

THE 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 23, 2023



Christ Lutheran Church of St. Catharines, ON

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
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: O Almighty and most merciful God, of Your bountiful goodness keep us, we pray, from all things that may hurt us that we, being ready in both body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish whatever things You want done; 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: Mark 8: 13-21 Wednesday: 1 Cor. 6: 19-20 Friday: Rom. 12: 1-2
Tuesday: Jas. 3: 1-10 Thursday: Mark 9: 43-50 Saturday: 1 Cor. 9: 24-27

Musician: Louise Gondosch
Reader: Don Fretz
Greeters: Don & Lois Fretz

WORSHIP: 10 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

July /August Worship Schedule

July 23 – Pentecost 8/Mary Magdalene Day Communion LSB Setting One
July 30 – Pentecost 9 Creative Morning Praise (Pastor John Makey)
Aug 6 – Pentecost 10 Service of Word (Pastor Robert Munoz)
Aug 13 – Pentecost 11 Creative Worship Holy Communion
Aug 20 – Pentecost 12 Scripture & Song Service [The Band]
Aug 27 – Pentecost 13/ Communion LSB Setting One

PLEASE NOTE: Pastor Todd will be away on vacation July 24 through August 7, 2023. Rev. John Makey will lead the service on July 30th and Rev. Robert Munoz will lead the service on August 6th. We do not have an official regional pastor emergency coverage, but Pastor John is open to visit any hospital emergencies. Phone answering machine will reflect this.

CANVAS FOR A CAUSE: Join us **Wednesday, August 16th at 7 p.m.** for a **“Paint Night”** which will help support our SOUL program. Everyone will be guided through painting an 11x 14 acrylic landscape. All supplies and light refreshments will be provided. The cost is \$25 per person. Bring a friend and find your inner artist! See Jenn Hoefts to register.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR JASON GILLARD, August 27, 4:00 p.m. at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 15 Wexford Ave. S., in Hamilton. Saulo Bledoff will be the preacher. Joel Kuhl will be the liturgist. Richard Juritsch will be the lector. A dinner will follow the service.

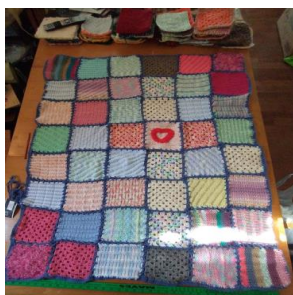
<u>Last Sunday Attendance:</u>		July 16th, 2023	Attn: 9 a.m. – 80	VBS – 30 Children plus helpers	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current	297,841.00	5,840.02	1,623.00	119,978.91	(40,397.91)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	65.00	9,679.50	315.65
Property Improvement:			54.00	3,327.50	

FLOWERS have been placed on the altar this morning to the glory of God by George & Gail Julie on the occasion of their Wedding Anniversary.

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.

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.

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 still needed: 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)

THANK YOU FOR SHINING JESUS' LIGHT! We had approximately 30 children for our VBS with 20 children staying all day! Throughout this week of VBS we saw God at work among His people. Thank you to the VBS staff and helpers who, with God's help rose above to SHINE Jesus' Love to each and every student and sibling that came through our doors. It was a wonderful week filled with warmth and kindness. Parents and children were so appreciative to receive such a warm welcome and be encouraged in the faith! What a joy to hear children singing songs, reciting Bible Verses and stories, hearing stories of other Christian children and making crafts reminding them of their Bible Verses and how God loves them and wants US to **SHINE HIS LIGHT!** The highlight of the afternoon program was Thursday going to Luther Manor and having "Tarts and Tea" (made by students) with the residents there, as well as sharing our songs and Bible Verses and of course our afternoon activities, including trips to the splash pad. Thank you to those of you who remembered us in prayer! We could feel those prayers and it was a joy to share with students attending that others they didn't even know were praying for them! A special THANK YOU to Heather Simons (our Co-director) for whom this entire week would not have been possible. Please continue to pray for the children and families that came, that God will continue to grow their faith He nurtured this week. ***"Well done my good and faithful servants!"***

