

October 11, 2020 – Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost – no gathering on the lawn this Sunday

A Blessed Sunday morning to you, welcome to your online worship service and a blessed Thanksgiving Weekend to you all ☺ This Sunday, we are NOT having a gathering on the lawn, and this is the last Sunday in which a worship service will be (e)mailed out before Sunday service. We have a new member and contextual placement student from the Seminary, Sarah Glinski, and she is our preacher this weekend. She wrote the sermon, and if you have access to audio, you will hear her voice preaching the sermon today ☺

On October 4th, we had a soft re-opening in-person service which went smoothly, and we anticipate resuming in-person worship on October 18th at 10:00 am (pandemic closures permitting). On October 18th and following weeks, worship emails (including the recorded Youtube link for the sermon) will be emailed to you in the afternoon, following Sunday morning live worship. Likewise, those who received physical mail of service will receive your mail a little later in the week following the service. This will allow us to resume a Sunday in-person worship practice that we can share, as best as possible, with those who are not yet comfortable or able to return to in-person worship.

The in-person worship services will have live music, possibly soloists, and possibly slightly different hymnody than the email service will; this allows us to ensure the best quality recordings in the online delivery. Eventually we hope to get to where we can livestream the service, either on Youtube, Facebook or some other streaming service. But for now, as we continue to rely on the generous sharing of gifts by many volunteers who are also working day jobs, we will only be able to offer a link after the live service has been completed and the sound file then uploaded. Even this will depend upon the cooperation of technology on a given Sunday.

If you are planning to attend worship on October 18th, please read through this page of notes carefully so you know what to expect when you come to church. More information may be sent out during the week, and complete information will also be sent out via Lamplighter. You will need to arrive early for the entry protocol, and come to the Church Street accessible entrance, at which you will be asked four assessment questions by an outside Greeter. A face covering is required. These are the assessment questions, and a self-assessment is advisable at home:

1. Have you travelled outside of the province or country within the last 14 days?
2. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
3. Have you been in contact with anyone that has exhibited symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 virus in the past 14 days?
4. Do you have any of the following symptoms that are unusual for you: fever, new cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, chills, headache, new loss of taste or smell?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, then you will be asked to return home. Otherwise, you will be allowed into the building, and an inside Greeter will check your temperature (if above 100°F or 37.8°C, you will be asked to return home) and ask you to sanitize your hands.

You will be seated by an usher to ensure social distancing in the pew. Families will be seated together. Seating will be assigned from front to back in the sanctuary. All volunteer disciples also want to worship, so please arrive early to ensure seating can be completed in time for 10:00 am start of worship.

At my preparation of these worship notes, we are seeking to populate a roster for at least 4 Sundays of volunteer disciples in place, beginning on October 18th, so that we are prepared to continue with worship, if we are not placed in lockdown conditions again based on rising infection rates. If you have not yet volunteered or been called on, but are interested in helping – please contact Hazel & Nyle (519-653-2901) or the church office (519-653-4721). A number of people are now trainers, and a one-on-one training session can be organized with you, as needed. Volunteer disciples are to gain access through the Church Street accessible entrance only.

One of the items we need for the COVID safe cleaning requirements are throw-away "rags" or wiping cloths. They will be dampened with COVID-safe solution, and used to sanitize, both by our custodial contractor and by our volunteer disciples. Most of us have old sheets, linens and towels which could be re-purposed for this use. We are asking that you donate any spare sheets, linens and towels that could be used in this way, freshly laundered, to our church. Drop off may be done at front porches at these locations: 23 Shade Street in Galt and 746 Regent Street in Preston. We will cut them into the appropriate sizes, so that we have a ready stock handy. If you are looking for an outing, maybe check out the thrift stores near you for items we could use, and consider purchasing some to share with church as a donation. They don't need to be brand new, just clean.

As always, if you need a phone call or distanced visits, please do reach out by email or phone: pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org or 519-653-4721 ... It is not my intention to neglect pastoral visitation ministry during this time, sometimes my shins just need a swift kick 😊

- 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! Providing permissions are given, you may include photos that include people, not just scenery. 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: Generous God, you are the source of all creation. Despite our experiences of hardship, help us to be thankful for all the blessings surrounding us every day. Help us to celebrate your generosity in all times, places and circumstances, ever mindful that with faith in Jesus and the faith of Jesus, nothing is impossible for us as your people. Amen.

Psalm 23 in hymnody: The Lord's My Shepherd (Crimond) SBH 522;

Composer Jessie Seymour Irvine; Bradley Moggach, Organ.

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

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The Lesson: Isaiah 25:1-10

God, you are *my* God.

