

THE 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 9, 2023



Christ Lutheran Church of Saint Catharines Ontario

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 Hoefts	(289-362-0113)	pastortoddhoefts@gmail.com
Parish Assistant:	Louise Gondosch	(905-329-8579)	parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
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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

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw

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

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

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

Musician: Mayumi Munoz
Reader: Daniel Figueroa
Greeters: Ralph & Mary Muller

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 10:00 a.m. – Worship with Holy Communion
 Tuesday: 6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. – VBS Crew Leaders meet at church
 Wednesday: 6:00 p.m. – Youth go to FootGolf (at Brock Golf Course) see note below

July 17 - July 21 — VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VBS CREW LEADERS: Thank You to those who have agreed to lead a small group of students through the VBS Stations. We will have a meeting this **Tuesday, July 11th from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. at the church** to review schedules, strategies and encourage. Any questions, please call Louise at 905-329-8579.

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!!



HERNDER ESTATE WINERY SUPPER MARKET:

Please join the Fellowship Committee on **Wednesday, July 19, 5-5:30 p.m.** We will meet at Hernder Estate Wines, 1607 Eighth Ave Louth. There is also a Farmers Market with local produce and crafters starting at 3 pm if you're interested in going early, followed by the Supper Market with food trucks at 4:30 pm, live entertainment from 5-8 pm. Amazing Food, free parking. Children and Pet Friendly.



Vacation Bible School

July 17-21

9 a.m. - 12 noon

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



*****Hey Kids—Are Ya Ready?? It's Getting Close!!
 Amost here! YAAAY!!****

Please Register as soon as possible!

Registration sheets at back of church.

OR Register online at: <https://vbspro.events/p/c99985>
 (Sign-up Sheet for VBS SNACKS is now posted at back of church—
 please sign-up if you can help)

We are in need of: fabric markers
 washable markers
 1 liter canning jars

Please share the date with family & friends & encourage them to preregister.



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

Last Sunday Attendance: July 2nd, 2023 **Attn: 9 a.m. - 77**

	<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	1,204.50	108,330.41	(40,590.09)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	225.00	7,679.00	(821.00)
Property Improvement:			50.00	3,094.00	

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 two (2) 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)

LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK DIVINE SERVICE
SETTING FOUR

THE 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
July 9, 2023 + 10 AM worship

OPENING HYMN: *"Rejoice In The Lord"*

www.hymnary.org

Re - joice in the Lord al - ways, a - gain I say, re - joice! Re -
joice in the Lord. al - ways, a - gain I say, re - joice! Re - joice! Re - joice! A - gain I say, re - joice! Re -
joice! Re - joice! A - gain I say, re - joice!

Take heart in the Lord always, again I say take heart.
Take heart in the Lord always, again I say take heart.
Take heart! Take heart! Again I say take heart!
Take heart in the Lord always, again I say take heart.

Have peace in the Lord always, again I say have peace.
Have peace in the Lord always, again I say have peace.
Have peace! Have peace! Again I say have peace!
Have peace in the Lord always, again I say have peace.
Words: Evelyn Turner, Phil. 4:4; Rev. T. Hoeffs, Phil. 4:6,9, 2023

CCLI Song # 15692

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CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

