

THE 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 17, 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
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Bulletin by email: 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: Grant, merciful Lord, to Your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve You with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Prov. 30: 4-9 Wednesday: 1 Cor. 7: 20-24 Friday: John 4: 31-38
Tuesday: 1 Tim. 6: 6-12a Thursday: 1 Kings 17: 1:6 Saturday: Luke 6: 20-26

Musicians: Music Team
Reader: Paul Wachs
Greeters: Ralph & Mary Muller

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 9:00 am – Coffee Hour
9:00 am – Sunday School
9:10 am – Confirmation
10:00 am — Worship
Monday: 10:00 - 11:00 am – Luther Manor Bible Study
Tuesday: 10:00 - 11:00 am – Precious Moments
7:00 pm – Mary Martha Meeting and Bible Study
Thursday: 10:00 -11:30 am – SOUL
7:15 pm – Women's Bible Study
Friday: 7:15 pm – Youth, Confirmands & Friends (*see note below*)
Saturday: 9:30 am – Niagara Zone Fall Rally in Stevensville

SEPTEMBER 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE
Sept. 17 – Scripture & Song Service (The Band)
Sept. 24 – Holy Communion Setting

SUNDAY SCHOOL BACK IN SWING: Please be sure to pass the word on to family & friends! We will have Preschool in the nursery and Grades 1-6 together. Sunday School will be a weekly event from 9:00 - 9:50 a.m. with **Coffee Hour** --not just for parents, but a time of sharing for everyone!

Memory Verse: "***The Father has sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world***". I John 4:14

PASTOR AWAY: Pastor Todd will be away Sunday, September 24. The service will be led by CLC Chairman James Hyatt & Vice-Chair Donald Fretz, both of whom are Church elders. Please accept them in the name of our Lord as they bring God's Word and share Pastor Todd's sermon message.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 1 will be a focus on mission with Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday which also honours our Christ Lutheran Mary Martha group. This will also be the transferred HOLY COMMUNION SUNDAY.



MMM, what is that delicious smell?

Coming Soon...

CHRIST'S CAFÉ

where coffee and salvation are always free!

See you downstairs for
Coffee, Tea and Treats
Sunday, 9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

Anyone willing to help serve or bring treats, please contact
Judy Mason 905-641-7546



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY Thursday, Sept. 22 at 7:15 pm. We continue our Study of Romans with RightNowMedia. If you are interested in joining us, please speak with Louise for more information

YOUTH, CONFIRMANDS & FRIENDS: What do games like Throw Throw Burrito, Happy Salmon and Uno Flip have to do with our lives as Christians? Join us this Friday, Sept. 22 at 7:15 p.m. as we play those games and discuss those connections. See you there!
(Next event *Pumpkin Carving—Friday, October 13th at 7:15 p.m.*)

LWML-C Zone/National Events: You are invited to any or all of the events below.

Sept: 23: – Niagara Zone Retreat in Stevensville: Registration 9:30am – Ingathering to Niagara Life Ministries****October 1st – LWML–C Sunday**

October 13th – 14 – *Retreat in Cambridge "Follow the Road!"*

October 31st – Deadline for submission of Mission Grant Proposals. Those mission grants will be voted on at Convention in London, Ontario in July, 2024. Please see Lorraine for more details.

LWML-C/Mary Martha Christ Lutheran Events:

Tuesday, September 19th: 7 p.m.—Bible Study

Tuesday, October 17th – 7 p.m. — Planning for the Bazaar and flower arrangements.

Tuesday, November 21st --7 p.m. – Packaging "**Warm feet for the Streets**" Care Kits for the "Out of the Cold" program

Saturday, November 25th – **Christmas Bazaar**

Tuesday, December 19th – 5:30pm – **Advent/Christmas Potluck (blessing) Dinner & Program**

ANNUAL FALLFEST: **Saturday, September 30, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at St. John's Lutheran Church, 3837 Netherby Road, Stevensville. Lunch served—Fresh pies and baked goods—Homemade pottery—Apple pressing—Wood crafts—Crafts—Handiwork, Jams and more!



