

Sunday, September 13, 2020

From Pastor Stephen, Zion Lutheran Church, Pembroke, ON

**Welcome:**

We sing our **Gathering Song:** ELW 854 Blessing and Honour  
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:** Gracious and tender-hearted God, you are the source of all forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will and caring for all your children, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**First Reading:** Genesis 50: 15 – 21

A reading from Genesis.

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, '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.

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

**Psalm 33:** Let Your Mercy Be On Us sung by Pastor and Cantor

**Second Reading:** Romans 14: 1 – 12

A reading from Romans.

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 servants 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 in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

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 of us will be accountable to God.

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

**Hymn to Welcome the Gospel:** The Lord is My Song, sung by Cantor

**Gospel:** Matthew 18: 21 - 35

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

Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

“But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’

But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’”

And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. “So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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

**Homily:** In every group, there is usually one person eager to ask questions. Those questions are often stupid and embarrassing ones but sometimes they are the questions we would have liked to ask and were too timid to express out loud.

Peter was that one person in the group. Impulsive at the best of times, Peter would always jump right in with his questions or his actions, his mouth or feet running before his brain was in gear.

Truthfully, though, it may have been because Peter often found himself confused. Especially when he found himself sinking on the water or denying Christ...things he wished he never would have done. Many of his questions were anxious questions, because he was simply having a lot of trouble figuring everything out that Jesus was saying and doing.

Today, Peter thought he had asked a good question, filled with grace and generosity. Should I forgive as many times as seven?

How would it be if I made seven my bottom line for forgiveness?

Jesus’s response was that there was no bottom line. Try 77 times, Jesus said.

Jesus’s response to Peter was grounded in the Hebrew scriptures...in the story in Genesis where Lamech sought seven times sevenfold revenge on those who had harmed him.

What Jesus is speaking about is the exact opposite of what happened in Genesis and what Lamech desired for those who had harmed and hurt him.

I cannot help but think of the Muslim woman in New Zealand who forgave the terrorist who killed her relatives in the mosque shooting, or the Christian woman in the States who begged people not to revenge her son's murder at the hands of the police. Neither the terrorist or the policeman was penitent, nor did they ever seek forgiveness.

That is the kind of forgiveness Jesus was speaking about. It is a letting go of righteous anger. The hurt certainly remains, but the anger starts to leave when such forgiveness is given.

I think also of Jesus on the cross, forgiving those who crucified him on the cross. No one was penitent that day either, yet Jesus forgave them.

And the person on the cross next to Jesus on Good Friday who asked for forgiveness... even though there was no way he could amend for any of his sins at that point ... receiving forgiveness and being invited into paradise by our Lord.

Perhaps the gift of such forgiveness is that it brings some healing and peace to the one who has been hurt and harmed...even when the person they forgive does not even seek, or want, or feel they need forgiveness. Sometimes forgiveness is the first step towards healing a pain whose source cannot be taken away.

Look at the story of Joseph and his family in today's first reading from Genesis. Joseph's forgiveness opened up a whole new possibility, and God was able to bring much that was good out of Joseph's gracious act of forgiveness. What Joseph said was that

God was moving him to forgive and that God brought blessing because of it.

Those who manage to forgive do find blessing in it ... peace and healing. You can only live on righteous anger for so long, until it begins to consume your life. With forgiveness, there is a chance to move on...a chance for new possibilities of life. It will not change the reality of the hurt and the harm...which often remains... but it will stop the hurt and the harm from consuming us.

As Christians, we have the daunting task of forgiving as God forgives and loving as God loves. We are to live as God's forgiven ones, who have received much mercy and kindness from our gracious God.

Our Gospel today shows us that it can be very easy not to do this and to act as if we do not know the meaning of mercy or the depths of God's great kindness toward ourselves. In his culture, the slave had every right to go after those who owed him money, and every right to get that money from debtors. But, in God's eyes, what he was doing was nothing less than a rejection of everything that God has taught us, and an absolute failure to live by grace – a repudiation of Christ and his cross and what it means for us as Christians.

Forgiveness, in our lives, is one way we give thanksgiving to God for God's amazing grace. To not forgive is to be thankless, and even faithless and eventually wicked – because it leads us on a journey that that leads us away from God and the Path of Life.

