

October 3rd, 2021 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Email/At Home Missal

The ZOOM link for today's service, which opens at 9.30 am on October 3rd, 2021, can be found here:

Sunday Worship October 3rd, 2021 09:30 am ZOOM room opens; service begins at 10:00 am.

Click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87943072549?pwd=RUI5UDlucjdGK3kxTmYvWHBmeXAvQT09>

Meeting ID: 879 4307 2549

Passcode: 768271

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): (All Canadian numbers). You can also access the ZOOM from your telephone by using the "One tap mobile" option:

+17789072071,,87943072549#,,, *768271# Canada

+12042727920,,87943072549#,,, *768271# Canada

Dial by your location:

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

+1 204 272 7920 Canada

+1 438 809 7799 Canada

+1 587 328 1099 Canada

+1 647 374 4685 Canada

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

Meeting ID: 879 4307 2549

Passcode: 768271

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kn2gtlcll>

PASTORAL VISITS: Please know that our Interim Pastor Chun Zhang is available for safe visits with social distancing requirements in place, and also for telephone visits. Please reach out to him by calling the church office at 519-653-4721 to arrange a visit.

Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank:

Now that we are open, we will resume collecting non-perishable food items for the Cambridge Self Help Food Bank. You can bring your items to church and drop them into the bins provided, or you can arrange your own drop-off time during the week. Please remember those who have not navigated this pandemic time as well as others have.

Thanksgiving for Our Presence on This Land:

Click Here: <https://youtu.be/SqEZLBrAu4c>

Gathering Hymn: ELW # 885 'Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow' (*Bradley Moggach – organ*)

Click here: <https://youtu.be/qTzPCCw2h6M>

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow; Text: Thomas Ken; Tune: Old Hundredth

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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:

Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. *Amen*

The First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. (NRSV)
Word of God, Word of Life. **Assisting Minister: Thanks be to God.***

Psalms: 8

O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!—
***you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;
you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.***

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
***what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?***

Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.
***You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:***

all flocks and cattle,
even the wild beasts of the field,
***the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.***

O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

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The Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. But someone has testified somewhere,

"What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?"

You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;

you have crowned them with glory and honor,
subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.” (NRSV)

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

Gospel Acclamation: ‘Listen, Listen to the Gospel Message....’ (Bradley Moggach – piano)

Click here: # <https://youtu.be/X2jHYEsLg8A>

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 10:2-16

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Some Pharisees came, and to test Jesus they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. (NRSV)

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

Sermon (Imaging Interim Pastor Chun Zhang’s voice here)

Today’s Gospel reading is about marriage and divorce. I really want to skip this topic and talk about something else, because it is such a hard topic to preach on. But as long as the Gospel has to be faithfully read in the service, it is impossible to avoid this catching topic that touches every one of us in this room.

Do you know anybody close to you who experienced or is now experiencing divorce?... yes, I do. According to survey, 50% of the married couple in North America experience divorce at least once in their lifetime. Divorce is so common in our culture and not one of us is immune to it.

With this awareness we approach the gospel lesson for today which is the most elaborate discussion of divorce in the Bible.

This passage itself is not too difficult to understand. Especially at the end Jesus himself gave a thorough explanation that anyone who devoice his or her spouse and get married again commit adultery.

And it is a very, very harsh judgment. I took quite a long time on this passage and tried to make it easier for every one who had been touched by divorce and remarriage. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't pull out the teeth of this judgmental conclusion.

"Adultery", how do we live with it? And how did Jesus live with it?

In Gospel of John, chapter 8, Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery before Jesus and asked him if it's right to stone her to death according to the Law of Moses.

Jesus' reply was, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

As the result, one by one, all of crowd went away. Then Jesus told the woman, "Go and sin no more."

Jesus knew and pointed out her sin but refused to condemn her as others did. Jesus had never been easy to sin, but he died on the cross for the sinners. For Jesus knew how much pain sin can cause in human beings; and he knew how divorce could harm everybody involved.

Divorce is tough on the couple. Have you ever met a couple who was happily going through a divorce? ... Neither have I. It is always painful for both parties. And it is even more painful for churchgoers. For the preaching, the teaching, even the closeness of other couples may sound like condemnation and cause pain.

Divorce is tough on the children. These kids often have emotional scars and personality dysfunctions that live with them for life.