LOOKING AHEAD: Watch for details in the Fall for a **WESTERN JAMBOREE**

The Fellowship Committee is planning on hosting a fellowship event on **Saturday, September 30th**. Cost would be only to cover expenses. Live band, pulled pork & beans, photo booth, etc. It



should be a lot of fun, watch bulletin for more details as it gets closer.

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Concordia Lutheran Seminary Guild’s

Annual Harvest Day 2023

Saturday, October 21.

Mark your calendars as we work together to fill up our Food Pantry shelves, gathering in support of the seminary and to spend some quality time with our fellow members and students in God’s glory.

Deadline for registration is Thursday, October 12th, 2023

Our meal will be catered by Chef Paul and will feature a buffet of finger foods: veggies, fresh fruit, cheese and crackers, a variety of sandwiches on white and whole bread (egg salad, turkey, Black forest ham, and roast beef), and dessert squares.

The day will be marked particularly by a presentation by our special guest, Rev. Saulo Bledoff. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you all in person this fall as we begin the new academic year!

8:45 am – 9:15 am Registration and Coffee Fellowship begins the day

You can read the Fall Newsletter and get a registration form etc. at this link:

[Seminary Guild Newsletter 2023-09 \(2\).pdf](#)



<u>Last Sunday Attendance:</u>		<u>September 10th, 2023</u>		<u>Attn: 10 a.m. – 96</u>	<u>SOUL:</u>
	<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	2,973.34	150,490.30	(61,435.03)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	800.00	12,380.50	(284.35)
Property Improvement:			789.00	4,915.05	

THANKSGIVING DONATIONS / DISPLAY!!! As we do each year in thanks to God for His



rich blessings to us, we are gathering food, both produce & non-perishable goods to use in our Thanksgiving Display (October 9th). We display these things as a way of focusing our attention on God’s abundant blessings to us. We will then donate the food items to the Seminary Pantry, and so we multiply our thanks because of their thankfulness to God for our generosity. ***Please place in the collection bin at the back of church. Thank You!!***

FLOWERS have been placed on the altar this morning to the Glory of God by Naomi Hohnberg on the occasion of her Birthday on September 23.

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.



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)

SOUL is in need of some simple, easy board games, to own or borrow. Candy Land, Chutes & Ladders, Pop-O-Matic, Trouble, Hungry Hippo and any simple matching games. Nothing too lengthy or needing too many players. Please let Jennifer or Pastor Todd know.



NIAGARA ZONE FALL RALLY

Saturday, September - Registration: 9:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church - Snyder
3837 Netherby Road, Stevensville

Morning Devotion and Bible Study led by Pastor Saulo Bledoff
Ingathering of Monetary Support of:

*** Societies are asked to please bring fruit or a dessert.



Praise
and give thanks to *the Lord*

OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Remember I told you Kareem once said, "**I have BIG HOPE**", well—his big hope is now reality! Friday, September 8th at 1:30 Kareem, Hamida, Ameer and Asser had their interview with immigration Canada and have been accepted to come to Canada as permanent residents. **God has answered our prayers in His timing**, and we give all the thanks and glory to Him!



Back in 2020 after the congregation agreed to sponsor Kareem and his family, I gave you a paper entitled: ***“We love because God first Loved us.”*** At the bottom I typed a quote from Kareem, ***“I have not offered you anything, and you offer us the greatest thing which is safety. Do you know tomorrow will be the greatest day for us in our life.”*** After three years his words will be a reality. The next step is for the family to have their physicals with government-approved doctors within the next 30 days, and once the department of immigration has processed their visas, they will be sent to us here in Canada. The time table is still vague but they could be here within the next 2 to 3 months. We need to continue in prayer for the completion of the process. Your Refugee Committee will be meeting soon to once again look at the immediate needs and the long term needs for the family. We will need your help in many different areas. Members of the committee will be reaching out to you and asking for your help. We will also try to update you about things we will need like linens and various other things. The cost of everything has gone up of course so we will need to add to the refugee fund. The fund stands at \$33,252.13, but due to the increase in rent and other things we will require more. We already have donations of furniture and a few other things, but once the committee has met, we will review the needs and reach out to you. When Kareem called me to tell me the good news he said thank you to you and to God. I thank you so much for staying the course,