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

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful

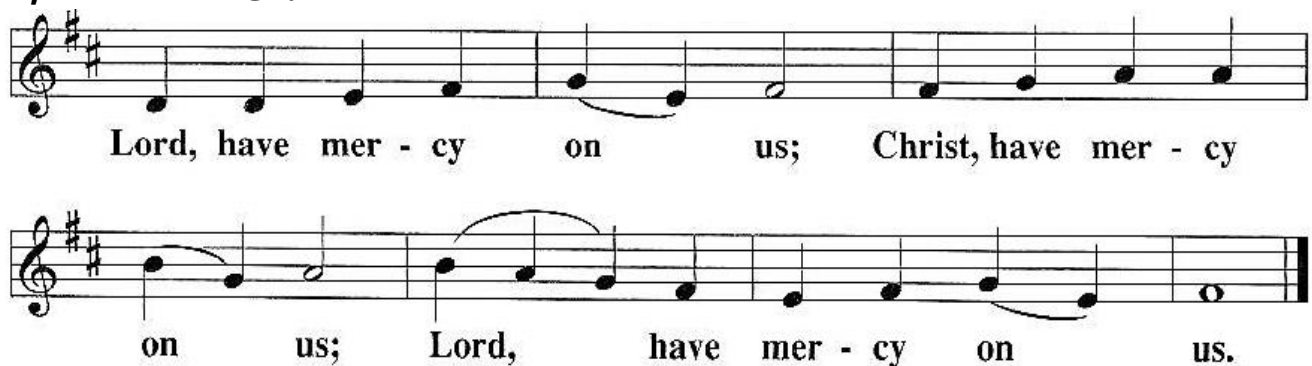
condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying:
God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY:



HYMN OF PRAISE:

"Glory To God"

Woodlands tune

**Glory to God, we give you thanks and praise;
of heav'nly joy and earthly peace we sing.
We worship you, to you our hearts we raise,
Lord God, almighty Father, heav'nly King.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son,
you bore for us the load of this world's sin.
O Lamb of God, your glorious vict'ry won,
receive our pray'r, grant us your peace within.**

**Alone, O Christ, you only are the Lord,
at God's right hand in majesty most high:
who with the Spirit worshipped and adored;
with all the heav'nly host we glorify.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

We pray: Lord God of all power and might, the Author and Giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of Your name, and increase our devotion; nourish us with all goodness, and by your mercy preserve in us what you have nourished; we as this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT: *Zechariah 9: 9-12*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

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

EPISTLE: *Romans 7:15-24*

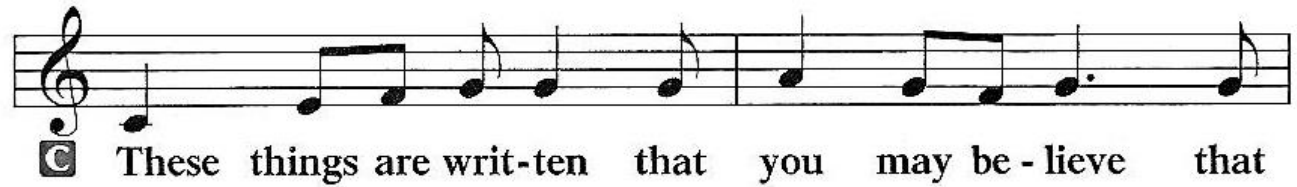
I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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


ALLELUIA & VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



These things are writ-ten that you may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God. *John 20:31*



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL: *Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 11th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.' At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

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 His 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 worshiped 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: "Who You Say I Am"

I was lost _ but He brought me in. Oh, His love for me. Oh, His love for
 While I was a slave to sin, Je - sus died for me. Yes, He died for

1. Who am I ___ that the high - est King would wel - come me.
 2. Free at last, _ He has ran - somed me, His grace runs deep.

me. Who the Son sets free, oh is free in - deed. I'm a child of
 me.

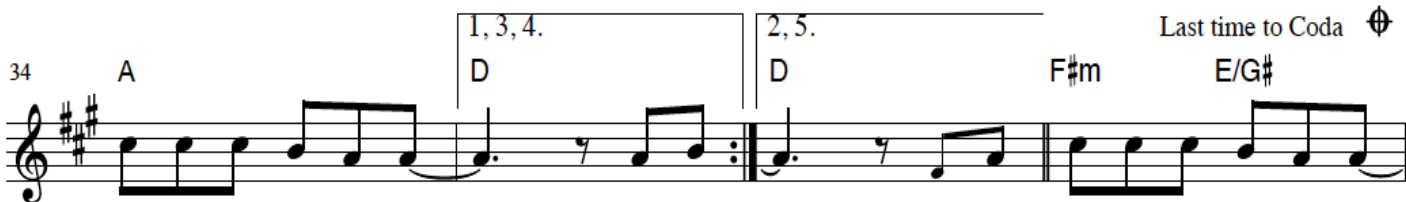
God, yes I ___ am. ___ In my Fa - ther's

house there's a place for me. I'm a child of God, yes I ___

___ am. ___ I am cho - sen, not for - sak - en. I



am who You say I am. — You are for me, not a - gainst me. I



am who You say I am. — I am — (Oh) I am who You say I am. —



— Who the Son sets free, oh is free in - deed. I'm a
Fa - ther's house there's a place for me. I'm a