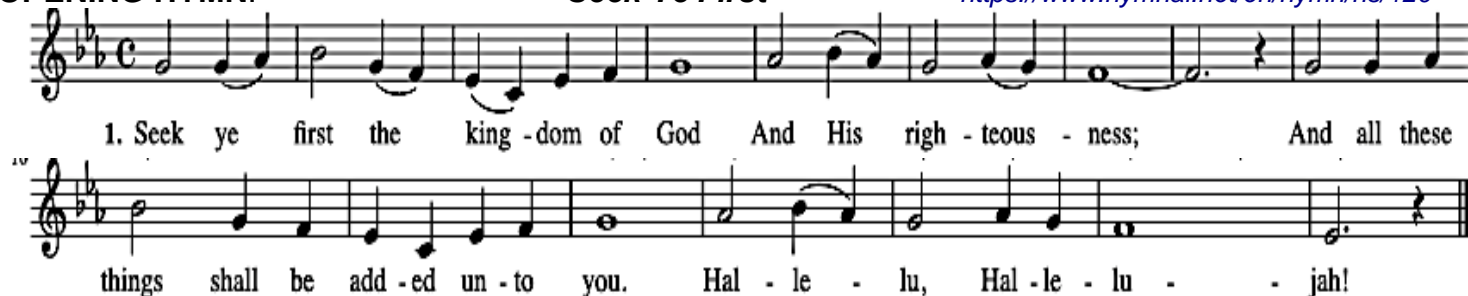
HOLY COMMUNION
LSB DIVINE SERVICE SETTING ONE

8th Sunday After Pentecost & St. Mary Magdalene Day
July 23, 2023 + 10 AM Worship

OPENING HYMN:

"Seek Ye First"

<https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/ns/120>



1. Seek ye first the king - dom of God And His righ - teous - ness; And all these things shall be add - ed un - to you. Hal - le - lu, Hal - le - lu - jah!

2. Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and you shall find.
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
Hallelu, Hallelujah!

3. Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds out from the mouth of God.
Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Karen Lafferty, 1972 © Maranatha Pub. 1972 USA

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

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

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, Who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[Brief silence for reflection]

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father:

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

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

SPOKEN KYRIE: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

HYMN OF PRAISE



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His peo - ple on earth.



C Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al-might-y God and Fa - ther:



We wor-ship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



You are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther; re-ceive our prayer.



For You a-lone are the Ho-ly One, You a-lone are the Lord,



You a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

We pray: Almighty and merciful God, You have made Your loving purpose known to us through the Good News of Your salvation in Christ. Make us faithful witnesses to this true proclamation, like Mary Magdalene, so that those who hear may believe and be united with all the saints in glory. We pray 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

The First Reading: *Acts of the Apostles 13:26-33a* [Mary Magdalene Festival lesson]

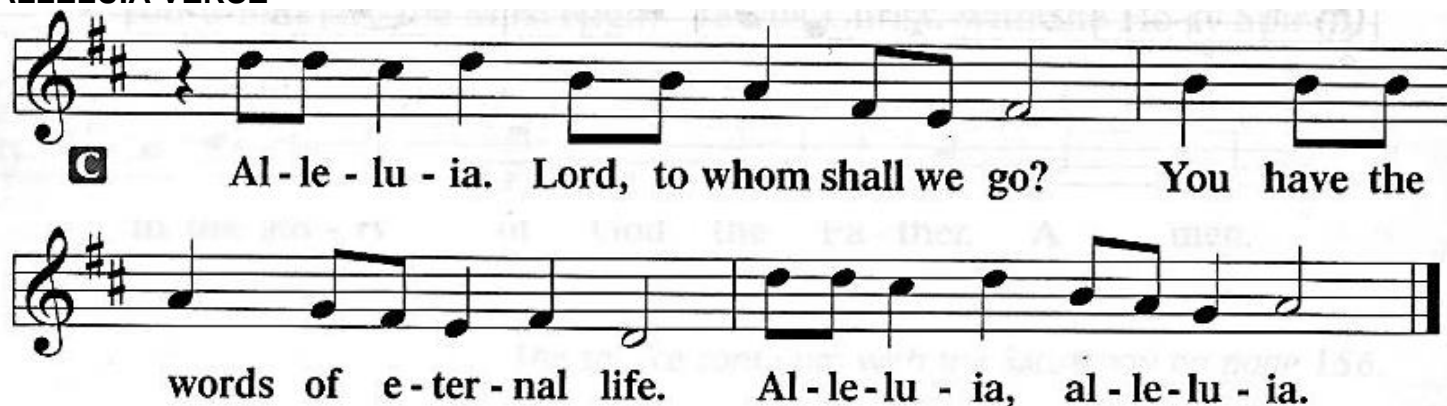
[St. Paul says:] 'My brothers and sisters, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: *Romans 5:1-8*

