

August 9, 2020 – Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

A Blessed Sunday morning to you, and welcome to our twenty-third online worship service.

My notes this week to you will be more brief than usual, as I am on leave (study leave followed by vacation) for four weeks from July 15 through August 12. During this time, emergency pastoral care is available for you by contacting the church office. Our emergency pastoral care clergy person is the very dear Pastor Claudine Carlson. Please do reach out if you need pastoral care, and the office will connect you directly with Pastor Claudine.

During my leave, I will not be responding to emails and phone calls. This allows me to focus on the study leave tasks of preparing a blog site to be connected to our church website, as well as preparing some reconvening worship-and-debrief modules for when we gather again, in small groups, and eventually for worship. Lorre, Gee or Bonnie may add notes to this missal week over week to keep you updated on church re-opening activities if there is any new news. If it is safe to do so, and all preparations are completed, we anticipate resuming worship sometime in September.

During the Sundays of my leave, you have the very special treat of hearing from many church voices: Bonnie Berg has agreed to prepare the message for Sunday July 19th, Lorre Calder for Sunday July 26th, Nicholas Stienberg for August 2nd and Lorre again for August 9th. We are blessed to have so many wonderful gifts in our family.

You remain in my heart and my prayers – every single one of you ☺ And, as things are opened up, 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.

Please exercise these acts of love generously. God be with you in every possible way ☺

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

You are all encouraged to keep Pastor Janaki in your prayers over the next two weeks. We pray that she will return rested, renewed, and recharged.

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'. 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: O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

Reading Homework: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Psalm 138

Click Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyENM47u0hM>

Music by Bradley B. Moggach, July 2020

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Psalm 138

bbm

F Dm C F Dm Bbmaj7 C

3 Am Dm Bb6 F/C C7 F

F C/E Bb/D F/C F/A Bb/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 Second Lesson: Romans 10:5-15

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

"The word is near you,
 on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (NRSV)

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

Acclamation of the Word:

'How Beautiful', from Handel's Messiah

(with visuals from our own stained glass windows)

Click Here: <https://youtu.be/rm9bAUffHK4>

Featuring Julianne Bintakies, soprano, Barbara Burden, alto, and Bradley Moggach, piano. The piece was recorded in 2009 for the 175th anniversary of our congregation. It was part of a CD created for the occasion entitled, 'Remember, Rejoice, Renew'.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 14:22-33

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (NIV)

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

Sermon (by Lorre Calder) Click here: <https://youtu.be/BgAz9hKhaFk> to access the audio of the sermon, or imagine Lorre's voice here:

Our gospel this morning shows up in three places in our bible. This version from Matthew 14, but also in Mark 6 and the sixth chapter of John. In all three cases, this story follows directly on the heels of the feeding of the five thousand with the loaves and fishes. The Matthew version is the only one where Peter tells Jesus to call him out to walk on the water to him.

Let's back up a bit first. At the beginning of our reading today, Jesus told the disciples to go on ahead of him while he dismissed the crowd. He then went up on the mountainside by himself to pray. If you recall the previous event, Jesus was probably tired, having likely preached, taught, and healed all day. He needed a break. And that's not even counting feeding five thousand people! We have all had days like that haven't we. The days that are just one thing after another with no time take a deep breath or gather your thoughts. Not a moment to yourself. Maybe at the end of such a day, you just want to go to some quiet place to clear your mind and your heart; it might be your patio, your garden, your bedroom, or a sun-room. You need to recharge and reconnect with yourself and reconnect with God. So Jesus sent the guys off ahead of him so he would have some time alone. And, by sending them off by boat, maybe it ensured that they wouldn't be back to bother him with that 'one last thing'.

Anyway, it seems they didn't get far because of strong winds because they were still on the water when dawn broke. Jesus walked out to meet them. On the water. The disciples thought it was a ghost and were afraid. Now you might think that with everything they had seen Jesus do with their own eyes, seeing Jesus coming to them walking on the water might be within the realm of possibility. He had healed sick people, cast out demons, raised the young girl from the dead that we heard about last week, given people back their sight and their hearing, and he had just fed five thousand hungry people with a young boy's lunch. But, they didn't recognize him until he told them who he was and to not be afraid. Then Guess Who pipes up? Peter says, 'Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water.'