I'm a child of God, yes I — am. —
I'm a child of God, yes I



am. —

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MESSAGE

OFFERING *is gathered.*

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Heavenly Father, bless your church and the work you have called her to do. Make us a resting place for the weary and the heavy laden. Let us be a place where troubled people can take their burdens and place them in your hands. Teach us to bring our burdens to you everyday and place them confidently in your hands knowing that in Christ alone we have been given a new start, and through Christ alone we can have the true peace and the true comfort of forgiveness.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We ask you to bless our agriculture, tourism, building, care-giving and all primary industries. When times are difficult, we place our trust in you and ask you to hear our prayers and answer our need. We thank you for rain and sunshine, and we pray that you would continue to send rain when and where it's needed. We ask that you would protect and watch over people who are struggling at this time, and especially those who are unable to put their trust in you. Help them to let go of their burdens and find the true rest only you can give them.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Protect all those who are starving, malnourished and in poverty, both overseas and in our own backyard. Give us hearts to share compassionately from our abundance to help provide for our brothers and sisters in need.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Bless our government and all in authority. Use our elected leaders to promote goodness, justice and truth. As you have appointed us to be stewards of the earth, help our nation to wisely manage the environment and prevent the degradation of land and water ways.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Be with all we know who have particular needs, especially (*insert names*). We pray for those who are entering hospital or recovering from treatment – help them to acknowledge your fatherly will and rejoice in your saving help.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We trust in your mercy, Lord, and put all our concerns into your hands. We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right and joyful, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord: Who, on this day, overcame death and the grave, and by His glorious resurrection, opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the church on earth and the whole company of Heaven, we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of Sa - ba - oth, a - dored; Heav'n and
earth with full ac - claim shout the glo - ry of Your name. Sing ho -
san - na in the high - est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord; Tru - ly



THE LORD'S PRAYER:

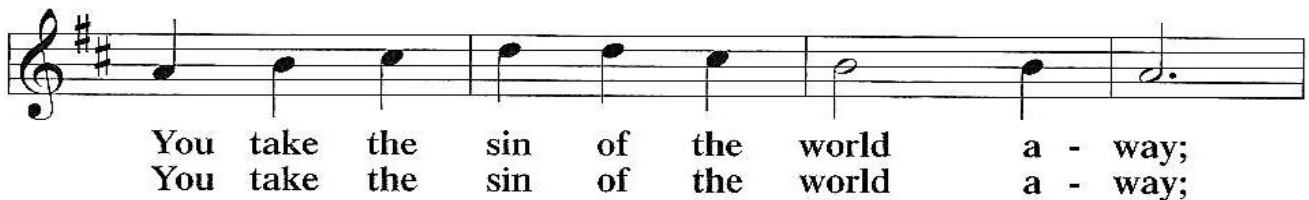
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come.....

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "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, which is 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

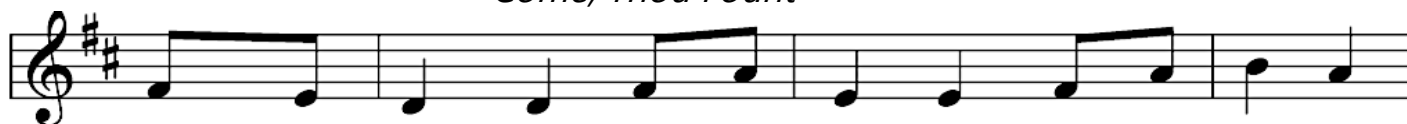


HOLY COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

For those who have need, please feel free to stand at the rail if kneeling is difficult. The common cup and trays of individual glasses are available. Gluten free wafers are also available. Light purple glasses of Communion wine mixed with water are in the centre ring of the silver trays.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