It certainly is hard work, and sometimes even trying work, to live with such forgiveness and grace. Jesus never said that following him would be easy – it took him to the cross after all. And

sometimes it can take us to the cross as well, or at least feel like it does in our lives.

May God grant us strength to live the words we pray, to forgive as we have been forgiven, and to live in the freedom and the deep joy and gratitude that such forgiveness brings into our lives.

**Amen.**

**Hymn:** ELW 609 Chief of Sinners, Though I Be

**Prayers of the Faithful:** Gracious God, your forgiveness and mercy fills our hearts with gratitude. May your compassion be seen in all we say and do. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbours. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are ill and all who are preparing for, or recovering from surgery: Erin Dupuis, Florence Felske, Edith Gorr, Richard Hubert, Alison Kellough, Hilda Klawitter, Jean Kuehl, Joan Lehman, Kris Purdy, Joyce Scheuneman, Murray Schutt, Gerry Vandersleen, and all who seek your healing and peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for Cody Keith Cormier, beloved child of God, infant son of Lori Weichenthal and Dan Cormier, baptized last week at Zion. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all children in this confusing and frightening time. Help us care for them in their times of anxiety and fear as we speak and live in the hope that is ours in Christ. 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, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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:**

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



## News and Announcements

**Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special Prayers:** Erin Dupuis, Florence Felske, Edith Gorr, Richard Hubert, Allison Kellough, Hilda Klawitter, Jean Kuehl, Joan Lehman, Kris Purdy, Joyce Scheuneman, Murray Schutt, Gerry Vandersleen.

**Please Pray For The Newly Baptized:** especially this day we pray for little Cody Keith Cormier who was baptized here this past Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, his parents, Danial Cormier & Lori Weichenthal, and his sponsors Deborah Bard, Molly Reid & Kirk Weichenthal.

**THANK YOU** – We thank our vocalists, Diane Wolfgram and Sherri Phannenhour and our cantor Jan Scheidt for their gifts of music in today's celebration.

**A DONATION** has been made to CLWR by Mervin & Martha McKibbon for 65 years of Blessings as they celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on September 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1955-2020. *“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”*  
*Colossians 3:14-15a*

**A DONATION** has been made to the Building Fund in loving memory of Randy Handke by his family as they recognized the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing on August 24, 2020. *“My days are like a shadow that declines, and I am withered like grass. But you, O Lord, endure forever and your remembrance to all generations.”*  
*Psalms 102:11-12*

**A DONATION** has been made to the upgraded recording system by Blaine Sack and Robert Tremblay in honour of Cheryl Sack and her 75th birthday on September 5th. *“Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly - not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God”.*  
*1 Peter 5: 2*

**OFFICE HOURS** – With restrictions lifting during the Covid-19 pandemic, beginning this week, the church office will begin to be 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](mailto:zionoffice@nrtco.net), sign up to have your offering automatically withdrawn from your account each month. Susan Dupuis, Counting Co-ordinator

**MID-WEEK CELEBRATION** – A mid-week celebration of Holy Communion is scheduled for this coming Wednesday at 10:30am in our Place of Worship (not the Lounge this time). It is a shorter and simpler celebration than our usual Sunday celebration.

**CONFIRMATION GATHERINGS** (classes) resume on September 13th, with the six confirmation youth who will be confirmed on October 25th (Group B) gathering in the parish hall (to allow for social distancing) at 11:30A.M. until 1:00 P.M. This group of youth will gather again on September 27th for their last class before they are confirmed. The nine youth who were in first year

last season (Group A) will gather on September 20th, October 14th and 18th, also in the parish hall at 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M.

The Confirmation Schedule for September and October:

September 13th, Group B

September 20th, Group A

September 27th, Group B (last class)

October 4th, Group A

October 11th, Thanksgiving Sunday, no class

October 18th, Group A

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** - Zion Lutheran Church is going to be offering a course to anyone interested called “Learning about your new tablet or Ipad” taught by Lyndsay Johnson. If you recently bought an Ipad or tablet, or are thinking of purchasing one, then this is the course for you! The course will be offered Tuesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the Board room beginning **September 15<sup>th</sup>**. Registration is limited. If interested, please call Jan Scheidt at (613) 631 – 0658. The phone has a short ring and I don’t always get to the phone in time before the answering machine kicks in, so please leave a message with your name and phone number, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. - Jan Scheidt

**CAMP LUTHERLYN FALL WORK DAY** - Camp Lutherlyn’s fall work day will be held **Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please come if you can and pass the word onto others you know. Check-in will be from 9-10am and lunch will be provided. Please rsvp if you know you are coming so we have an idea of numbers for lunch.