I celebrate you. I praise you.

You've done your share of miracle-wonders,

well-thought-out plans, solid and sure.

Here you've reduced the city to rubble,

the strong city to a pile of stones.

The enemy Big City is a non-city,

never to be a city again.

Superpowers will see it and honor you,

brutal oppressors bow in worshipful reverence.

They'll see that you take care of the poor,
 that you take care of poor people in trouble,
 Provide a warm, dry place in bad weather,
 provide a cool place when it's hot.
 Brutal oppressors are like a winter blizzard
 and vicious foreigners like high noon in the desert.
 But you, shelter from the storm and shade from the sun,
 shut the mouths of the big-mouthed bullies.
 But here on this mountain, God-of-the-Angel-Armies
 will throw a feast for all the people of the world,
 A feast of the finest foods, a feast with vintage wines,
 a feast of seven courses, a feast lavish with gourmet desserts.
 And here on this mountain, God will banish
 the pall of doom hanging over all peoples,
 The shadow of doom darkening all nations.
 Yes, he'll banish death forever.
 And God will wipe the tears from every face.
 He'll remove every sign of disgrace
 From his people, wherever they are.
 Yes! God says so!
 Also at that time, people will say,
 "Look at what's happened! This is our God!
 We waited for him and he showed up and saved us!
 This God, the one we waited for!
 Let's celebrate, sing the joys of his salvation.
 God's hand rests on this mountain!" [The Message Translation]
 Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.** *

Reading Homework: Philippians 4

Gospel Acclamation: Il signore. Taize; Bradley Moggach, piano, Debbie Lou Ludolph, vocal
Click Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93PRP79QbIQ>

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The Holy Scriptures according to Matthew 22:1-14 **C: Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus responded by telling still more stories. "God's kingdom," he said, "is like a king who threw a wedding banquet for his son. He sent out servants to call in all the invited guests. And they wouldn't come!

"He sent out another round of servants, instructing them to tell the guests, 'Look, everything is on the table, the prime rib is ready for carving. Come to the feast!'

"They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden, another to work in his shop. The rest, with nothing better to do, beat up on the messengers and then killed them. The king was outraged and sent his soldiers to destroy those thugs and level their city.

"Then he told his servants, 'We have a wedding banquet all prepared but no guests. The ones I invited weren't up to it. Go out into the busiest intersections in town and invite anyone you find to the banquet.' The servants went out on the streets and rounded up everyone they laid eyes on, good and bad, regardless. And so the banquet was on—every place filled.

"When the king entered and looked over the scene, he spotted a man who wasn't properly dressed. He said to him, 'Friend, how dare you come in here looking like that!' The man was speechless. Then the king told his servants, 'Get him out of here—fast. Tie him up and ship him to hell. And make sure he doesn't get back in.'

"That's what I mean when I say, 'Many get invited; only a few make it.'" [The Message Translation]

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

Sermon (by Seminarian Sarah Glinski)

Click Here for audio file of the sermon: <https://youtu.be/UmEt3QFWIXg>

Not too long ago I was invited to a friend's wedding. Of course, I was excited for my friend and honoured to be included in her special day. However, as the date approached I began to become anxious. I don't like big crowds, and this was to be a big Italian wedding banquet with hundreds of people in attendance, most of whom I had never met. I haven't been to many weddings in my life and soon I became preoccupied with details; What should I wear? Would I need to spend a lot of money on a new dress? What about gifts? Was she expecting cash? How much? And should I book a hotel for the night or just leave early and sleep at home? As the wedding day drew nearer, my anxiety and discomfort grew. When she had first become engaged I was so excited for her, and so excited to celebrate with her. But as the day became a reality, creeping closer and closer on my calendar, suddenly my focus shifted. I was thinking about me. About how much it would cost me and how inconvenienced I would be. After all, this wedding wasn't coming at a great time for me. It was the end of the semester, I had so many assignments to complete. I noticed myself starting to think of excuses. Wondering if it would be acceptable for me to revoke my acceptance of her invitation and end all of the stress that was occupying my mind.

When I first read today's parable, I identified immediately with the guests who refused to show up to the King's wedding banquet. Surely, at some point in the past when the event was just an idea, they had accepted the King's invitation. Why else would the King be expecting them, with a feast prepared? But as the day drew closer the event became an inconvenience. They chose instead to stay home, to tend to their gardens, or to go to work.