God Bless,

Pastor John

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Scripture & Song Service
THE 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
September 17, 2023 + 10 AM Worship

GATHERING

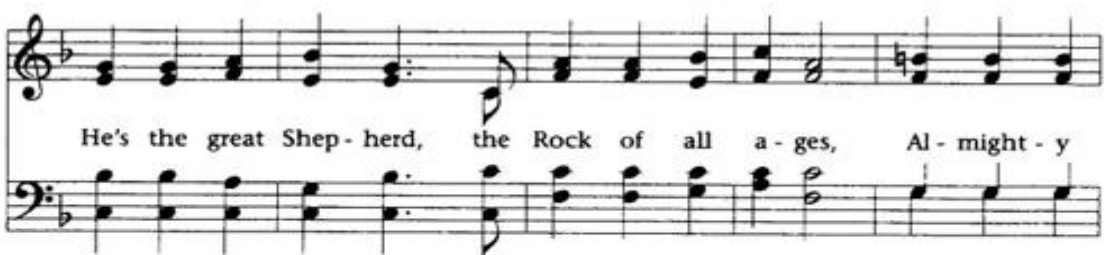
BEGINNING SONG: ***“His Name Is Wonderful”***



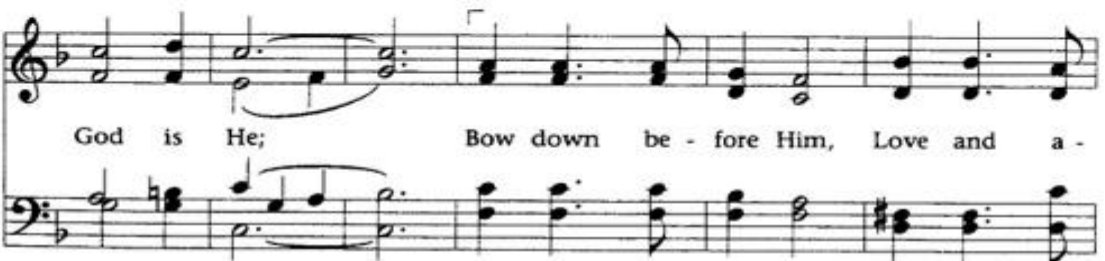
His name is Won-der-ful, His name is Won-der-ful,
He is the might-y King, Mas-ter of ev-'ry-thing.



His name is Won-der-ful, Je-sus, my Lord;
His name is Won-der-ful, Je-sus, my Lord.



He's the great Shep-herd, the Rock of all a-ges, Al-might-y



God is He; Bow down be-fore Him, Love and a-



dore Him, His name is Won-der-ful, Je-sus, my Lord.

<https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/2814818496093990/>

WE BEGIN IN GOD'S NAME

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

Amen.

I was glad when they said to me,

Let us go to the House of the Lord!

Unless the Lord builds the House,

In vain do the builders labour.

Surely the Lord is in this place.

This is the House of God, this is the Gate of Heaven!

You are gracious and merciful, O God,
Slow to anger, rich in love.
Receive our prayers and worship as You have promised
And uphold us by Your Spirit,
Until all things, mended by Your mercy,
Are made whole and well in You,
Through Jesus Christ
Our healer and our hope. Amen.

KYRIE--PRAYING FOR MERCY

**Have mer-cy on Your peo-ple, Lord; Have mer-cy Jes-us Christ—
Have mer-cry on Your peo-ple, Lord; Have mer-cy, grant us peace.**

Amazing Grace tune

CONFESSION OF SINS & FORGIVENESS

To You, O Lord God,

All hearts are open, to You all desires are fully known. We come to You, moved by Your Word and Spirit, as sinners, confessing our sins. Forgive us in Your mercy. Remember us in Your love. Show us Your way, teach us Your path, lead us in truth and faithfulness, for the sake of our neighbour and for Your sake, O Lord God, in the hope of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

By water, Word and Spirit, our God gives you new birth and through the death and resurrection of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His name and in His stead, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

When the Son sets you free, you are free indeed!

Praise be to God!