What to bring:

**Hoffman beach clean-up crew:** work gloves, garden rakes (not fan), tree trimmers, chainsaws, and anything that would be good clearing out underbrush.

**Main Camp/ Bancroft Beach crew:** work gloves, power tools for various carpentry projects, paint supplies if you wish to paint the inside of your cabin.

Accommodations at the camp are available upon request for Friday or Saturday night. Physical distancing protocols will be in place, so please bring a mask for when entering common areas.

**GARAGE SALE –** We are planning to proceed with our annual garage sale Saturday September 26th from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. We will be needing volunteers to help us set up the week before. If you can help any or all of the days your help would be greatly appreciated. Please call Ellen Vandersleen @ (613) 732 - 7649. If you wish to donate items for the sale please phone the church office to set up a time when Kevin or Jean will be here. We have been collecting items for months now, thank you for all your donations. It will be wonderful to start seeing everyone again, even if we are behind a mask, as we will be required to wear masks. Proceeds will be directed towards the video equipment upgrade and the Robbie Dean Family Counselling Centre.

**REMINDER –** This Tuesday is the deadline for the October issue of the Guiding Light. Please have all submissions in to Jean at the office by this date. Thank you!

**WE CARE KITS –** Once again members of the Social Ministry Committee will be gathering items for Canadian Lutheran World Relief's "We Care" Children's Learning and Living Kits. The kits are distributed to children in refugee camps and remote villages around the world. Kits, kit items and donations will be collected in

November. The kits will be assembled and shipped to CLWR at the beginning of December. Here is the list of kit items:

- 3 lined notebooks
- 10 unsharpened pencils with erasers
- 1 metric ruler (30 cm), 1 pencil sharpener and 1 eraser
- 1 pack of crayons (or pencil crayons)
- 1 small and simple toy (new and not requiring batteries, examples: doll, truck, ball, stuffed toy)
- 1 bar of soap and 1 toothbrush (new and wrapped)
- 1 tube of toothpaste (expiration date no earlier than one year) \*\*\* Please wait until November to hand in your kit items.

These kits make a real difference in the lives of children. Last year, thanks to the generosity of Zion members, 119 kits were completed. Since 2002 we have shipped 1,437 Learning and Living Kits to CLWR. You can read more about the "We Care" program at [www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org).

**BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN** – First Steps Options – Pregnancy Resource Centre – will be hosting their annual Baby Bottle Fundraising Campaign from September 14<sup>th</sup> – October 4<sup>th</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup>.

**ETERNITY FOR TODAY** - Just a quick reminder that the office needs to know who would like to renew or begin their subscription for our devotional booklet "Eternity for Today". Parasource (*church supply company*) needs to have any changes to our current subscriptions by the end of September. Please call the church office at (613) 732 - 8792 if you would like to continue to

receive, or begin receiving this daily devotional. The deadline for placing your order is September 24, 2020. Cost for this devotional is \$9.00 for the year. Subscription payments are due when you receive/pick up your first issue for 2021 in December 2020. The last issue for the year is currently in the church office. Please arrange to pick up your copy.

### **Today's Scheduled Worship Leaders**

**Counters:** Murray & Sandra Sell, Mervyn Bimm

**Sexton:** Koit Rull

**Worship Assistant:** Lorraine MacKenzie

### **This Week at Zion – September 14 – 20**

<b>Tues</b>	<b>10am</b>	Ipad/Tablet Course <b>GUIDING LIGHT DEADLINE</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>10:30am</b>	Holy Communion <b>BULLETIN DEADLINE</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>9am</b>	Clean Up Day @ Lutherlyn
<b>Sun</b>	<b>10am</b>	Holy Communion
	<b>11:30am</b>	Confirmation Class ( <i>Group A</i> )