"Come, Thou Fount "



1 Come, Thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless - ing, Tune my heart to
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer, Hith - er by Thy
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or Dai - ly I'm con -
4 Oh, that day when freed from sin - ning, I shall see Thy



sing Thy grace; Streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing,
help I've come; And I hope, by Thy good plea - sure,
strained to be; Let that grace now like a fet - ter
love - ly face; Clothed then in the blood - washed lin - en,



Call for songs of loud - est praise. While the hope of end - less
Safe - ly to ar - rive at home. Je - sus sought me when a
Bind my wan - d'ring heart to Thee: Prone to wan - der, Lord, I
How I'll sing Thy won - drous grace! Come, my Lord, no long - er



glo - ry Fills my heart with joy and love, Teach me
strang - er, Wan - d'ring from the fold of God; He, to
feel it; Prone to leave the God I love. Here's my
tar - ry; Take my ran - som'd soul a - way; Send Thine



ev - er to a - dore Thee; May I still Thy good - ness prove.
res - cue me from dan - ger, In - ter - posed His pre - cious blood.
heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts a - bove.
an - gels soon to car - ry Me to realms of end - less day.

Words: Robert Robinson [1758]; Music NETTLETON Martin Madan [1861]

<http://www.oursavior-gr.org/church/wp-content/uploads/05-09-Easter-6-Online.pdf>

"Now, We Join In Celebration" [Tune: Soul, Adorn Yourself]

Now, we join in celebration, at our Saviour's invitation,
dressed no more in spirit sadness, clothed in Heav'nly joy and gladness;
for the Lord of all Creation, having won us full salvation;
Stooping down in love to meet us, with His very life to feed us.

Lord, as round this Feast we gather, fill our hearts with holy wonder!
For this bread and cup of blessing, are for us the sure possessing
of Your loving deed on Calv'ry, this, Your Flesh and Blood bought vic'try,
Gift of Your unfailing Presence, foretaste here of Heav'nly gladness.

Lord, we share in this Communion as one fam'ly of God's children,
reconciled through You, our brother, one in You with God our Father.
Give us grace to live for others, serving all, both friends and strangers,
seeking truth and love, and mercy, till You come in final glory.

Text: Joel W. Lundeen (b. 1918) alt. Copyright © Joel W. Lundeen. Lutheran Book of Worship reprint SCHMUKE DICH melody

"Softly & Tenderly"

Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for
you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,
Refrain
watch - ing for you and for me. "Come home, come home!
mer - cies for you and for me? Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me. You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,
Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909
Music: Will L. Thompson

THOMPSON
11 7 11 7 and refrain

"Jesus, Name Above All Names"

**Jesus name above all names, beautiful Savior glorious Lord---
E-mman-uel God is with us, bless-ed Redeemer, living Word.**

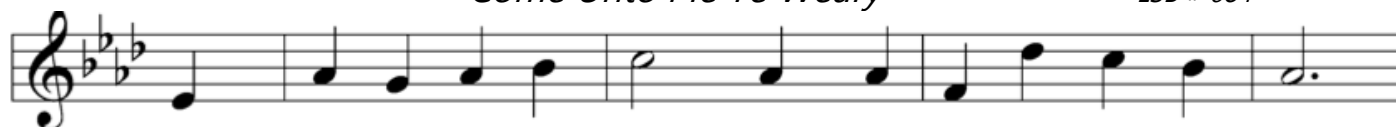
**Jesus, loving Shepherd, promised Messiah, Lamb of God--.
The Prince of Peace, Son of the Father, Son of Man, and --Light of the World.**

**Jesus, Way of salvation, King of kings and Lord of lords--;
The Way, the Truth and the Life-- , Mighty Creator, Saviour and Friend.**

