

Christ Moravian Church
Pastoral Letter
for the
Weekend of July 5th, 2020

Moravian Watchword for Sunday, July 5th, 2020 :

“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Psalm 145:8

As I read the faithful and thoughtful reflection found in this Psalm, a part of me wants to meet that Psalmist. Get to know what is going on in their life. What would lead them to express a description of God, or the experience they’ve known with God, in this way.

We may pause in our day in these summer months going forward to reflect on the way we would describe the nature of the God we encounter. In what ways has mercy and graciousness been our experience? Is there a moment when we may expect God’s anger, and what we actually experience is understanding, grace, steadfast love?

As our church community experienced the death of a dear member last week, we pray for God’s gracious, merciful, and steadfast love be with the Brian Pemberton family. Do keep Jill and the family in your prayers throughout these days and weeks ahead as they experience this sudden loss in their lives.

With regard to the Funeral Service for Brian Pemberton, the family will plan another service at a later, safer date. We all recognize that having a sense of closure and blessing for the family at this date is important as well. Please know that a gift to the Christ Moravian Church Memorial Fund is a lovely way to remember Brian as these funds assist in special Memorial Projects at CMC.

As we all would realize this would traditionally be the week of the Calgary Stampede, with all of its yahooing, “pancake-eatin’, bronc ridin’ fun! The Sunday Service which Steve Blackwell will make available on Saturday includes our traditional Stampede Service with a bit of Canada Day emphasis as well. Big thanks to Marty Antonini and everyone who helped out making this Stampede Service so special. Plan to get your boots, hats and chaps on as you watch on Sunday morning!

The usual attachments are added onto this email message. A reminder that the Men’s Breakfast Group will connect at 8:30 am on Saturday July 4th; the CMC Bible Buddies Group will convene at 9:00 am on Sunday July 5th. If you are reading this on the church website, contact the office for links to these Zoom meetings.

Should pastoral issues or prayer concerns develop, please let me know with a phone message or email.

With a Yahoo and a Yodel,

Stampede Steve

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

THE SPIRIT CONSPIRACY

Ephesians 5:15–6:9

Philemon 1:8–19

Hebrews 13:1–8

James 5:1–6

THERE ARE CIRCLES OF people that the Spirit of God wants to touch and bless, and you are the person through whom the Spirit wants to work. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to conspire with the Spirit to bring blessing to others.

Let's start with your family. Nobody is better positioned to wound and harm your spouse than you, and nobody better to love and enhance your spouse's thriving than you. The same goes for your parents, your children, your siblings. The Spirit wants to conspire with you in making their lives rich, full, free, good, and fruitful.

When Jesus wanted to confront religious hypocrisy in his day, he pointed out the way hypocrites served their religion at the expense of their families. Paul picked up this theme in his letters to the early churches, calling such behavior worse than unbelief. So Paul urged husbands and wives to submit to one another and show one another true love and respect. Although his writings may strike us as chauvinistic by today's standards, they were progressive by the standards of his time, because they promoted mutual responsibility, not merely top-down privilege. Similarly, he told children to obey and honor their parents, and parents to nurture their children and raise them without frustrating them—presumably by excessively high or

unclear demands. And Paul repeatedly showed special consideration for widows—which today might mean an elderly aunt, uncle, or grandparent, or any family member who is alone and vulnerable.

Paul quickly moved out from the circle of family to what we would call the circle of work. In his day, slavery was a social norm. Where he had the opportunity—as he did with a church leader named Philemon—he urged slave owners to release their slaves and accept them as equals. Where that couldn't be done, he urged slave owners to transcend the normal master-slave relationship and dare to treat their slaves with kindness—to mirror the kindness of God.

Similarly, he urged slaves to transcend social norms by doing their work with pride and dignity. Before, they might have given the least required by a human master. But now in the Spirit, they would work for and with God. They would do whatever was required and even more, giving their best.

James took Paul's concern for a Spirit-led work ethic to the level of business management and economic policy. In strong language, he warned rich employers not to underpay their workers. What employers might call "keeping labor costs low," James called wage theft, and he reminded employers that God hears the cries of every underpaid laborer.

Our economic behavior will change greatly when we stop asking typical questions like "How little will the market or the law allow me to pay this person?" Instead, the Spirit leads people to conspire around new questions like "What would God consider fair and generous pay to this person? How can we expand the bottom line from economic profit to something deeper and broader—economic, social, and ecological benefit? How could our business and economic systems and policies become less harmful and more beneficial to aliveness on planet Earth—for us and for future generations? Could we measure success not by how much we consume and how fast we consume it, but by how well we live, care, and serve?" Just imagine how the business world would change if more and more of us went to work conspiring goodness in the Spirit.

In the next circle out beyond family and work relationships, the Spirit activates our concern for people in our neighborhoods, including strangers we meet on the street. Whatever their race, class, religion, political party, or

sexual identity, they, too, are our neighbors, and the Spirit will constantly awaken us to opportunities to serve and care. Biblical writers constantly emphasize the importance of hospitality—especially to strangers. "As you have done for the least of these, you have done for me," Jesus said. So the Spirit is looking for conspirators who are interested in plotting goodness in their communities. "What would our community look like if God's dreams for it were coming true?" we ask. The answer gives us a vision to work toward.