Of course, Jesus is not sharing this story to ensure that his followers never turn down a wedding invitation (luckily for me, or I would certainly be disappointing him). Jesus instead is describing the Kingdom of God. How many times have each of us found ourselves choosing to do what is easy and what is comfortable instead of what God has asked us to do. God has asked us to give our lives over to him and we have been promised a wonderful reward, admission to his Kingdom. And we are all happy to accept the invitation. But are we as happy to show up? Are we always willing to step out of comfort zones and put our faith into action? Do we stand up for the oppressed and marginalized, even when it is not popular? Do we proclaim our faith loudly, even if we are the only Christian in the room? Do we answer the call for help from the stranger we pass by on the way to work, desperate to find their next meal? It is easy to accept the invitation, it is not always easy to show up.

Unfortunately for my friend, her wedding was set to take place on March 28th of this year, less than two weeks after COVID-19 had been proclaimed a pandemic. As the world began to lockdown and everyone was sent home, my friend was forced to make the heart-breaking decision to cancel the big Italian wedding that she had been planning for a year. And suddenly my anxiety shifted. No longer was I worried about what to wear or how I would cope being surrounded by so many people. Now I was grappling with the uncertainty of not knowing when I would gather with any of my friends again.

More than six months later, we are still in a pandemic, case numbers are on the rise, and the uncertainty still weighs on all of us. Cancelling our Easter celebrations was a disappointment. Cancelling yet another holiday feels unfair as we prepare for a very strange Thanksgiving. We are all exhausted. We miss our friends and our families. We are tired of worrying about the risk to ourselves and our loved ones if we dare to gather, dare to embrace. Some days it is difficult to imagine what we are meant to be giving thanks for. It seems that we have been being flooded, for so many months, with uncertainty at best and terrible news at worst. This year has been difficult. Perhaps it has even tested your faith.

In the time of COVID, weddings look very different. And our call to action as Christians looks very different as well. It is uncomfortable to imagine God, portrayed in today's gospel story as a King, throwing out one of his guests because they are not dressed correctly. But what if the King's banquet was being held in 2020? What if the dejected guest was refusing to wear a mask, or keep six feet of distance from the other guests? It is easy for us to imagine this scenario. The righteousness in refusing to serve and reward someone who

refuses to comply with protocols that have been put in place in order to keep everyone safe. It is something that has become commonplace in our new world.

COVID with all of the pain and frustration, the isolation and uncertainty, may be testing our faith some days. But it has also provided us with an opportunity. I have talked to many people who, despite the difficulties, have found that this time has put many things into perspective. Parents have spent more time with their young children. Neighbours have found creative ways to support one another. Some people have been able to pay down their debts with money saved from cancelled trips, even cancelled weddings. We have been forced to re-evaluate our own values. Focus on what matters most to us. Take time to recognize what parts of our disrupted lives we truly miss, and what parts maybe we are better off without.

Even with these silver lining, there is no denying that this Thanksgiving feels different. There is a sadness in knowing that the simple act of sitting down to share a meal with loved ones, something we have all likely taken for granted, is now potentially dangerous. We want to gather. We want to give thanks together. But showing up as Christians, valuing the lives and well-being of our community, now means keeping our distance. And it is hard.

But through all of the feelings of isolation, we must remember that we are not alone. I learned something this past week in my seminary studies that brought me a lot of comfort and I hope that it does the same for you. I read that the phrase "Faith in Christ" when translated from ancient Greek, could also be read as "Faith of Christ". We have been invited to the banquet, invited to share in the Kingdom of God. And to accept this invitation is to accept Christ into our lives. To show up and get to know Him, intimately. Christ becomes a part of who we are. It is our faith in Christ that allows us to have the faith of Christ. The faith that carried Jesus through his life, knowing that he would suffer and sacrifice- but that others would be saved because of it. Faith that his suffering was not only worthwhile, but an act of love. Our own faith, towards Jesus and God, is inseparable from the love we show to others.

This weekend our dinner tables may be set for fewer people. We will have to wear protective face coverings while we shop for our thanksgiving meals. But our faith will carry us through. We will continue to show up, to protect our loved ones and our communities, to follow these protocols and to trust that it is all worth it. That even when things are difficult and the way forward seems uncertain, we have love. We are loved. We have so much to be thankful for.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn of the Day: For the Fruit of All Creation ELW 679

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCleDgaJ4Lg>

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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 all those who have now returned to school,
 And for those who have lost beloved family members in the past weeks:
 May your Spirit walk alongside them to comfort them.
 We pray that you would also keep us in good spirits, as we feel the colder weather coming,
 And as we contend with the reality of rising infection rates ... please keep us in your care.
 We pray in the name of Jesus. 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 – Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ ELW 674

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVKkz95RBdw>

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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: For the Beauty of the Earth (Dix) ELW 879; Bradley Moggach, Organ

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFPhyp7fvJI>

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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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