[St. Paul writes]: Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

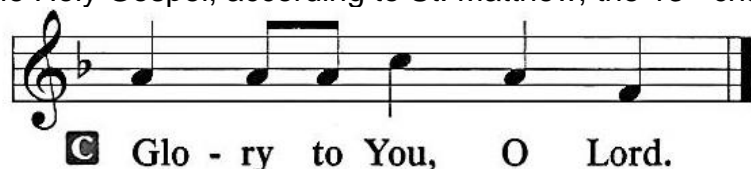
ALLELUIA VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel: *St. Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 13th chapter:



Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

Jesus put before the crowds of people another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '....Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



G 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL SONG:

"For God So Loved The World"

Alfred Smith

The image shows a musical score for a gospel song. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "For God so loved the world he gave his on-ly Son, to die on Cal-v'ry's tree, From sin #to set me free, Some day he's com-ing back, what glo - ry that will be! Won - der-ful His love for me".

He came unto his own, His own received him not
But all who will believe, the power to receive
To now belong to God, by trusting in his name
I'm so glad--- Jesus came.

If God so loved the world, then we can love them too
By grace, we live for Him, all people seek to win
By faith and loving when, Christ comes to earth again
Glor'ious His return will be.

Frances Townsend


Alfred B Smith

<https://gospelchoruses.wordpress.com/2014/12/29/for-god-so-loved-the-world>

MESSAGE

OFFERING SONG:

“Let The Vineyards Be Fruitful”



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, And fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, That we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the
hopes and the dreams of all; U - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with Your pres - ence, and
give us A fore - taste of the feast to come.

THE OFFERINGS *are gathered*

PRAYERS

Creator God and Father, how majestic is your name in all the earth. We praise and thank you for making and upholding all things day by day. For our bodies, minds and souls; for food and clothing, home and family, daily work and all we need from day to day, we give you thanks. Open our eyes, ears, hearts and hands to Your creative presence in our daily lives through your Son.

Hear us, O God – **Your mercy is great!**

We thank you for your new creation – your church, the body of your Son – in whom we receive grace and mercy. Bless and protect your church throughout the world that she may preach the gospel to all in need. Equip pastors and lay people and all leaders of our church, that your Holy Spirit enable all to carry out their callings in supporting church work with joy, strength and wisdom.

Hear us, O God – **Your mercy is great!**

We thank you for ordering our country and society by means of our government and elected leaders. Bless those in positions of responsibility that they may willingly strive for truth and justice, and so be your instruments of care and protection.

Hear us, O God – **Your mercy is great!**

Give abundant healing and peace to all we know who are unwell or undergoing medical treatment. Today we commit to you (*insert names*)... Watch over them, give them confidence in your good and gracious will for them and guide the surgeons, doctors, nurses and other health professionals who care for them.

