s lost it”. If we show anger, we may be “losing our cool”. If you’re like me, you put something away that’s been out for a while. And when you can’t recall where you stored it, it’s lost. We don’t normally lose things on purpose. Reminders help. Calendars. iPhone calendars that beep or ring to remind us of appointments. It’s scary being lost. It’s worrisome losing your memory. The other day I was looking through some of the boxes I hadn’t unpacked & rejoiced over an item I found which I had no seen or thought of for many years! Lost and found means a lot to people in ancient days. Precious items can’t be easily reproduced. Open, honest interaction is highly valued among the peasant world of Jesus’ followers. Any attempt at secrecy brings on suspicion and distrust. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees who are plotting behind Jesus’ back; Jesus urges his followers to be open and public. Today’s Gospel has the continuation from Jesus’ house on the rock lesson. He’s preparing to send out the disciples. Whatever has been hidden, Such as the arrival of the Messiah, Will be revealed in this rabbi Jesus. This whispered are known shouted out. Here is the One Who comes to rearrange life, Overthrow Satan’s agenda and heal humanities’ rebellious sin. So Jesus’ disciples will proclaim, in words and actions, this Kingdom of God that’s here. Jesus warns them that the message they take out, the good news of Jesus’ ministry, will be opposed. As a result, division will occur. When people hear the news of God’s kingdom, they hear 2 things: They are for Jesus or against Jesus. Followers of Jesus MUST prepare for fierce opposition. There is a cost for discipleship. “You would have thought Jesus would have enticed people into discipleship. You would have thought he would have made it easy; that he would have put the bar of discipleship very low. You would have thought Jesus would have said, ‘It is easy being a disciple. Love your wife. Love your kids. Show up to work on time. Be nice to the neighbor next door. Go to synagogue. It is easy to be my disciple.’” German pastor and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book I found like changing, “The Cost of Discipleship”. My pastor gave it to me to read before I went into the Seminary. **“When Jesus calls us [as pastors and people], He bids us to come and die”.** In Matthew’s time, these followers of Jesus were being shunned by the Jewish synagogue. Rigid ritual of rules LOOKS costly but it’s easy – transactional – easy to understand in a worldly way. The world is transactional – God is not. Personal Public Piety means little if Christ is not treasured in the heart. Just as in Matthew’s time, so it was in Jesus’ time and it is in our own time. Christian churches have all too often succumb to being rule and moral police. The world is viewed as a nasty, evil place – so I will fortress myself in. And make myself believe I’m a good Christian because I feel like I view the Bible rightly and try really hard not to be like others. That’s the Christianity non-churched people see, right or wrong. So if Jesus is not welcomed in culture, Maybe it’s because the Jesus they have seen in the Christian behaviour Is not all that Christlike. We’re called to proclaim that Jesus calls the world to change. To live by wide welcoming love, to forgive one another, to seek justice for those stepped on, to be agents of reconciliation and peace. To give up the stuff of this world and give ourselves to it’s people. To seek out the unfriended and offer them a place at our table. To avoid the charms of life and seek the challenges. To look hard into the face of temptation and stare it down because Jesus is in us.

To fight for the one whose arm is weak; to say no to self and yes to sacrifice.

To believe in Jesus who comes from God, who is God, and who will never settle for a world that is offering a different message than His Gospel of love for the entire universe.

This is our call to discipleship from Jesus. We carry the cross and follow.

This means letting yourself suffer for the faith you've been given.

This means struggling with the hurt that you have people in your life

Who don't value faith as you do. This means letting Jesus remain your focus even if no one else does.

Bearing the cross isn't about suffering through illnesses or difficult family members or the troubles your kids get into or financial difficulties. Those are hard and debilitating. But they are all just part of living in an imperfect world with imperfect people.

Everyone gets sick. How believers trust in Jesus through it all is the defining factor.

Bearing the cross of Jesus is HOW we shoulder the faith trials and troubles of life.

This moves us to lose our lives. And in losing them, find them. That really goes against the grain. Our lives are precious. Why lose em? One approach in our NA culture says to save your life: hoard it, clutch it, cling to it, grasp it, try to get hold of it for yourself, take care of yourself, trust yourself, see that in every situation your first and major concern is, "What's in it for me?" Life is about you and your happiness. Save your life from any pain, discomfort, or suffering. Jesus approach is: lose your life: give your life away, Freely invest in something bigger than you, and move out in dependence upon God. It's very easy to lose ourselves and become hidden. The trick is to figure out how to lose one's life so that it will be found. Losing our life for Jesus' sake becomes a life that is found and saved. We lose ourselves by diving into the needs around us.

