

August 30, 2020 – 13th Sunday After Pentecost

A Blessed Sunday morning to you, and welcome to our twenty-sixth online worship service, in this last full week of summer “holidays” ☺ I say “holidays” in quotation marks because for many of us, June, July and August have been very busy with preparation for the fall. This week, so many emails and phone calls were happening to move us ever gently towards our re-opening for worship.

Nothing beats seeing each other in person. We have started, weather permitting, meeting on the church lawn on Sundays, 10:00 am to 11:00 am for an informal visiting time. You are encouraged to bring your lawn chair and complete all toileting before coming out. We visit at a safe distance, without the requirement of masks (as we will be outdoors). The goal of this time is to gently re-open the experience of in-person time, in preparation for re-entry to the building. Prayer together will be part of our visiting time on Sundays.

Because our church is a big building, with many users who want back in, come September, a big part of our job in preparing to re-open is figuring out how to ensure the building is kept safe and COVID sanitized in-between user groups. We want and need to share our space, and we also want and need for it to be safe for our own use. To this end, your church council, Mutual Ministry/Human Resources team and Risk Management ministry teams plus many disciples have been hard at work this week to continue moving church re-opening forward. Last week we made the call out for disciples to volunteer in these roles:

- Ushers (involved in directing people to marked out seating when they come in).
- Greeters (or welcome team, to assess safety as people enter).
- High-touch Wipe-Downers (as the name suggests ☺).
- Helpful in other ways with re-opening tasks.

I had one email reply!

Hazel and/or Nyle Schmidt are taking a lead in communicating, to see who might be willing to continue to serve from our Gifts of Serving list. The amended re-opening checklist from the Synod Office will continue being populated with the names of those helping with the re-opening tasks. We need help, and people to indicate their willingness to help in order to re-open for in-person Sunday worship.

In the meantime, remember the COVID-19 virus remains alive and well. For us to likewise remain alive and well, precautions are advised: safe distancing, avid handwashing and polite consideration of and respect for the fears of others are, at this time, acts of love. As followers of Jesus, we are called to love each other, so please exercise these acts of love generously ☺

If you still have not heard from me since my return from leave, and you had reached out, please kick my shins with a phone call. It is not my intention to neglect visitation ministry in the administration-heavy time of re-opening.

Outdoor, safe distanced visit, or a phone visit from me, please do reach out by email or phone: pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org or 519-653-4721

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

I want to offer a word of thanks for those of you who have allowed us to use your photos, or who have offered the use of your photos in the creation of our music videos. It truly adds to our worshipping community and makes worship more of a 'group effort'. It's not too late to get in on the fun! If you have some photos you might like to send along, please be in touch with me by email, lorre.calder@sympatico.ca . We can arrange how best to co-ordinate access to your photos. Full credit will of course be given.

—Lorre Calder

Please take a few moments of silence, prepare your heart,
centre yourself for worship.

Prelude: Land acknowledgement with Brad's creative composition ☺

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Zar8-GeUs>

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, as time thunders on, you are with us, to guide, protect and lead us. Be our foundation and keep us centred in our faith. Keep us consistent in acting with love, patience and gentleness in all our interactions, following the example of Jesus, ever our Redeemer and Way-Maker. Amen.

Psalm 138

Click Here: <https://youtu.be/KxeBnnNXL3I>

Music by Bradley B. Moggach, July 2020

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Psalm 138

bbm

F Dm C F Dm B♭maj7 C

3 Am Dm B♭6 F/C C7 F

F C/E B♭/D F/C F/A B♭/D C7 F

So let us sing of the ways of the Lord. Great is the glo-ry of the Lord!

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with | my whole heart;
before the gods I will | sing your praise.
I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast | love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name
and your word a- | bove all things. **Refrain**

When I called, you | answered me;
 you increased my | strength within me.
 All the rulers of the earth will praise | you, O Lord,
 when they have heard the words | of your mouth. **Refrain**

They will sing of the ways | of the Lord,
 that great is the glory | of the Lord.
 The Lord is high, yet cares | for the lowly,
 perceiving the haughty | from afar. **Refrain**

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you | keep me safe;
 you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
 your right | hand shall save me.
 You will make good your pur- | pose for me;
 O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever;
 do not abandon the works | of your hands.* **Refrain x 2**

The Lesson: St Paul's letter to the Romans 12:1-8

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it."

Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good. (The Message Translation)
 Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.** *

Reading Homework: Jeremiah 15, Exodus 3, Psalm 26.