Hear us, O God – **Your mercy is great!**

Graciously protect us from fire and flood, from war and disease, from famine and strife and from every kind of disaster. Support all people in their proper vocation, particularly those who are overworked and those whose work is difficult and dangerous. Help all those who are unemployed or underemployed to find suitable work. Bless our arts and culture, our science and technology. Be with all widows and widowers, and provide for all children who have lost their parents. Comfort those who are lonely and those who mourn the loss of loved ones.

Hear us, O God – **Your mercy is great!**

Mary Magdalene was the first to greet your risen Son and carried the news of his triumph over death to the disciples. Strengthen us to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel in the world; as we bring our prayers to you, we believe You hear and answer Us in Your own time and will, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

(LSB Page 161)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of Your glo - ry. Ho - san-na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name....*

WORDS OF OUR LORD:

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

LSB tune # 163

Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; have
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
 world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
 sin of the world; grant us peace.

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: "We Come As Guests" [Sing to the Lord of Harvest tune]

1 We come as guests in - vit - ed when Je - sus bids us
 2 We eat and drink, re - cei - ving from Christ the grace we
 3 One bread is ours for shar - ing, one sin - gle fruit-ful
 dine, his friends on earth u - nit - ed to
 need, and in our hearts be - liev - ing on
 vine, our fel - low-ship de - clar - ing re -

share the bread and wine; the bread of life is
 him by faith we feed; with won - der and thanks-
 renewed in bread and wine: re - newed, sus - tained, and
 bro - ken; the wine is free - ly poured for
 giv - ing for love that knows no end, we
 giv - en by to - ken, sign, and word, the
 us, in sol - emn to - ken of Christ our dy - ing Lord.
 find in Je - sus liv - ing our ev - er - pres - ent friend.
 pledge and seal of heav - en, the love of Christ our Lord.

Glory to God 504

TEXT: Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1975; © 1984 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by Permission.

MUSIC (WIE LIBBLICH IST DER MAIEN 7.6.7.6.D): Johann Steurlein, 1575

"The Reign Of God, Like Farmer's Field"

Dundee tune

1 The reign of God, like farm-er's field, bears weeds a-long with wheat;

The good and bad are in-ter- twined till har-vest is com-plete.

2 Like mustard tree, the reign of God, from tiny seed will spread,
 Till birds of ev'ry feather come to nest, and there be fed.

3 Though hidden now, the reign of God may yet un-noticed grow;
 From deep within it rises up, like yeast in swelling dough.

4 The reign of God is come in Christ; God's Kingdom now is near!
 Ablaze among us, kindling hearts, God's Kingdom now is here!

Words: Delores Dufner, OSH b. 1939 © 2013 GIA Publications www.lectionarysong.blogspot.ca

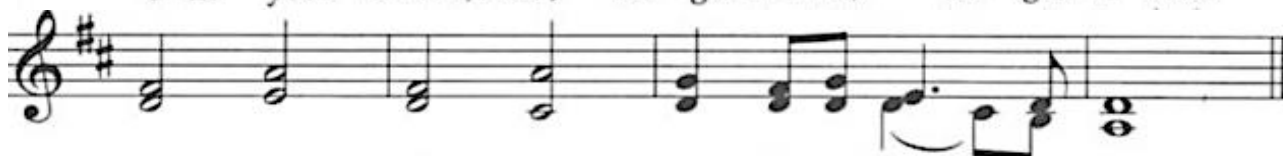
Music: Dundee (Scottish) Edinburgh Psalter, 1615 www.hymnary.org/hymn/ELW2006/page/1091

"Be Glorified"

<https://www.firstpreswh.org/daily-devotional/in-my-life-lord-be-glorified-hymn-468>



1 In my life, Lord, be glo-ri - fied; be glo-ri - fied.
2 In our song, Lord, be glo-ri - fied; be glo-ri - fied.
3 In your church, Lord, be glo-ri - fied; be glo-ri - fied.



In my life, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day.
In our song, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day.
In your church, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day.

4. In this Bread, Lord, be glorified; be glorified.
In this Wine, Lord, be gloried today.

5. In this Meal, Lord, be glorified; be glorified.
As we meet, Lord, be glorified today.

TEXT and MUSIC: Bob Kilpatrick, 1978

Text and Music © 1978, 1986 Prism Tree Music, assigned 1998 to The Lorenz Corp.