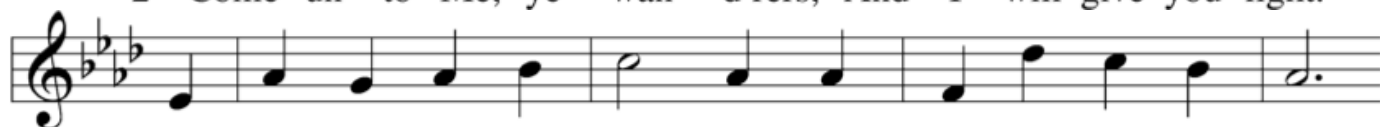
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"Come Unto Me Ye Weary"

LSB # 684



1 "Come un - to Me, ye wea - ry, And I will give you rest."
2 "Come un - to Me, ye wan - d'ers, And I will give you light."



O bless - ed voice of Je - sus, Which comes to hearts op-pressed!
O lov - ing voice of Je - sus, Which comes to cheer the night!



It tells of ben - e - dic - tion, Of par-don, grace, and peace,
Our hearts were filled with sad - ness, And we had lost our way;



Of joy that hath no end - ing, Of love that can - not cease.
But Thou hast brought us glad - ness And songs at break of day.

William Dix, 1867 public domain

[http://www.stjlutheran.org/home/180011894/180011894/docs/02-24-21%20Bulletin-Invocabit%20Wed%20\(for%20website\).pdf?sec_id=180011894](http://www.stjlutheran.org/home/180011894/180011894/docs/02-24-21%20Bulletin-Invocabit%20Wed%20(for%20website).pdf?sec_id=180011894)

SONG OF SIMEON

1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, 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 HYMN:

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"

**What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be
discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?**

**Jesus knows our every
weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

**Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our
refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake
thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield
thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.**

Words: Joseph Scriven, 1855 [Canadian]; Music: Charles Converse, 1868 public domain

REV. TODD HOEFFS
PENTECOST 6
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
Take It Easy...
July 9, 2023

Famous author Mark Twain once wrote – it is easier to fool people than to convince people that they have been fooled. [If you ignore the news in the papers you're uniformed; if you take to heart all of the news from the papers you are mis-informed.]

It's easy finding misinformation. It's so easy being misunderstood. To say one thing, and it be taken so many different ways! A compliment can be taken well or perceived as a threat.

An order can be followed or ignored. Both John the Baptizer and our Lord Jesus are misunderstood. So its no shock when we as followers of Jesus feel misunderstood.

Jesus' audience recorded in Matthew's Gospel has immense indifference.

This generation are those Jesus encounters when travelling and teaching.

This generation is any person at odds with Jesus' message of renewal.

This generation includes every era. Jesus starts with an unusual story of not dancing to flutes or failing to cry. Flutes played for weddings; public mourners wailed at funerals.

THIS generation fails in both. Mostly due to the failings of religious culture for Israel at that time. MEANING – they hate John the Baptizer, they hate Jesus. The people of these towns and cities got angry at Jesus' message. Places like Capernaum are basic, unimpressive villages in Galilee, the small villages where most of his disciples came from.

Nothing notoriously bad or threatening there. Jesus preaches and heals, and no one is moved by it, going on about the regular business. John is hated because of his austere living and rigid diet; Jesus is hated for exactly the opposite reason, because of His eating drinking and welcoming of public outcasts and sinners. Jesus is attacking the comfortable, secure and self-centered lives of the religious orders. The common person didn't like the situation, but got used to it. This proves a heads up for our generation as well. Oftentimes when our habits or lifestyles needs changing [like when I need a phone calendar that rings for appointments, Or I need a note as a reminder, or start a diet] and we are confronted by Truth we cringe, becoming hard to deal with Weighing the truth of the Word [or the words of those we love] against our lives, embracing it and enjoying the Spirit's transformation in our faith. People who cannot respond positively to any suggestion from God end up being nothing. Jesus' contemporaries prefer to sit on the sidelines uninvolved rather than take seriously God's message as John and then Jesus. They don't want the restrictive habits of John the Baptizer. They don't want the openness of Jesus. They want someone to bless them in the old attitudes and habits as they are. Maybe they're hoping for a therapist to come and enhance their self-esteem rather than enable them to grow. Indifference, stubbornness, are all bothersome to Jesus. He gives a common story to highlight their woe!