Divorce is also tough on the grandparents. Grandparents are often the forgotten people in divorce, but it is tough on them as well. Sometimes, the grandparents have to take care both their children and grandchildren. Sometimes, grandparents lose contact with their grandchildren.

And divorce is tough on the church. When someone devoted to the church gets divorced, we all feel it. And when the pastor gets divorced, it can sometimes be so painful that both the church and the pastor would be hurt severely.

Jesus knew all these pains. So even though he wouldn't stop condemning divorce itself, he couldn't stop loving those who suffer in the divorce business.

A story is told that during the Depression of the 1930s, one cold winter night, Mayor LaGuardia of New York showed up at a night court in the poorest ward of the city. The mayor dismissed the judge and took over the seat himself.

A woman came in who looked very poor. She was charged with stealing a loaf of bread from a neighborhood grocery store. In her defense, the woman told Mayor LaGuardia that her son-in-law had abandoned the family, her daughter was sick and her grandchildren were starving.

Mayor LaGuardia asked the grocery store owner if he would drop the charges, but he refused to. "It's a bad neighborhood, your honor." The grocery store owner said, "She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson."

LaGuardia sighed. He told the woman, "I've got to punish you. The law makes no exceptions. It's a fine of \$10 or 10 days in jail."

He then put his hat on the table, and reached into his pocket to put a \$10 bill in it. He said to the court, "I've just paid the fine." Then he put another 50 cents in the hat and said, "Now I'm going to fine everyone in this courtroom 50 cents for living in a city where a grandmother has to steal bread to feed her family."

Pharisees asked Jesus in the beginning of today's Gospel, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" What they cared the most was the law. But what Jesus cared the most was the people.

Jesus knew how powerful sin is, and he knew how vulnerable we are under the attack of sin, and he knew how weak we are to escape from sin. So he took the punishment of all our sins on his body.

But Jesus was never easy to sin itself. He made it clear: "No, it is not lawful for a man to divorce his wife, nor for a woman to divorce her husband." The pain in every divorce is the penalty paid by all involved.

Jesus called all his disciples, all his followers including us to carry our crosses to follow him. He suffers with all who are suffering, and he invites us to join his ministry to cry with those who are suffering.

I hope from today on, other people's divorce will never become the topic of our after church chitchat, or opportunity of critics, or even the self-righteous condemnation, but the pain of our own heart and the struggle of our own spirit. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: 'An Environmental Lament' (Bradley Moggach – piano)

Click here: <https://youtu.be/kk0FIHlunQg>

An Environmental Lament; Text: John Wesley Oldham; Music: Bradley Moggach; © 2021

Prayers of Intercession:

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you have raised up faithful leaders throughout history. Empower those discerning a call to ministry and all seminarians, that they continue to be formed for the sake of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established a diverse and beautiful creation. Revive declining species and preserve endangered lands. Cultivate in us a sense of wonder for the world you created. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You desire for us not to be alone and to live in community with one another. Strengthen relationships between nations and peoples, that we celebrate and support one human family. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You share in our experiences and struggles. Bless all who live with any mental or physical disability. Inspire creative communities, spaces, and environments that are accessible and hospitable. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established and nurtured relationships that extend beyond those gathered here today. Bless members who can no longer travel to worship with us and remind us of their continued role in this community of faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You let your gentleness be known among those who are sick or in need of comfort, especially Bill, Don, Tammy, Alice, Don, Lynn, Sharon, Bryan and Sherrie. Strengthen doctors, medical care workers, and caretakers who see to their needs. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You promise eternal life to all your children. Thank you for the people of faith who have gone before us. Strengthen our trust we have in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; 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.

Offering Prayer:

God of abundance,
you cause streams to break forth in the desert
and manna to rain from the heavens.
Accept the gifts you have first given us.
Unite them with the offering of our lives
to nourish the world you love so dearly;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

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.

Meal: Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/-RnRfJoYmjs>

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you unto life eternal.

Prayer after Communion

Lord of life,
in the gift of your body and blood
you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation.
Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,
bearing witness to the abundance of your love
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen

Blessing:

People of God,
you are Christ's body,
bringing new life to a suffering world.
The holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 848 'Give to Our God Immortal Praise!' (*Bradley Moggach – organ*)

Click here: <https://youtu.be/eXUrDWbvG5I>

(Title: Give to Our God Immortal Praise! Text: Isaac Watts, 1674 – 1748; Public Domain; Music: arr. John Hatton, d. 1793; Public Domain Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)

Dismissal:

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.
Thanks be to God.