

May 9th, 2021 Sixth Sunday of Easter (Setting 3) – Email/At Home Missal

St Peter's Lutheran Cambridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: St Peter's Lutheran Sunday Worship May 9 2021

Time: May 9, 2021 09:30 AM America/Toronto. Service begins at 10:00AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82695448391?pwd=RFBgeGFCMm4zY2Y3UHIDUIR5V2RHdz09>

Meeting ID: 826 9544 8391

Passcode: 301278

One tap mobile

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You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):

Dial by your location

+1 438 809 7799 Canada

+1 587 328 1099 Canada

+1 647 374 4685 Canada

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

+1 204 272 7920 Canada

Meeting ID: 826 9544 8391

Passcode: 301278

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdiD9u1SwX>

Gathering Hymn: ELW # 879 'For the Beauty of the Earth'

Click here: <https://youtu.be/AFPhyp7fvJI>

Text: Folliott S. Pierpoint; Music: Conrad Kocher; Words: Public Domain; Music: Public Domain

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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, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The First Reading: Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days. (NRSV)
Word of God, Word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.***

Psalm: Psalm 98

O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.

**His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.**

The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

**He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.**

All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**

Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.

**With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.

**Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy**
at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming
to judge the earth.

**He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.**

The Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. (NRSV)

Word of God, Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation: 'Let Us Enter Into the Silence'

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

Oldham/Moggach – all permissions given by hymn creators!

The Holy Gospel according to John 15:9-17

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not

choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

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

Sermon (Interim Pastor, Rev. Chun Zhang)

In the last couple of Sundays, have you noticed that the Gospel readings from the Gospel of John are somehow repeating themselves? Especially the expressions like “bearing fruit”, “remain in me”, and “love each other as I have loved you” appear multiple times.

And the image Jesus used to describe this loving relationship is the inner connection of the grapevine and its branches.

Last Sunday, Pastor Janaki preached about her experience of battling with fruitless vines. Today, I’d like to share my experience of almost destroying a fruitful vine by being overly enthusiastic to provide unnecessary help.

Before diving into my experience. I’d like to invite all of you to use your imaginations. Can you imagine what a grapevine looks like? Especially in the wintertime?

I don’t know about you, but the first thing showed in my mind was the dry, dead-looking vine and dry and dead-looking branches. If you take a closer look at the branches, you would find that there is absolutely no sign of life in it. It's just like the grapevine climbing on the fence between my backyard and our neighbours’ many years ago when we still lived in Toronto.

At that time, my parents came from China to visit us. They were very much into gardening especially anything to do with fruits and vegetables. My father was always proud of his gardening skills but he never dealt with grapevine before. I still remember that year we had a cold and late spring, and trees were still brown at the end of April. One warm afternoon my father asked me what we could do to have a better crop that year. My only knowledge about the grapevine was from the Bible. I told my father that the Bible said if those branches are not bearing fruits, they should be cut off and put into the fire.

My father agreed. Then that whole afternoon, two of us were busy in the backyard trying to trim the vine by cutting out dead-looking branches. In a short time, there is a big pile of dry branches on the ground already. But right at that moment, my neighbour George ran out of his house and stopped my father. He told my father the branches he cut down were still alive and could bear much fruit. We wouldn’t believe him for the branches were truly dry and there was no sign of life in them. But George insisted. Not because we were convinced, but for the sake of being good neighbours, we left the dead-looking branches alone.

However, only 2 weeks later those dead-looking branches suddenly changed their appearance. The seemingly lifeless old branches were truly alive. And there is no better evidence than the greenery of these new leaves. And later that year these old branches bore much fruit. But those new branches growing out of the vine from the places me and my father cut off the old branches were still in the process of maturing. They didn’t bear any fruit.

Both my father and I learned one lesson from this experience, which is that we cannot make a quick judgment based on appearance only. The sign of life is always showing itself when the time is coming, and when the life is touched, and the heart is moved.

Sometimes, it is discouraging to see the shrinking of our congregation. It is difficult to see many used-to-be-fruitful ministries are not bearing fruit anymore. And it is very tempting to cut the dry and dead-looking

branches out before giving them a chance to show the sign of life. It is tempting to start new things just for the sake of being new, or because it somehow works in other churches and settings.

Thanks to our wise neighbour, we had a harvest year of grapes and jars of grape jam made by my parents occupied my fridge long after they left for China. And thanks to Jesus' words, from which we learned that Jesus and his father are both patient and loving. And from all other lessons, we are encouraged to seek the sign of life from what we treasured the most in our seemingly not very vibrant church life. Especially during this seemingly-never-end pandemic time, when patience is thin and hope is small, and vision is blurry, it is extremely important to seek more carefully the signs of God's loving power moving in our church.

Last Sunday, we all experienced that moment of love expression mixed with tears and laughter when you have to say goodbye to your very well-loved pastor Janaki. At that moment I believe all of you felt the communion of love being connected not only with yourselves but also with God, who is the source of love. What we need to do next is to give thanks for these signs of life, which reassure our connection to our Lord like branches' connection to the vine; and to bear fruit of love confidently as Jesus called us to do. And this image can and will be the fruitful future of our life and our church's life.

Amen!

Hymn of the Day: ELW # 793 'Be Thou My Vision'

Click here: <https://youtu.be/C2DkJKyKYN4>

Text: Irish, E. H. Huff, M. E. Byrne; Tune: Slane; Irish Traditional

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Prayers of Intercession:

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

Loving God, you call us to be your fruit-bearing church. Strengthen the bonds among all Christian churches. Today we pray for the Moravian Church, giving thanks for the life and witness of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church and hymnwriter. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, the earth praises you. The seas roar and the hills sing for joy. Fill the earth with your love so that by their song, all creatures of land and sea and sky, burrowing and soaring, may call us to join with them in praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Faithful Savior, you conquer the world not with weapons but with undying love. Plant your word in the hearts of the nations' leaders and give them your Spirit, so that the peoples of the world may live in peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Caring Healer, you forget no one and accompany the lonely. Be present with those who are sick or suffering (*especially*). Provide for those needing homes or medical care and point us towards life-changing responses to these needs in our own communities. Be with the dying (*especially.....*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Gracious God, as a mother comforts her child, you comfort us. Bless mothers and mothering people in our lives. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and those who have never known a loving mother. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Gentle Redeemer, all who die in you abide in your presence forever. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives (*especially...*). Keep us united with them in your lasting love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal:

Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsiaRdyFr50>

You are invited to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

Prayer after Communion

Wellspring of joy,
through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
and send us as joyful witnesses,
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Blessing:

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,
Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 543 'Go, My Children, with My Blessing'

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paeLiwar3Hg>

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Dismissal:

Alleluia! Christ is risen. ***Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!***

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia ***Thanks be to God. Alleluia!***