We can all relate to that. Our world is becoming hotter, crowded and wired.

We have extreme weather patterns more often, Less resources, less capital to buy and produce, debt problems are causing economic hardship and we don't have a plan for how we will deal with the sick, the elderly and the needy. We are born self-absorbed. We're concerned with how things affect ourselves. And we choose to rebel knowing

we have no clue of what to do or how to go about it. We like our own little worlds. It's easier. It's comforting in the short term. But it stirs up trouble. Isolation rarely helps.

Nothing good grows in that. Evil things rarely appear creepy or ominous.

The devil always puts the words "new and improved" on his toxic products.

He cleans himself up, hides in plain sight looking pious, religious and helpful. It's easy to see outreach and welcome as a waste of time. Why do you think Adam and Eve hid from God in the Garden of Eden? Alone in self-induced sin feels better for the moment.

EDMONTON EX of evangelism – why bother? We've done it all before. A church on every corner. They should know to go!!! If they don't come, it's their problem. !!!!!!!

It's frustrating when our approaches bear little result. But we can't blame the outside world for not darkening our door. Even though many Christians say that today. Pride and arrogance makes this generation hate Jesus. Lack of humility must never be traits of Jesus' followers. Jesus is here for those who have no one else to turn to. Jesus is here for the rock bottom hopeless cases. Jesus is here for those in pain, those who misunderstand, those misunderstood,

The little ones, the weak ones, the hurt, vulnerable and marginalized ones.

Jesus is here for each one of us in all those times we find ourselves in.

Jesus is here, know -- And He is still delighted that these truths of His Father's Kingdom are hidden from the perceived learned folks And shown to little children. Those who humbly depend upon God to meet their needs are "Little children." We are all well aware of our shortcomings, our less than exemplary traits, our weaknesses, our dislikes; We HAVE to depend absolutely upon God's grace in Jesus to rescue us and give us a secure way out and way forward. A highly educated, "learned" individual can be a "Little child" in spirit.

This is based solely in trusting Jesus' forgiveness, mercy and grace. This makes you and me a child of God and follower of Jesus. Faith is simply God's gift so we can rely on Him for all things needed. The wise and intelligent, self-sufficient, self-made people thinking

This helps them get into heaven easier, are not such Little children. Humility comes from relying on God, no matter the rank or degree. A humble heart is a heart willing to learn and grow. This is how God's Kingdom in Jesus is welcomed and believed. So Jesus says COME. All the weary ones, Come. The judgmental and those judged; Those who nitpick and those who are picked apart for falling short. Those weary of having to have the answers, or those weary of not knowing; This is us, too. We just need Jesus and His promised rest. That rest depends on something strange. A YOKE. A yoke is a piece of wood and curved metal rods

secured around an animal's neck. Like when cows pull carts or ploughs. It's a burdensome way to work. We all have burdens, yokes we wear, keeping us tied to all kinds of circumstances. Even the daily lists we make to get things done is a burden, Especially what we rely on to get us through a day. Is it just our own selves of Christ Who is in us? Other burdens are not so visible, and we carry them inside ourselves

This is why Jesus' yoke is EASY. Lightweight. Not burdensome. It's not an exchange.

Sometimes we are so intertwined with our problems they aren't yokes, their deeply woven into our being. His yoke removes all the other yokes created by harmful reasons.

God's Spirit gives us inspired attitudes to meet daily challenges with renewed peace and hope. Because – when we have Jesus' yoke, He bears all the strain with us and in us.

His neck feels any abrasion, not ours. His head leads the way, not ours. We live and move because of His life, His power, His strength in our bodies. We are not partners, He is our daily movement. He's not only offering us a rest *from* our hectic lifestyle,

but His rest *IS our* lifestyle. He is the embodiment of perfect rest.