HYMN OF PRAISE: "Shout to the Lord" *Darlene Zschech © 1993 Hillsong*



My Je sus, my Sav ior, Lord, there is none like You;
All of my days I want to praise the won ders of Your

might y love. My Com fort,

my Shel ter, Tow er of ref uge and strength, Let ev 'ry breath,

all that I am nev er cease to wor ship You.

mf Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing

Pow er and maj es ty, praise to the King!

Moun tains bow down and the seas will roar at the

sound of Your

name. I sing for joy at the work of Your hands, For

ev er I'll love You, for ev er I'll stand;

(continued next page.....)

Noth ing com pares to the prom

ise I have in You!

<https://musescore.com/jeffrey/scores/5642528>

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Hear my prayer O Lord;

listen to my call for help.

Merciful Father and God of all people, Your arms reach out to embrace all who call upon You. Teach us as followers of Your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that Your name may be known through the earth; we ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

The New Testament Reading: *Genesis 50: 15-21*

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

The Epistle: *Romans 14: 1-12*

[St. Paul writes:] Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God. For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

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

SPOKEN GOSPEL VERSE:

Alleluia! Great is your faith! May it be done for you as you believe! Alleluia!

The Holy Gospel: St. Matthew 18:10-17

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 18th chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus says:] "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

THE APOSTLES' CREED: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess the faith.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the + life everlasting. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL SONG *"His Mercy Is*



1. What love could re - mem - ber no wrongs we have done? Om -
(2. What) pa - tience would wait as we con - stant - ly roam? What
(3. What) rich - es of kind - ness He lav - ished on us. His

More"

5
 ni - scient, all know - ing, He counts not their sum. Thrown in - to a sea with - out
 Fa - ther, so ten - der, is call - ing us home? He wel - comes the weak - est, the
 blood was the pay - ment; His life was the cost. We stood 'neath a debt we could

6
 bot - tom or shore, our sins, they are man - y; His mer - cy is more.
 vil - est, the poor. Our sins, they are man - y; His mer - cy is more.
 nev - er af - ford. Our sins they are man - y; His

11
 2. What mer - cy is more. Praise the Lord,
 3. What

17
 His mer - cy is more. Strong - er than dark - ness, new ev - 'ry morn. Our

22
 sins, they are man - y; His mer - cy is more. Praise the mer - cy is more.

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MESSAGE

OFFERINGS *are gathered*

OFFERING SONG: "Give Thanks"

Henry Smith@1978

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-----!**

<https://www.music-ministry.org/hymns/give-thanks-with-a-grateful-heart/>

PRAYERS

Almighty God, heavenly Father: In your mercy you have forgiven us the debt of our sin. Help us to forgive each other in our homes, our families and congregation. Especially help those who have suffered at the hands of others to overcome their pain, to forgive, and to receive healing.

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

You have given to your church the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Help your church throughout the world to rightly preach law and gospel, to retain the sins of the unrepentant and forgive those who repent and believe.

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

Bless the nations of the world. Move the wealthy nations to do justice by canceling the debts of poorer countries where possible. Be with our country. Guide our Prime Minister and all politicians as they govern our nation.

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

We thank you for the laws of our land which provide safety and order. Bless our justice system and all who work in it, that people may receive their rights and be encouraged to fulfill their responsibilities.

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

Be with those who are sick or receiving medical treatment: we pray especially for (*insert names here*). Guide the hands of the doctors and nurses and other health professionals who care for them, and grant them healing if it is your will.

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

We thank you for our material blessings. Help us to be good stewards and to give generously towards the work of the church.

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

Lord, you have compassion on us as a father has compassion on his children. Hear our prayer, and satisfy our needs, and the needs of all for whom we pray. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WORD:

Blessed Lord God, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Help us so that we may hear, read, mark, learn and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, Who with the Father and Spirit You rule and reign as one God, now and forevermore. Amen.

THE BLESSING

Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. May you hear His voice and keep His Word.
Amen, thanks be to God.

Jesus is the Pathway that leads to life. May You follow in His narrow way.

Amen, praise be to God.


Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches. May you be rooted and grounded in His Word and love. **Amen. Glory to our God.**

May the Almighty God, the Father, Son + and Holy Spirit, bless and keep you now and always. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: "Are You Washed In The Blood?"

