

Sunday, October 4, 2020

From Pastor Stephen, Zion Lutheran Church, Pembroke, ON

Welcome: A warm welcome to all who worship with us this week.

We sing our **Gathering Song:** ELW 836 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Let us pray: (prayed together) Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 5: 1 - 7

A reading from Isaiah.

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 16: Path of Life

Second Reading: Philippians 3: 4b - 14

A reading from Philippians.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia. Jesus, says, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will last. **Alleluia** (sung by Pastor and Cantor)

Gospel: Matthew 21: 33 - 46

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to the people: “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. “Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will

crush anyone on whom it falls.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Homily: One of the results of the Covid-19 lockdown was that many of us found ourselves with way too much time on our hands. I usually do not waste time watching American television, probably because I can be ignorant enough without any help; but one day, wandering around with the remote, I happened to turn to a documentary on Sweden. This should be remotely interesting I thought, and it certainly beats housework.

Unfortunately, instead of showing me spots of interest around Sweden, or maybe providing a virtual tour of an IKEA workshop, or a tutorial on assembling IKEA furniture, or a cooking lesson on how to make Swedish meatballs with lingonberry sauce, the host launched into a tirade on the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the smiling God of the Lutherans.

While we Lutherans certainly do have our faults, we have never thought that God was always benignly smiling at us. We are fully aware that God can have righteous anger and we also know that God can indeed run out of patience with us. And, as in today’s Gospel reading, God can also become profoundly disappointed with us, especially when we mess up some of God’s best work with our careless or apathetic ways.

From a young age, we learn the story of Adam and Eve being chased from the Garden of Eden because of their disobedience, or the story of Noah and the Great Flood, or what happened when the Israelites worshipped an idol in the wilderness. We know these stories well...we were taught them as children. We know

God is not mocked, nor is God a pushover, and we are keenly aware that God has expectations of us.

Then we get to Confirmation class, and Luther in the Small Catechism teaches us that we are to fear and love God. Only a German could use the words fear and love together in the same sentence and think it makes sense. But our love for God is born out of a very healthy respect and we are careful not to push the limits of God's patience. Our fear and respect for God is tempered by the fact that we also love and cherish God ... it's part of the tension that is the Lutheran understanding of Christianity and our relationship with God as beloved children of God.

We never stop at God's judgement, because we know that with God there are often words of Grace still to be spoken, even in the most miserable of situations, even in the midst of the worst of our sin and rebellion, when we have sorely tried God's patience and mercy.

Look at today's Gospel reading as an example of this. Jesus asks the first hearers of this parable how they thought this parable should end. He asks: "Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants, who mistreated his servants and killed his son?" They responded: "He will put those miserable wretches to a miserable death."

As Lutherans, we know that is not how the story ends for us, who work in God's vineyard. Even though the Son of God is put to death at the hands of those who hate him, he rises from death to bring life, forgiveness and hope, even to those who crucified him.

When we thought we could only expect condemnation and punishment, God finds a way to bring forgiveness, pardon and new life through the cross of Christ.

As we look at the history of our life with Christ, some of those who once hated our Lord and his followers became Christ's most devoted and faithful servants. God has a way of rewriting even the most miserable of endings. The parable of the vineyard does not have the ending we would expect or would have written, simply because God is so much more gracious and forgiving than we could ever imagine and expect, or be ourselves. That is not something we should ever take for granted, but it is certainly something we should celebrate with gratitude and joy.

So we are very honest as Lutheran Christians. We know sin is offensive and that it brings pain to God's heart and taxes God's patience, also bringing pain to the world God created. We know that we deserve God's judgement and we know we should only receive God's wrath. But our sin, our failures, our faults ...as miserable as they might be sometimes...are no match for the grace and the steadfast love of God.

Maybe God is not always smiling at us, but God has chosen to love us and bring us life in Christ the Risen One. In this we rejoice, always celebrating God's great kindness. And maybe that is why God, for the Lutherans, is still smiling at us. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 769 If You But Trust in God to Guide You

Prayers of the Faithful: Gracious God, our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Keep us always in your gentle care and help us grow in faith and trust in you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for Avery, newly baptized as your precious and beloved one. We welcome her into your holy family, the Church, the Body of our Lord. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the birth of Huxley Lillian Lange, daughter of Scott and Hilary. Bless her and her family as they rejoice in her birth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the family of Inez Kelly as they mourn for her. As we say farewell to Inez, help us to remember the hope that is ours, who share in the Risen Life of Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we pray for all who are ill and all who are preparing for, or recovering from surgery: Carol Boldt, Erin Dupuis, Florence Felske, Richard Hubert, Alison Kellough, Hilda Klawitter, Kris Purdy, and all who seek peace and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are working on vaccines and treatments during the pandemic and for all who care for those struggling with the virus. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, gracious God.

Gathering all our prayers into one, we pray the prayer that you have taught us:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Blessing: May our Gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us in the Risen Life of Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Sending Song: ELW 538 The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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News and Announcements

Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special Prayers: Carol Boldt, Erin Dupuis, Florence Felske, Richard Hubert, Allison Kellough, Hilda Klawitter, Jean Kuehl, Joan Lehman, Kris Purdy.