LORD, BE GLORIFIED

4.4.4.4.6

CCLI# 1296903

"On What Has Now Been Sown"

www.Hymnary.orgLBW



1 On what has now been sown Thy bless - ing, Lord, be - stow;
2 To Thee our wants are known, From Thee are all our pow'rs;
3 O grant that each of us, Now met be - fore Thee here,



The pow'r is Thine a - lone To make it sprout and grow. Do Thou
Ac - cept what is Thine own And par - don what is ours. Our prais -
May meet to - geth - er thus When Thou and Thine ap - pear And fol -



in grace the har - vest raise, And Thou a - lone shalt have the praise!
es, Lord, and prayers re - ceive, And to Thy Word a bless - ing give.
low Thee to heav'n, our home. E'en so, a - men, Lord Je - sus, come!

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt.
Tune: John Darwall, 1731-89

DARWALL'S 148TH
66 66 88

POST COMMUNION HYMN:

“Thank The Lord”

LSB # 164



☐ Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear His name.



He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

O Father, as You fed Your children with the True Manna, the Living Bread from Heaven, give unto us, we humbly pray You, that the Body and Blood of Your Son may be our support throughout our earthly pilgrimage, until we reach that land where there is neither hunger nor thirst, Your magnificent Heavenly Banquet; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING:

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

CLOSING HYMN:

“God Of The Fertile Fields”

[God Whose Almighty Word tune]



1	God	of	the	fer	-	tile	fields,	shap	-	er	of
2	We	would	be	stew	-	ards	true,	hold	-	ing	in
3	As	grows	the	hid	-	den	seed	to	fruit	that	
4	God	of	the	coun	-	try	-	side,	dear	to	the



earth	that	yields	our	dai	-	ly	bread:	forth	from	your
trust	from	you	all	that	you	give;	help	us	in	
serves	our	need,	so	your	reign	grows.	Let	all	our	
Christ	who	died	to	make	us	one:	we	pledge	our	



boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
love to share, teach us like you to care
toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,
lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.



that all in ev - ery land be clothed and fed.
for peo - ple ev - ery - where, that all may live.
no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.
Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

TEXT: Georgia Harkness, 1955, alt.
MUSIC: Felice de Giardini, 1769, alt.
Text © 1955, ren. 1983 The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing Company)

ITALIAN HYMN
6.6.4.6.6.6.4
CCLI# 1296903

Rev. Todd Hoeffs

Pentecost 8/St Mary Magdalene Day

Matthew 13:30

Title: "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"

July 23, 2023

Walked into the Tim Hortons' up the road at the Fairview. Waiting for my cup of coffee.

An older man walks in, looks familiar from the area. "Hi Rev, how are you." "Fine. Yourself?"

"Still breathing, life is good. But I'm OK if I don't."

"Oh, you're ready to go?" Shaking his head yes, "oh, that's very rare."

"I'm looking forward to seeing my son I buried when he was 48."

"Recently?" "Last year." "Oh, no, I'm very sorry to hear that." "God bless Rev, see you again". Off he went. Most people would wonder why? Why God allows this? Why must a parent bury their child? He appeared to carry on, as his eagerness for Heaven flowed from him very naturally.

Spiritually to be more precise. You never know who you're going to meet in the day-to-day world.

When people are left in grief, they don't look for polished theology They need real down to earth, Christ-centred Gospel words of hope. The people gathering on that beach to hear Jesus tell them stories aren't much different. They experience oppression from Roman occupation.

They watch as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Life is far from fair. Yet, God allows the world to turn. Evil at times seems to flourish. Isn't the promised Saviour going to change all of this mess?! There's a saying in the African American community: If you don't like something, change it.