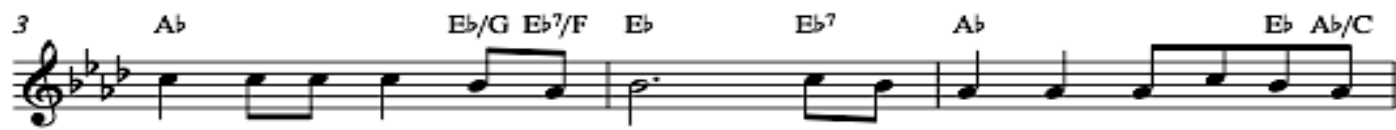
Elisha A. Hoffman

Ab Ab Db/Ab Ab Ab/C Eb



Have you been to Je - sus for the cleans - ing power? Are you
Are you walk - ing dai - ly by the Sav - ior's side? Are you
When the Bride - groom com - eth will your robes be white? Are you
Lay a - side the gar - ments that are stained with sin, And be

3 Ab Eb/G Eb7/F Eb Eb7 Ab Eb Ab/C



washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you ful - ly trust - ing in His
washed in the blood of the Lamb? Do you rest each mo - ment in the
washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will your soul be read - y for the
washed in the blood of the Lamb; There's a foun - tain flow - ing for the

6 Db Ab/Eb Eb7 Ab



grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you
Cru - ci - fied? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
man - sions bright, And be washed in the blood of the Lamb?
soul un - clean, O be washed in the blood of the Lamb!

9 Ab Db Ab Ab/C Eb Ab Eb7/G Ab




washed in the blood, In the soul - cleans - ing blood of the

12 Eb Eb7 Ab Eb/Bb Ab/C



Lamb? Are your gar - ments spot - less? Are they

14 Db Ab/Eb Eb7 Ab



white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

©MichaelKravchuk.com

REV. TODD HOEFFS

PENTECOST 16

Genesis 50:15-21

No fear, no peace, Know Fear, Know Peace.

September 17, 2023

Mailed a letter at the post office this week [in my clergy collar]

“How are you today” I ask. “Oh, I’m here, still living the dream”!!! [sarcastically]

“Oh, wow! Really? That’s great, I don’t hear that too often”. *shaking her head no*

No, not the dream I had she says. You? “No, I’m living God’s dream, not necessarily mine, but it has great days and not so great days.” She stopped and smiled.

“That’s a really neat way to look at it”. There was a slight pause. “Will things ever get back to normal?” Assuming she meant post covid, I commented: “why? You mean people?

Demanding, entitled, privileged...” *shaking her head yes*

“You’d think after lockdowns and sickness people would give space, room, time to think, talk...” This person is on the receiving end of a lot of bad human behaviour.

People didn’t necessary improve their outlooks. Maybe pandemic created a new form of the dark ages. Regressing into negativity, impatience, hopelessness.

That’s an easy trap.

Joseph doesn’t exactly live the dream either, at least not his dream. God’s dream.

The dream humans ruined by rebelling against God’s goodness. Genesis 50 is really a miraculous amazing ending to a terrible tale of humanity’s drift from God. From evil comes good. Joseph is Jacob’s son. [Joseph not to be confused with Jesus’ father Joseph – although it’s all the same family tree]. He is connected to the last of the three great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, The last living link with Abraham – they lived together as grandfather and grandson for fifteen years – When father Jacob dies, some of his sons begin to doubt. As many families falter when their beloved patriarch dies. The special family cocoon of protection surrounding them while their father ruled is now no more. Joseph had always been the target of abuse by his older brothers. Father Jacob loved Joseph best and spoiled him [remember, the coat of many colours!?] Instead of killing him, their love of money & power moves them to sell Joseph into slavery in EGYPT. Imagine. Egypt. Israel’s enemy. Selling your own brother to them. While the OT made allowances for Hebrews to make slaves out of fellow Hebrews, It paid off a debt but only a maximum of 6 years. 7th year they are freed [redeemed]. Joseph lived as a slave and as a prisoner in jail 13 years.