And not one person is excluded from this rest. Because Jesus laid down and rested on the cross when His torn open back Bears the burden of the world's troubles.

His arms bore His suffering body, the weight of our sin, the curse of our death,

In His death. He sets you free! Free from trying to bargain your way back to God.

Free from trying hard and hoping your good intentions are enough.

Free from thinking you must act great to be loved by our Lord. Free from any unwillingness to grow or view life differently. You are free to trust in Jesus for everything to get you through. It's not about what advice or path is easiest or quickest. Is Jesus' word OK, or John's, or something I researched myself. With Jesus you have all you need.

An identity, a faith, an inheritance in Heaven, a life of grace now that doesn't run out,

A family of believers all over the globe. Jesus' freedom is easy. It comes right over your head like a shower – a baptismal shower of Spirit-filled grace. It's easy because its predictable. It's uncomplicated, simple and available to all. When Jesus sends you out the door He takes you where you need to go. And He is concerned with how you go and how you arrive and what lies ahead. When Jesus sends us opportunities in His service

they are made to exactly fit our needs and our abilities.

There are no strange demands. There are no unattainable expectations.

Follow Jesus, trust His yoke, live His life in your life. The pastor's stole I wear is also called the yoke of Christ.

When I put it on I am reminded of Whom I belong. Jesus got me here and He will carry me through. And that is perfect information we can rest upon.

Amen.

Vacation Bible School

N N A V F X U K A D F S K M B E A
I O X S F I K N S E E P N J P M A
N I C S C W I Z M E N V P M X B M
Y T Y Z D M Q J L T A C T O L R H
A A F S A F X X L W M V T S K F P
P C L L R C Q S A A U J C E Y Y G
L A S D P C K T P U Q B D S G E E
G V D I D Z E X K H I T C V I O J
U W A C Y R H A X B F G S L X U L
J O V R I M R B L R F L Z U C Q N
J K V E C Y V E A R Y Z O S R A P
C C M A R C R X I P T T U O L F V
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J M X O U D W U S R P K S R U W S
K U B N S Y O D B U U V D M I D U
N U L B E A C H G K S K F R C B G

beach

surf

sea

birds

animals

water

baptism

creation

Moses

Jesus

friends

school

bible

vacation

But Whom Do You Say That I AM?

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N	M	P	E	I	A	G	O	N	O	F	U	O	R	H	A	D	U	J	F	O	N	O	I	L	I	F	E	I	T
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R	S	A	A	H	O	F	F	E	T	K	E	E	N	D	O	G	Y	T	H	G	I	M	L	A	M	E	N	H	I
A	S	S	Q	N	G	D	D	O	I	L	A	N	I	N	O	S	N	E	T	T	O	G	E	B	Y	L	N	O	D
Z	I	T	J	O	U	N	N	N	D	E	C	A	E	P	F	O	E	C	N	I	R	P	H	Y	P	L	P	E	
A	A	E	D	Y	O	E	G	A	C	O	R	S	T	N	E	N	I	V	D	I	V	A	D	F	O	N	O	S	M
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Advocate
Almighty
Alpha and Omega
Amen
Apostle
Beloved Son
Bishop
Branch
Bread
Captain
Carpenter
Chosen
Christ
Consolation
Cornerstone
Counselor
Day Star
Deliverer

Door
Emmanuel
Everlasting
Faithful and True
First and Last
Forerunner
Foundation
Governor
Head
High Priest
Holy and Just One
Horn of Salvation
I AM
Jesus
Judge
King
King of Kings
Lamb of God

Lawgiver
Life
Light
Lion of Judah
Lord
Lord of Lords
Master
Master
Mediator
Messiah
Mighty God
Morning Star
Nazarene
Only Begotten Son
Passover
Priest
Prince of Peace
Prophet

Redeemer
Resurrection
Rock
Savior
Servant
Shepherd
Son of David
Son of God
Son of Man
Vine
Way
Wonderful
Word