What on earth was Peter thinking? It figures that it was Peter, right? Throughout the gospels it seems that Peter was always the one who spoke before fully thinking things through. But, how often don't we find ourselves in Peter's sandals? He says things without thinking. His mouth gets him into places where his courage doesn't keep him. He loves Jesus, but he has doubts; he falls short. He is human. Sounds a lot like most of us, doesn't it. So, Peter stepped out of the boat, walked toward Jesus, but became afraid and started to sink when he noticed the wind. He cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus reached out, grabbed him, and brought him back into the boat. Jesus then basically said to him, 'you silly man, did you really think I'd let you fall?'

We have to remember that the water wasn't calm when Peter challenged Jesus to call him out onto the water. It was just as windy when Peter made his move to get out of the boat as when he noticed the wind, became afraid, and started to sink.

There is much for us to learn in this gospel reading for today. How often don't we find ourselves in stormy waters prompting us to call out to Jesus for reassurance of his presence? Jesus tells us, always, 'I'm right here. Just come to me'. We might take those first steps toward Jesus' embrace and security but sometimes the uncertainty of the unknown path with Jesus drives us back into the storm we already know, no matter how difficult or joyless it might be.

Peter was pretty safe in the boat. Sure it was windy, and they weren't making any headway, but it was safe. The boat was solid, it had a floor which kept him from sinking to the bottom of the lake, and his fellow disciples were, forgive the pun, in the same boat. But Peter wanted to prove his faith and his belief. So, he follows Jesus' call into uncharted territory. He actually took the bold step. He was really incredibly brave to throw his legs over the side and step onto the water. Yes, he got scared, but we do too, don't we? Sometimes following Jesus requires us to make moves and do things we might not do otherwise, but when we step out in faith, Jesus is always, always there to catch us. Peter got wet. When he stepped out of the boat, Peter got wet. In fact when he realized what was actually happening, with the wind and the waves, he started to sink into the water and he got really wet. We get wet, too. When we follow Jesus, it might be a bumpy road, it might not be easy. In fact we are told that earlier in Matthew 7. The Message translation puts it this way, *"Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with sure-fire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention."*

But, if we are going to follow Jesus, we have to take that first step. We can't do it from the safety of the boat. Here in our congregation we are trying to discern the best way to be better neighbours, better disciples, better followers of Jesus. We must be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. In order to do that, we will need to step out of our comfort zone. We cannot do it from our perch in our favourite pew. We must throw open our doors and take the first, bold step outside. We must have faith that even if the road is bumpy, if we make mistakes, have faltering footsteps, risk giving in to our fears, that Jesus is there with an outstretched hand to keep us from sinking to the bottom. It doesn't mean we won't get wet. Jesus never promised Peter he wouldn't get wet, and we are made no such rosy promises either.

One of my favourite Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. quotes goes, *"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."* In our congregation as we navigate what our mission will look like as we seek ways to redevelop our property, we will no doubt make mistakes, have uncertainty, and have fears about whether or not what we are doing is right. None of us can see the future, but as the song goes, 'I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future.' As we discern what our next moves are in the redevelopment process, your prayers, your faith, your willingness to step out of the boat and get wet is needed. We can't do it without you.

In our gospel, Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water. To be sure, they had never seen Jesus do that before. It's no different today. Jesus will present himself to us in ways we don't expect or maybe won't even recognize. We must rely on our faith and the outstretched hand of Jesus waiting to grab onto us and bring us safely to him.

We can also apply our gospel today to our current situation. COVID-19 has really done a number on us in ways no one could have predicted. Six months ago if you had said what our lives would look like through April, May, June, July, and now into August, I can't imagine anyone would have believed you. I sure wouldn't have bet my next paycheque on that vision

of our collective future. And yet, here we are. Out of the boat and getting wet. But, as always, Jesus is there with an outstretched hand grabbing onto us. Various disciples here at St. Peter's are working diligently to find the safest ways for us to return to in-person worship this fall. It might be early September, but we won't know for a bit yet. It will probably be in small groups with a very different worship format for a while, but we don't know what that will look like yet, either.

These disciples are out of the boat, and are aware of the wind swirling around them. We want everyone to return to our worship space safely, but there is much work to do to make that possible. Every precaution we can take to make that happen takes care and effort. It is a huge job and there are many factors in play. They can't do this alone. Jesus is there, of course, but your prayers, your faith, your willingness to step out of the boat with them and get wet is needed. We can't do it without you.