Gospel Acclamation: Be Still For the Presence of the Lord

Click Here: <https://youtu.be/9gQ47tRJe1s>

Be Still, for the Presence of the Lord by David Evans
 Helga Morrison, soprano and Stephanie Burgoyne, piano.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 16:21-28

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Then Jesus made it clear to his disciples that it was now necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, submit to an ordeal of suffering at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, and then on the third day be raised up alive. Peter took him in hand, protesting, "Impossible, Master! That can never be!"

But Jesus didn't swerve. "Peter, get out of my way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works."

Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; *I* am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?

"Don't be in such a hurry to go into business for yourself. Before you know it the Son of Man will arrive with all the splendor of his Father, accompanied by an army of angels. You'll get everything you have coming to you, a personal gift. This isn't pie in the sky by and by. Some of you standing here are going to see it take place, see the Son of Man in kingdom glory."

[The Message Translation]

The Gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon (by Pastor Janaki) – "On Feeling Peter-ish": *(Due to the busy-ness of Pastor Janaki's schedule this past week, there is no audio link for today's message. If she is able to record one as time permits, we will upload it and email out the link to you. We appreciate your grace and your understanding.)*
Imagine Pastor Janaki's voice here:

As we look at the solid structures in our communities, like churches, hospitals and schools, and as we consider August pushing us towards September, there is no denying the variety of anxieties, concerns and fears that accompany school re-opening. This is very real. Predictions of a second wave of high numbers of COVID infections are being offered by most experts, and I feel people trying their best to batten down, to brace for the storm, to prepare.

When I was in high school in Jamaica, I remember a hurricane, named Gilbert, which wove its way right across our island nation. Hurricane Gilbert peaked as a Category 5 hurricane that brought widespread destruction to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico for nearly nine days. In total, it killed 318 people and caused about \$2.98 billion (1988 USD) in damages over the course of its path. The thing about hurricanes is, generally, the closer they get to you, the more you can be certain that they are going to hit. And you have an idea of how strong they are by their rating – Category 5 being the highest.

There is a holy moment in the eye of a hurricane ... a time when the winds cease, and the stillness is almost eerie, before everything resumes with the same strength but with everything blowing in the opposite direction. This is usually when roofs get ripped off, trees might fall and hydro poles come crashing down. The thing is: you know it is coming for you. You know how bad it might be. You batten down.

In some very real ways, this is what is happening in our Gospel reading: Jesus is giving the weather forecast, or the COVID forecast if you will, on his own life ...

- Like September coming upon us, it is time to go to Jerusalem.
- Like a hurricane coming at them, Jesus tells the disciples, an ordeal is pending.
- Like COVID, like a hurricane ... there will be death.

But what is different in the prediction given by Jesus?

I would say two things:

- First, Jesus beats any weatherman or COVID prediction specialist

- Second, he will be raised up on the third day ... we do not have that kind of guarantee with COVID or with hurricanes for that matter.

We have all now experienced the reality of first wave of COVID ... so we have an idea of what to expect, much the way that, for me having experienced Hurricane Gilbert, as I watch hurricanes swirling around I know what the people who will be affected are in for.

The thing about knowing what to expect is sometimes, the fear that comes with that knowing can be crippling. It can cause squirming, writhing and gnashing of teeth ... it can make us object vehemently, and try to escape the inevitable challenge that we know is coming with the unfolding of time.

So we can understand Peter's objection when Jesus lays out the prediction of his own crucifixion: Peter is like "Absolutely not, no sirree, this cannot happen to you, Jesus, you are the Messiah the Son of the Living God".

Like us knowing COVID first wave, like me knowing Hurricane Gilbert, Peter knows about crucifixion. He knows how humiliating and violent and vicious a death it is. And he cannot even consider such a death in the same sentence as his beloved Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus' response to Peter doesn't seem to be particularly compassionate though. To me it feels a little like a bucket of ice water, or maybe a sharp slap across the cheek, like Jesus is saying to Peter with a smack "snap out of it" ... Jesus says "Satan get lost".

And then he says one of these turnkey Jesus things: "You have no idea how God works."

Other translations put it like this:

- "You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on things of God, but on things of man." [Amplified Translation].
- "You are a dangerous trap to me. You are thinking merely from a human point of view, and not from God's." [The Living Bible].
- "You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." [The New King James Version].

When I think about Jesus' response, to be honest, I can sympathize completely with Peter ... it is really hard to keep my mind on God, to consider God's ability and God's point of view, when I am staring down the barrel of the possibility of stillness, silence and lockdown that we went through in April.