Please Pray For The Newly Baptized; especially, this day we pray for little Avery Jean McGregor, her parents Katie Rutz & Mitchell McGregor, and her sponsors Macy & Vikas Arora, that they may grow in God’s continuing and abiding love.

THANK YOU – We extend our gratitude to our vocalists today: Allen Rose, Steve Boland, David Lehman and cantor, Jan Scheidt. Your gift of music is a blessing to us all.

EMERGENCY CLOSING - With Covid-19 creating so much uncertainty we feel it is necessary to have a plan in place on how we will notify our members if we need to close the church on short notice. Should this be required there will be lots of media attention that should have the members questioning our closing. We will do the following:

- Have the voicemail message at the church office updated indicating our closing date and restrictions.

- A message will be posted on our Facebook account and our church website.
- We will send an email to all members who have an email account on file.
- We will identify people that have been attending our worship services by using the registration sheets completed each week and will call these people.

Susan Dupuis

OFFICE HOURS – The church office has begun to be open again. It is currently open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday morning from 9am until 12 noon. When coming into the office, please remember to wear your face mask, as this will be mandatory.

OFFERING UPDATE -We are truly blessed to have received your offerings over the past 5 months. We would like to ask you to consider the following which will help to keep us safe: use a cheque in your envelope in place of cash, e-transfer your offering to zionoffice@nrtco.net, sign up to have your offering automatically withdrawn from your account each month. Susan Dupuis, Counting Co-ordinator

CONFIRMATION GATHERINGS (classes) resumed on September 13th, gathering in the parish hall (to allow for social distancing) at 11:30 A.M. until 1:00 P.M.

The Confirmation Schedule for September and October:

October 4th, Group A

October 11th, Thanksgiving Sunday, no class

October 18th, Group B (*Confirmands - last class*)

October 25th, Confirmation for Group B, 11:00 A.M.

No class for new first year confirmation youth will be held this year, with a combined grade 7 and 8 class being offered next Autumn. Pastor Stephen

IPAD/TABLET COURSE - Tuesday, October 6. IPad/ tablet course is continuing. Topic is Features of Facebook. For registration, please contact Jan Scheidt at (613) 631-0658

ZLW – Our Zion Lutheran Women will resume meeting in October. Please join them for a presentation by Jan Scheidt entitled “Thanks Living”. They will meet on Wednesday, October 7th at 2pm (new time) in the sanctuary. Covid guidelines are in place. Please wear a mask and social distance. All are welcome.

NOTE FROM WORSHIP & MUSIC – As we are following recommendations from the Renfrew County Health Unit and Synod, we are not singing our hymns as a congregation. At our planning meetings for the resumption of our services it was felt that if the words to the hymns were projected, we would all be tempted to start singing. For that reason, the words are not being projected.

CLWR LEARNING AND LIVING KITS CANCELLED - We have just heard from our Dean of the Ottawa St. Lawrence Conference Area Bruce Thompson that due to the COVID Pandemic the learning kits will not be able to be shipped due to excessive cost and difficulty in shipping this year.

If you have already purchased items for the kits, we would still welcome your donations. We have made arrangement to give the school supplies to children in need in our own community. The

toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap, etc. will be packaged along with other items for the residents of Carefor at Christmas.

You may bring your donations into the church and we will collect them in the big yellow bag but the supplies will be used locally. We shall keep you updated when we receive more information. Thank you for your understanding.

Ellen Vandersleen, Chair Social Ministry Committee

NEW DATE FOR GARAGE SALE

Saturday October 17, 2020

8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Proceeds will be donated to the Robbie Dean Center and Zion's New AV equipment. Thank you for your most generous donations.

Looking for Volunteers. If you can help with set up or on the day of the event please let Ellen know @ 613-732-7649. Help is always welcome!

Susan Dupuis- Chairperson of church council was in contact with the Health Unit and was given a go ahead. The event is monitored and everyone will be required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer. We will be following Covid guidelines. It will be like we are when out for groceries, etc.

Should regulations increase, the event will be cancelled. Please watch for notices or posts on Facebook. You may also phone Ellen Vandersleen.

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN – First Steps Options – Pregnancy Resource Centre – are hosting their annual Baby Bottle Fundraising Campaign from September 14th – October 4th. Baby bottles can be picked up at the church this morning at the entrance. Please make cheques payable to First Step Options, and either drop off at the centre or return to Zion by October 4th.

Today's Scheduled Worship Leaders

Counters: Kathy Godin, Kathy Hoffman, Christine Booth

Greeter: Cheryl Sack

Guides: Pamela Duplessis, Sonya Grife

Projector Operator: Diane Hammel

Sexton: David Lehman

Worship Assistant: Debbie Wegner

This Week at Zion – October 5 - 11

Mon	7pm	Social Ministry Cte. Mtg.
Tues	10am	Ipad/Tablet Course
	7pm	Worship & Music Cte. Mtg.
Wed	2pm	ZLW Mtg.
		BULLETIN DEADLINE
Thurs		Graveside service for Inez Kelly
Sun	10am	Holy Communion