From the circles of family, work, and neighborhood, the Spirit moves us to another sphere of concern: vulnerable people who would normally be forgotten. According to James, our religion is nothing but hot air if we don't translate our faith into action in regards to the vulnerable and easily forgotten around us. So the Spirit invites us to conspire for the well-being of orphans, widows, undocumented aliens, refugees, prisoners, people with special needs, the sick, the poor, the homeless, the uneducated, the unskilled, the unemployed, and the underpaid.

Then there's the still larger circle of our civic and community life. We're told in the New Testament to pray for and show due respect for our political leaders. We're told to avoid debt—except the perpetual debt of love that we owe to every human being. In today's world, that means everyone on the planet, because as never before our world is bound together in one global ecology, one global economy, and one global military-industrial complex. To be in tune with the Spirit is to transcend all smaller boundaries and to conspire in terms of the planetary whole.

There's another circle that we can't dare forget: the circle that includes our critics, opponents, and enemies—the people who annoy us and those we annoy, the people who don't understand us and those we don't understand, the people who try our patience and those whose patience we try. Rather than write them off as unimportant and unwanted, we need to rediscover them as some of the most important people we know. If we ignore them, our growth in the Spirit will be stunted. If we let the Spirit guide us in what we say to their faces and behind their backs, we will become more Christ-like.

Speaking of our words, one of the most important ways the Spirit moves us to care for people in all these circles is by training us to control the tongue. Words can wound, sometimes deeply: careless words, critical

words, condemning words, harsh words, insulting words, dehumanizing words, words of gossip or deception. If your life were a ship, your words would be its rudder, James implies (3:1–12). So if you want to be a mature agent in the movement of the Spirit in our world, conspire with the Spirit in your choice of every single word.

You'll never regret forgoing an unkind word. And you'll never regret uttering a kind and encouraging word. An overworked person doing customer service, a housekeeper in a hotel, a landscaper or janitor, a harried mother on a plane with a cranky child, the cashier at a busy fast food joint, your child's third-grade teacher, the nurse in the emergency room—how much could they be encouraged today by a kind word from you, not to mention by a card, a gift, a large tip, a written note? If you're a part of the Spirit's conspiracy, you can be God's secret agent of blessing to anyone in any of these circles.

There's one other circle we haven't mentioned: the circle of your community of faith. It's the learning circle that forms whenever we encourage each other to let the Spirit keep flowing and moving in one another's lives. It's important to keep showing up and to show up with a good attitude. It's especially important to be a channel of blessing to those who lead in your community of faith . . . being sure they don't have to worry about money, for example, and being sure they feel truly appreciated. Their work is so important and surprisingly hard. Your encouragement could make the difference in whether they give up or keep giving their best.

The largest circle of all extends beyond humans and includes all living things and the physical structures on which we all depend: air, rain, soil, wind, climate. You can't claim to love your neighbor and pollute the environment on which he depends. You can't claim to love the Creator and abuse the climate of this beautiful, beloved planet. The Spirit that moves among us is the same Spirit that moves in and through all creation. If we are attuned to the Spirit, we will see all creatures as our companions . . . even as our relatives in the family of God, for in the Spirit we are all related.

In all these circles, you can be part of the Spirit conspiracy that is spreading quietly across our world. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to be a secret agent of God's commonwealth, conspiring with

others behind the scenes to plot goodness and foment kindness wherever you may be.

ENGAGE:

1. What one thought or idea from today's lesson especially intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenged, encouraged, warmed, warned, helped, or surprised you?
2. Share a story about a time when you felt the Spirit guided you to go above and beyond your normal way of responding to a situation.
3. How do you respond to the idea that our words are a rudder that steers our lives?
4. For children: Could you share a story about a time someone used words that hurt your feelings? And could you share a story about a time someone used words that made you feel wonderful?
5. Activate: Choose one of the circles from this lesson and make it your focus in the week ahead.
6. Meditate: In your imagination, walk through a typical day, from waking up to going to bed at night. Imagine yourself as a portal of blessing in each circle of influence. Simply pray, "Let it be so."

A Bride for Isaac

Genesis 24:1-67

Word Search Puzzle

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

FAMILY	WIFE	MARRIED	CAMELS	SERVANT
DRINK	ABRAHAM	WEALTHY	SPRING	MAIDEN
WATER	SON	CHOSEN	ISAAC	REBEKAH

Christ Moravian Church
Calgary, Alberta



A Bride for Isaac
Genesis 24:1-67

Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

A	G	C	W	L	B	P	F	Q	S	R	O	V	T	K	H	J	X	N	M	I	E	D	Y	Z	U
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