Edmonton Lutheran church member -- ELLA S – during WW2, a young woman, German, living near Polish border. Neighbouring Polish farmers kept her in their home as a slave housekeeper for 2 years after war end. Even had a child. Went to mail a letter one day and escaped into Germany. Her young child dies while fleeing. Heartbreaking. Yet Ella’s faith was rock solid love and grace. So Joseph’s brothers are afraid he’ll get even for their terrible act of selling him. They are desperate. Seven years of plenty are followed by seven years of famine; Joseph avoids starvation in Egypt by gathering huge reserves of 7 years of grain.

They hear about his grain. They had no idea what Joseph even looked like.

21 years have passed. *They wanted to get rid of this favoured brother and in getting rid of him, they wound up making him the most favoured.* God’s dream for Joseph is coming to light. Joseph is filled with emotion; the older brothers fearfully bow down in front of him.

The formality doesn’t fit. This is long lost family. And not just blood. But faith.

They are the nation of Israel carrying the promise of the Saviour. It's expected they are afraid. They sold him into slavery and lied to their dad. That is terrible.

Sin always starts in our hearts. It erodes away the love while hardening over the rest.

And Genesis records that "they meant this for evil". That is critical. Often in our own love of positivity we aren't always willing to see people for who they are. Wanting good can cloud seeing the problems. Even lovely, generous, wonderful people can think or feel or do evil.

Not every Nobel Peace Prize winner is a saint And not every dictator is a demon.

In fact, we are all slaves to sin. We serve it whenever any THING becomes more important to us than God. That is how a loving heart becomes cold, as love is replaced with envy or desire or power or control or insecure fear or anything that nags at you day and night.

You can't feel if you don't love. You want to turn off the feel so it never bothers you again.

The brothers shoved Joseph's legacy aside until they needed him. Only God can make that happen. In all of his years of slavery and prison, Joseph grew in faith and strength from God Who NEVER left him. Joseph forgives. He could've killed them. Get payback.

But instead loves them. These brothers need this. They don't understand grace and mercy until know. God's love and power shrank in their eyes and they only trusted in lies and survival. Forgiveness is freeing. You forgive. And when that happens, you are free from the burden of what happened. You can let go of it or let it be. By forgiveness and grace you let it leave your heart and mind. The offender and the offence does not control you.

Or, you may let it be where it is and you move on. The Holy Spirit makes this happen.

Both are the best parts of how forgiveness changes us. You don't wait.

You don't sit and stew. No grudges, no gossip circles, no complaining – You forgive.

Trust that letting go of it will make the evil let go of you. Trust in the forgiveness that removes all the wrongs from your resume. Trust that when other troubles come your way it's not God getting even. Life happens. You are living God's dream in your life. It's fearful and yet freeing. It is authentic without being austere. Every step is mapped out and yet there are twists, turns, trials and turbulence. God is still in control. Am I in the place of God? Joseph tells his brothers. Fear not, I am not the judge. Which proves the very opposite!

Standing in the place of God, Joseph graces them with Heavenly mercy. No different when you stand in the place of God and forgive. No different than when I stand here and forgive in His name. God is faithful. His only Son forgives. God's work is all about bringing good from evil. The world's plan has been evil since the Satanic snake slithered his way into the apple of God's eye – humanity. Evil starts life turning toward redemption. In fact, the Hebrew forgiveness Joseph gives is the very same ancient and treasured forgiveness God gives in Christ which means release from captivity. Once a slave, Joseph shares God's freedom.

Born free from God and Mary, Jesus becomes a slave. Whipped and burdened and nailed and speared on a cross to death to rescue us. Jesus carries our sins. He carries our troubles, evil, trials and imperfections. In His slavery, each one of us along with the whole world is bought back to God and His Kingdom with the price of perfect Blood. Christ forgives.

His Blood and Spirit cleanse us and keeps us in peace. Even now, while He doesn't allow troubles that we're passing through to affect our standing with Him. When the bad creeps in, the Gospel keeps God in and bad away. Your heart is warmed by the Gospel, refreshed with faith in Baptism, and trust replaces fear as the Word of God becomes your word.

Trials will happen because we are still in a world where the freeing Gospel of grace can and will be the only real remedy. Nothing else will do.

In Joseph we see our own self. We stand with God in how we forgive.

Not because it earns us points in the angelic ranks.