Matthew's version of this story is a gift to us. The Mark and John versions, as I said at the beginning, don't have Peter stepping out of the boat. I think this added part of the story teaches us such a valuable lesson. I see three things come to the forefront of this story: faith, feet, and hands. Peter, as bold and brash as he was, had faith that if Jesus called him to come out onto the water, that he could indeed walk on top of the water. Peter then had to take that first step. He put his legs over the side and put his feet to the surface of the water and took those first steps. When he was overcome by fear of the wind and the waves, Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed Peter's hand. Yes, Peter got wet, and he gave in to his fears, but he wasn't wrong to take those steps in faith.

Whether you have a big decision to make, whether you have received a bad or uncertain medical diagnosis, whether you need to make better choices for a healthier lifestyle, whether you are trying to admit you need help to find a way out of addiction, just take one step out of the boat, and then another, and then another. Jesus is there, waiting with an outstretched hand if you find yourself starting to doubt, or give in to your fears, or make a mistake.

We don't know what any possible redevelopment will look like. The way ahead might be bumpy and uncertain and the end result might not look like anything we envisioned when we started out. But, we must take the first step, and then another, and then another. Our neighbours and our community need help. They need us. Jesus is there with an outstretched hand if we find we are losing our way, or are uncertain as to which fork in the road to take. We don't know what our worship or our worship space will look like as we begin to approach the light at the end of the COVID tunnel, whenever that happens. It will look, and feel, and sound very different than when we left the building on March 15th. We might have both in-person as well as online worship in our future, but we can still grow, and learn, and become better disciples. We must also allow each other the grace and the space to come back together in whichever way feels best for our own anxiety and comfort level. Are we willing to throw our legs over the side of the boat and take that first step, and then another, and then another? We need each other. We have missed each other. For those times when we are bound to feel anxious and afraid, when we see and feel the wind blowing around us, all we need to do is reach out our hand just like Peter did. 'Lord, save me!' Jesus will be right there with an outstretched hand waiting to pull us to safety. No matter how weak our faith, how faltering our feet, or how shaky our hands might be. Jesus is there and he won't let us drown.

Amen.

Hymn of the Day**Stay With Us****Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FRT5B4xaPs>

Tune: © 1988 Ron Klusmeier, Admin Hope Publishing Co. Carol Stream, IL, 60188

Text: 1983 Walter Farquharson, Admin Hope Publishing Co.

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Our prayers of the people are from Heidi VanSchaik, our youth minister. They give focus to the things that have affected our younger brothers and sisters during these unprecedented times.

A Prayer In The Time Of COVID-19

God of love, you help us turn our worries into prayers. You hear the confusion, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear in our minds right now. We lift our burdens to you so that we can let them go, knowing you are here to listen. We pray for every young person who has lost their job & now faces financial struggles, for every university student who had to return home unexpectedly, for youth whose home is not a safe place, for everyone struggling with the transition to online school or lack of routine, for the graduating class who might not get to walk across the stage, and for all people who are missing their friends. Together we grieve all the lost joy and happy memories quarantine has taken from us.

Thank you, Lord, for the person on the other side of the screen (or page) right now. For their courage, strength, and kindness despite everything weighing on their hearts. Help them to know your boundless grace and endless love is still here even when they can't see it. We pray for doctors, nurses, janitors, cashiers, politicians, and everyone working at this time. We ask you to help us see Your face in all the brave people keeping our families and country together. Although buildings may be empty, we pray you keep our hearts full of compassion for others and love for our neighbours. We thank you for FaceTime, TikTok, Instagram challenges, and all the other things that remind us we are not alone in this.

Knowing God, you understand even the messiest of our prayers. Despite physical distance, we are still Your church. We pray for CLAY and the hundreds of young people disappointed that we can't come together this summer. We look forward to next summer.... We call you to be our lighthouse in the wavy seas and our guide in the wilderness. God, you've got some crazy plot with this whole Corona thing, but we trust you. The unknowns of Your plan have no end, but neither does your grace.

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 – If You But Trust in God to Guide You ELW #769**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1bOItJGvWU>Text & Music: Georg Neumark; tr. Composite Organ Setting J.S. Bach BWV 691 Tune Name: Wer Nur Den Lieben Gott
Text & Music: Public Domain Administrators: Public Domain Used by Permission. CCLI License # 11098609

Offering Prayer

God of all abundance, receive our brokenness and the offering of our lives.

Take us, who return to you in thanksgiving: form us and shape us into a love like Jesus, so that we may be love for this broken world. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn:

The Lord's My Shepherd (Crimond) SBH 522

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k3YyC8pV2s&t=11s>

Composer: Jessie Seymour Irvine; Words: Public Domain; Music: Public Domain

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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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