In Jesus' context, losing one's life means losing one's social status – becoming disgraced in the eyes of others – because one chooses to associate with those outside of one's social circle. Hanging out with the lowest and the least, enemies, or maybe even one's actual neighbours. By losing life, it is found. It is found because Jesus is found in the least and lost in His Kingdom. The ill, the lame, the humble, the abused, the neglected. In their ranks we are found. In the likes of those in need of the Gospel, we find ourselves and what our faith is rally made of. It's not about me, it's about Jesus. ALL ABOUT JESUS. You see, when we think only of ourselves, we reveal our separation from God.

This is how Jesus comes not to bring peace but a sword. Jesus' sword cuts away the barriers we've made that keeps God and others out. Jesus' sword destroys the sin that separates us.

The sword cut His life to pieces, and this makes His grace and forgiveness

Accessible to all. Like when Jesus dies and the temple curtain separating people from God is torn from top to bottom. We are loved by Jesus. And God accepts us into His Kingdom because of Jesus. And we gratefully express this truth of who Jesus is, The truth of who we are now are as his baptized disciples. We have a new life in our identity in Christ.

We are not saved to become new RULE MONGERS or control freaks. But followers of Christ who embody His Gospel message. We become loyal to Christ and live within his priorities of love and service to others, all who are in need. No matter what the need.

Jesus also assures us of God's love that will never leave us. As we commit ourselves to proclaim God's kingdom coming near through our words and actions, God's love enfolds us. A love so all encompassing, that it is a love that marks the fall of each sparrow and counts every hair on our head! Wow! This is a love that fills our souls. This is a love making us sons and fathers, mothers and daughters, members of one another in a new family household, the church.

As members of the body of Christ and humble receivers of God's love, we are moved by the Spirit to witness the good news of God's Heavenly kingdom. **WE NEED NOT FEAR ANY OF THIS!** Since our lives are lost and found in Jesus, We will not love our families more than we love Him. Doesn't mean we're not to care for family with deep affections for our closest earthly kin, but Jesus is saying we must love even them less than we do him as believers trusting in Him. I will love my family and friends well flowing from the depth of my love for Jesus Because He has first loved us by embracing the suffering of His Cross. Jesus is not demanding that you literally hate your family. There is a cost of following Him. BY faith and grace, we are glad to lose ourselves in Him, to love him unreservedly—to trust Him and go where He leads. By loving Jesus this way, we're going to love our family more. He's showing HOW we love them even more. And that begins with love for Christ as He has for us. My former brother-in-law came from a Lutheran family we all knew and loved very well in our home church. After he graduated high school, he joined the US Navy, serving a number of years. During those years, his father was diagnosed with cancer. After surgery and chemo, he pulled through and had a good year. Well, after that, the cancer grew and his health worsened at a rapid rate. During this time, they never told their son in the Navy how serious his dad's health became. When they finally consented to tell him, his dad died before he saw him, and the secretiveness created such a vile wedge between him and his family that to this day, hasn't fully healed. In trying to protect their son, the secret caused anger and guilt and lost time and drove him to finish the Navy and return to a life of poor life choices....one of them alcoholism. He has been a recovering alcoholic – but after 12 years of married life and 2 grown children, they are divorced. Wounds are still there with layers of damage that will be there for time to come. Secrets can hurt. Hidden agendas can hurt. Trying to save a part of ourselves only hurts us in being totally found in Jesus. Jesus leads. We follow. We trust His cross. Because an empty grave is the end of the story. Trusting Jesus is how we live. He has proven Himself trustworthy over and over. We have no guarantee other than the blood of Jesus washing away the harm and hurt. A life lost is a life found. In Jesus. Amen.

PRAISE

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| THANKSGIVING | ENCOURAGES | AFFECTION | SILENT | LORD |
| GOD | NOISE | JOYFUL | WEAPON | SURRENDER |
| BOAST | BOW | EXHALT | MAGNIFY | REACH |
| LIFT | SHOUT | INSTRUMENTS | VOICE | PSALM |
| SING | DANCE | CLAP | TODAH | SABAH |
| YODAH | HALLELUJAH | SAMAR | TEHILLAH | HALA |