But because forgiveness brings all people into a place of peace know

And joy later when we dine with our Saviour at His Heavenly Table.
This is living God's dream. People create evil. God creates good.
Jesus' cross proves that. By His wounds we are healed.
His cross is God's glory and our peace.
This is Christ-centred living – as His Body of witnesses in the everyday world.
Less about giving something your blessing; more about not giving something power.
SOUL prayer time this week.
We go around and ask everyone what they would like to pray for.
A young woman asked to pray for her dad who has cancer.
Her only family member with whom she has contact. It's better hospice news.
While her dad's cancer is a rare blood cancer, it is slow in its growth so he will live a bit longer
and have less suffering and give her more time with him.
That is strong trusting faith. Good coming from pain.
What sickness means for death,
Jesus brings about for life.
Amen.

People from the New Testament

N F S W X H O E Q R B R D R S I P M A S Z Y N B X M S C Q Q
 G T K Q M S A R U K L R A K J K Y C R H J R Q J O S E P H O
 A Z Q Y E T I M O T H Y C R A Y E D A D U E L X M Z K B T V
 K V D M P U M K J R O Z M G M W E P F P J Y Q S Y A X B I X
 R R K R Y W T S G D G K T P E K V D Z L I F C D H S R H I U
 W K K Q H F N M V J U O U X S S U I L E N R O C T T F Y N K
 O B Y U X K S A B A N R A B S M K B A P F O T A E A T U O Y
 I P A H T R A M L W M E V O I Y T E A U J T E D B B A U M E
 V D I G E J B Q T S O J M K U X B U Z J M M D G A I O T I J
 F L Q T I N L R X B A B Z B S K L M D K T C V K Z T N A S C
 U J U L C I U V Q S E Q X G P B S O U Z C F J I I H F O U I
 P I R L P C V R Z A X T V Y I V D F Q P S S Z X L A J M M S
 U N G H B T I G L I I B R Q W B N A E W R W L M E O J O H N
 P R I S C I L L A H Q Q T K C S U E A H C C A Z H V P X V N
 E W K V P X R G D T H U C W E P J B E I R S L N F W U C K X
 K U H V P H F U K T N E H P E T S G W Q K B T F B D M O D E
 U Y Q E S P C I K A S A D U J E P J S I Y H B A R S A B A S
 L D T E P A E D P M Q W Y T A B J I L E E S C G B J L D F P
 R E E R L U X P V B A U G Z J L A H W B V Y E G C E Y K V G
 R B H D E M Q P S Z C B O A A C R R A T N P G V K S D N G S
 T R Y Y T A K H D G Z C C Z A G Y P T P H I L I P U I G I Z
 O L M E M X Z W Y B Q E A C O B T K G H V F C L Z S A L M R
 M R L C P T L Q E Z T R B X E I L Z L N O T E K L Q A Q A X
 C S A X K U V A Z S U D R E S O A A D J W L H U Z S V V R S
 U C A I R H T U N S Y A L T D Q G H V J S N O O D C W Z K Q
 N U K P B Q Y U U D Y X E K L E M Z J F R P E M M V L B N I
 U W D M A T T H E W R D M Q Y E E D K N I D Z N E A Z E R W
 R D C J Q R V V B N G E E C S A S U E A D D A H T W S A M G
 S B M F R D Z K Y E J I W L T O X Z S C C A P X R Y M W R V
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Andrew
Aquila
Barnabas
Barsabas
Bartholomew
Cornelius
Elizabeth
James
Jesus

John
John the Baptist
Joseph
Judas
Lazarus
Luke
Lydia
Mark
Martha

Mary
Matthew
Matthias
Paul
Peter
Philip
Priscilla
Silas

Simon
Stephen
Tabitha
Thaddaeus
Thomas
Timothy
Zacchaeus
Zebedee

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TOY

BAMBI
BEAUTY
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FROZEN
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MERMAID

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PAN
ROBIN
STITCH
TARZAN
TURNING

BEAST
BOLT
ENCANTO
HOOD
LIGHTYEAR
LITTLE
MICKEY

MONSTERS
MULAN
PETER
SLEEPING
STORY
WHITE
ZOOPTOPIA