If you can't change it, change your perspective on it. Look at Jesus, not for what you think you want

But what He wants to give. Because He's God, He's in control, He knows exactly what you need at the exact time. "Let anyone with ears listen," Jesus' parables are life stories which are telling us all

how it is. How we hear them depends on the condition of our hearts and minds. The wheat and

weeds story is quite simple, And Jesus even interprets it. The weed or OKJV says "tares", is a bearded darnel weed. It's annoying. It looks very much like wheat. But it carries a poisonous fungus in its grain-like head. If it's harvested and ground together with wheat, the flour is useless.

As the grain matures, it's easy to tell the thin heads of bearded darnel from the fuller heads of wheat, but by then, it's too late to uproot one without damaging the other. Pulling weeds can cause more harm than good, destroying the very crops we want to harvest. If that's true in farming, know think of the weeding regarding humanity. Why weeds? Why thorns? Why anything like that?

Why any form of trouble? That's life in an imperfect, sin-infested world. The enemy sows in the weeds in the fields of grain. The land is God's Kingdom, His ministry of the Gospel on earth.

Servants have not watched carefully enough, But even if they did, the enemy couldn't be easily stopped. God cares about nurturing His kingdom field, But the enemy, Satan, just causes trouble and goes away. The enemy weed can be almost anything harmful and evil. There are easy worldly

examples we could name. But the quiet, slow, enemy erosion that creeps into the Kingdom through us is worse. We are supposed to be in the world but not of the world. And yet, we have witnessed

church history alone ruin faithful peoples' lives; We see terrible management of what resources God gives; We see Christian gossip, greed and grudges infiltrate and take root. Letting fear lead every

believer's agenda for what is or isn't done. And not just in the church building, but in the community, the home, the mission field. Caretaking is tough work. We know this from parenting and managing. It

needs listening ears, open attitudes, curious minds and welcoming hearts and arms.

It's much easier to chagrin, oh, no one's a believer anymore, woe is me, lets hide. And that's how the

enemy likes to win. Before you know it, the grain is gone and it's an overgrown mess.

So what does a believer's human nature do? Let's circle the wagons and call anyone we like bad.

Enforce rules for order. Who's in, who's out. Reminds me of that saying you see and hear,

hate sin, love sinner. It may surprise you to know it's not Biblical. The only sin our Lord ever calls us to dislike is our own – no one else's. We as people cannot lovingly hate a human trait while not hating the person at the same time. We'd like to think so, but we can't. It's not possible.

That's why there's nasty name calling in society. If somebody is wrong, we attack their entire person. We have an inborn ability to hate people so completely. We are what we do or think or behave. It's not our job to separate sin from the sinner. The wheat and weeds grow together.

Pull out one, you pull out many. Think of how many blades of good grass get cut out when a thistle is extracted from a lawn? Or you think it's a bad weed but it's really a good plant. We can't tell what's good or bad. We can only love God and love our neighbour. We can only trust God that the way of kindness and mercy creates better fields of grain. Weeds thrive in hostile, fear-based, toxic environments. Do we look at one another as a fellow redeemed child of God, Or a person we can't stand and wish to avoid at all costs.

As we learn to love and help difficult weedy people,

then we'll discover that they, like us,

have experienced hurt and disappointment in life.

That is not to say there is no room for discipline to protect the vulnerable –

but there can be room for transformation and reconciling.

And let's be honest, each one of us has wheat and weeds in the soil of our own hearts. The Holy Spirit removes those weeds as we confess our sins, Trust in God's mercy & grace, to continue growing in other directions, Benefiting from Jesus' total and complete forgiveness. This helps you grow good fruits, in how you live, love and learn. A tree is known by its fruits for sure; and some fruit taste sweeter than others. So we can't tell for certain of the wheat or weeds when we look at people.

Pulling up weeds in others could ruin good soil and uproot the faith that instead needs encouragement. We can only trust God knows what He's doing. His Kingdom is here.