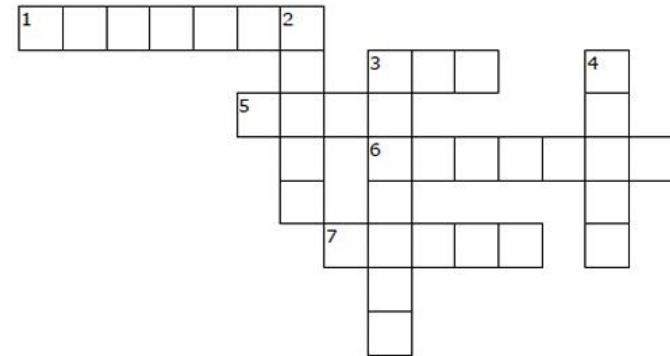
- 10-22-11-13-1-19-14 _____
- 10-12-19 _____
- 4-21-8-22 _____
- 8-1-20-21-5-24 _____
- 23-11-21-19-15 _____
- 4-1-14-22-11 _____
- 3-1-20-22-5-10 _____
- 20-1-11-11-21-22-23 _____

SON	WIFE	MARRIED	FAMILY
WATER	SERVANT	CAMELS	DRINK



Isaac and Rebekah

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- To be united as husband and wife
- A male human offspring
- A man's partner in marriage
- The wife of Isaac
- A large animal used for transportation in the desert

DOWN

- To take liquid into the mouth and swallow it
- A person who works for another person
- The son of Abraham

REBEKAH	MARRIED	SERVANT	ISAAC
DRINK	SON	CAMEL	WIFE



Quick Picks: Activities for Kids and Stretched Parents

July 4 – July 10, 2020

BITS and PIECES

As our son was growing up, we stashed interesting packaging, containers, paper rolls... in the drawer beneath his bunk. These materials – along with a lot of glue and duct and masking tape -- inspired endless props, imaginative characters, and crafts. Many of this week's activities integrate the materials we so often recycle or throw out. Some will need simple toys and objects that are likely in your home or garden. Consider documenting the results through pictures and videos; then, share them with others

I have tried to include a few more activities for very young children this week. Some of you have been hoping for them.

Float a boat or an ark : (just add toy animals) 2-13: If you have been using the suggestions offered in the past few months, you may have already created a boat out of recyclables. These links suggest a few other ways to float a boat. This activity is simple enough for wee ones <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxH8KUzd1gY> , but here's one that's more challenging and interesting for older kids: <https://www.feelgoodteaching.com/2017/05/stem-challenge-boat-building.html> If our weather continues to be as wet as it has been, you could try sailing these down the sidewalk gutters on a quiet street.

Shoe boxes aren't just for shoes: 2-7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X82bXsNF8Rw>

Create a shoebox train, a barn, and even a hair salon. Although other boxes might be used, shoeboxes come in consistent sizes and they usually have a lid. Call a shoe store or shoe department to see if they'll save some for you.

Make and Play Your Own Musical Instruments : 3-11

https://www.cbc.ca/parents/play/view/activity_musical_instruments If you have several children in the household, extend this activity by encouraging them to listen to a favorite piece of band music and then ask them to recreate its sound.

Dance and "Make some Noise:" 3 - 11 Here's a dance readalong that can inspire some "ordered" noise and movement or just plain fun:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzgmPaQp7cc>

Puppets from Recyclables: 3-9: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SV_4N6d1Wc These puppets are made from paper tubes, egg crates, and paper plates. Kids love to enact puppet fights as their first go to "script". How about staging a favourite books or story, instead? Even better, have them create one.

Use puppets to problem solve: 4-9; prop and stage construction, 7-11: Puppets are sometimes used to resolve a conflict. Here are some guidelines on how to do it:

<https://susanfitzell.com/puppet-shows-for-peace/> and <http://www.momentsaday.com/practicing-conflict-resolution-through-puppetry/> I wonder if the outcome would be different if your child took the part of a friend's or sibling's puppet?

Imagine through natural objects 2-11 We are all probably hoping that our families can get outside this week. Here are some suggestions that might help us notice and interact with natural objects. <https://www.calacademy.org/educators/lesson-plans/nature-play-create-with-nature>

Play with water and sound: 2-adult techno We have a small pond in our yard with a spitting fountain. We love to hear the sound of running water as we sit beside it. This requires us to “tune” the water and rocks as water levels, pump pressure... change. Here's some guidance in doing that: <https://www.meetup.com/GenevaPond/messages/boards/thread/856467>.

Children can explore other “sound” ideas: <https://www.fantasticfunandlearning.com/make-your-own-rock-band.html>

And if there's an adult in the house that loves sound and experimentation, here's a real thriller! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uENITui5_jU It's possible to make water go uphill.

Create a Rube Goldberg Machine: 2-adult

First, just be gobsmacked by this version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VODC7nFrYs> and then start thinking much more simply. We gathered materials for a camp a few years ago and set up several teams whose goal was to “prove their invention works.” The activity filled an entire morning and part of the afternoon.

For a toddler, Rube Goldberg machine might just be a slinky toy descending a stairway or maybe a ramp (consider an eggcrate top or an open cereal box) that will lead a ball to strike a toy at the bottom. A slightly older child might try to change the angle of the ramp so that the ball lands in a spoon. Try different spoon sizes and shapes. Let imaginations go crazy! Here's a great site to guide and inspire you: <https://tinkerlab.com/engineering-kids-rube-goldberg-machine/>

Involve other households and share online.