For those who are teachers, I imagine it is really hard to keep your mind on God, God's ability and God's point of view when you are staring down the barrel of a classroom of [perhaps somewhat snotty nosed] children, with the ways of children who, even when told and instructed and reminded a million times about best practice, will swap juice boxes for a taste, or try on each other's masks, or exchange a [gasp, egad, don't do it] germ-ridden high five.

For those who are parents, I imagine it is really hard to keep your mind on God, God's ability and God's point of view when you are staring down the barrel of rushing your child to the

hospital with a midnight fever that won't abate, rattling lungs and the worry of whether a ventilator be available?

For those who are custodians or janitors, now expected to provide protection with their work at a whole other level, I wonder where does God's ability and God's point of view come in?

For those who are healthcare workers, who have had some reprieve from the higher infection rates of late winter and early spring, I wonder where they sit when they try to consider COVID second wave from a Godly, Kingdom perspective?

For each of these groups of people, I feel the Peter-ish reaction rising within myself: heels digging in, a bit of muffled kicking and screaming (on the inside if not the outside):
Nooooooooo ... not me not us ... not yet ... not yet.

Because we WANT to lead in our own preservation ...
we WANT to be in control of our lives ...
we WANT to know and control the outcome.

And, absolutely, we can take precautions ...

We can wear masks, teach our children, and support our teachers and other frontline workers.

But the time for trusting, for leaning into the leadership, provisioning and MIGHTINESS of our God is now upon us.

The "Jesus take the wheel" moment is upon us – when we have to trust that, yes a hurricane of infection may come, but we do NOT walk this journey alone, we do NOT walk this journey with only mortal life, we do NOT walk this journey without proof: on the third day, He rose again.

We do walk this journey knowing that God is with us: God, the almighty Parent, Creator of heaven and earth.

We do walk this journey knowing that Jesus is with us: the one who was crucified, died and was buried, and who rose again on the third day, evidence of the conquest of mortal death.

We do walk this journey knowing that the Holy Sacred Spirit of God is with us: connecting us in the communion of saints with all the believers who have gone before us, those who are here with us, and even those who are yet to come.

We do walk this journey knowing there is an everlasting life that allows us to live THIS mortal life full of the knowledge that the dwelling place of God is with us and within us, knowing that WE are GOD's PEOPLE, knowing that eternal life is ours, through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for us.

Knowing these things equips us with courage and bravery for the days that are to come, for the suffering and difficulties that lie ahead, for the dangers that we fear.

Knowing these things allows us to re-set our minds on the things of God, while working within the realities of mortality: of church buildings, and school buildings and hospitals.

At the end of the day, at the end of our ropes, and for every minute and inch before that end, our God remains a mighty fortress which never ever fails us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn of the Day #504 A Mighty Fortress is Our God

(Words are provided for your meditation.)

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGK05jJhfcU&feature=youtu.be>

Tune Name: Ein Feste Burg; Text & Tune: Martin Luther; Arrangement for Organ: J. S. Bach

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The Apostles Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen. (**that is, the true Christian church of all times
and all places*)

The main prayer below was accessed through the Xavier University website, at:

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/coronavirus-prayers> and written by
Sister Christine Koelhoeffer, IHM. The final two petitions were added based on our context for this Sunday.

A Coronavirus Prayer:

Loving God, Your desire is for our wholeness and well being.
We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.
We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.
We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.
We pray: may love, not fear, go viral.
Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.
Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together
in spirit and in solidarity.
Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,
You, the God who does not abandon.

We add to these prayers our prayers for the people of Lebanon,
so hard hit by the explosion in Beirut earlier in August,
And our prayers for those who are preparing for in-person gatherings whether at schools,
churches or workplaces come September – be with us all as we move forward in love. Amen.

Lord's Prayer:

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.**

While you listen to the offertory hymn, continue your prayers and consider how you may be an offering in the coming week.

Offertory – Christ has Arisen, Alleluia

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqbD58GJAQk>

Text: B. Kaymaanywa, H. S. Olson; Tune: Tanzanian Traditional

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Offering Prayer

God of goodness and growth,
all creation is yours,
and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
Water and word, social distancing and hand-washing:
these are signs of your abundant grace.
Nourish us through these gifts,
that we might proclaim your steadfast love
in our communities and in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: #396 Spirit of Gentleness

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LoRbQGq_A0

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Blessing:

May God bless us and keep us.
May the face of God shine upon us with grace and mercy.
May God look upon us with favor
and give us ✝ peace.
Amen.

Dismissal: Go in Peace, Go in Hope. ***Thanks be to God.***

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