We can only invite others in to be here, then, they can have the Spirit tend to their heart's overgrowth. God's Kingdom of Grace on earth we find in the church isn't done yet. It grows when we influence and inspire others around us. We need not be so surprised that evil lurks around corners. Jesus' Kingdom is present in the world, but not of the world. But the issue of evil is already settled. Jesus' Words "it is finished" while dying on the cross settles the problem for good.

Jesus' ability to do everything on earth to save us is finished. His empty cross and empty grave are witnesses. Which brings us to Mary Magdalene, Who also shares this saint day in the church calendar. She is a witness of both Jesus' death and resurrection. A witness whom society & the religious leaders wouldn't have tolerated. Whom Jesus cast out 7 evil demons. A woman of great faith, the 1st preacher of the Gospel to the disciples. A faithful follower who out of her financial means supported the Kingdom mission work in the days following the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

A woman whom the church of the Middle Ages wrongly labeled a prostitute, In the hopes of elevating Mother Mary. Mary Magdalene yet serves as an eyewitness of Jesus' Kingdom crashing into the world, making a great shift in all the lives of those who believe. Like Mary Magdalene, we are who we are because of Jesus. Into His Kingdom we are baptized. Christ is our identity, and His life is lived out as we radiate mercy. We are given grace, we give out grace. Like the grace we have today Coming to us in the Bread and Wine of Holy Communion;

So how much more the faces we show others will also show a glimpse of Jesus.

Jesus' grain, Jesus' wine, His Body, His Blood, Allows good fruit growth while His presence intertwines with ours.

We worry less about weeds,

We grow with the grain.

Amen.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

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

WORD LIST

ADVENT
ANGEL
APOSTLE
BAPTISM
DEUTERONOMY
DISCIPLE
EPIPHANY

EXODUS
GENESIS
GOD
GOSPEL
JERUSALEM
JESUS

JOHN
LUKE
MESSIAH
MOSES
PARABLE
PARADISE

PROPHECY
PROVERBS
PSALMS
ROMANS
SACRIFICE
WISDOM

Old Testament Books of the Bible

H E N K U K K A B A H K 2 D I D I M 2 K N N A L
 V I T K M I N J O N H I E H N M S I N S M L H I
 G V I U E A Y T 2 J S S M C Z L A C U G S U F Y
 B O J H U G J S R E B M U N C B M A D N E Y T D
 A R T H A G E E 2 S A M U E L G U H H I C I Y L
 E L J Z M A A S R J I R O B K S E B H K C A D J
 S N E B O H H E R E J R H S F H L I R I L I E D
 O F H O S T A G E O M A I I A R K S I S E N E G
 H Y A P J A T D Y C N I A I X P S A L M S M Z D
 G I I D S U V U F O V V A D X R Z D Z S I E E U
 M X D Y D H B J J P G S H H E M H O E F A D P Z
 I S A B U S C E R S I P C S L I U X A B S R H Y
 O M B I 2 O X L N B A K T O J G O H J J T P A M
 I G O P B J D E Z R A H A M N D X O A L E I N O
 H I C L X L I U A I E D E V U K D V O N S Z I N
 A I H N R X E N L R V U F S E Z E K I E L J A O
 I R P I C H R O N I C L E S P R O V E R B S H R
 R L R E D I J 2 U I J T J N E H E M I A H L L E
 A G 2 C H R O N I C L E S C C G O D A N I E L T
 H P V L E V I T I C U S I H C K R H Z Z Y V O U
 C S I H C A L A M A D T V U J T U K R J F F C E
 E X X 2 S N O I T A T N E M A L T K V U D K R D
 Z C Z T 2 K I N G S 2 2 S G A L H D I N S I O Z
 X B Z I R O T R N O M O L O S F O G N O S J K J

Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1 Samuel	2 Samuel
1 Kings	2 Kings	1 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	Ezra
Nehemiah	Esther	Job	Psalms	Proverbs
Ecclesiastes	Song of Solomon	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentations
Ezekiel	Daniel	Hosea	Joel	Amos
Obadiah	Jonah	Micah	Nahum	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Haggai	Zechariah	Malachi	