

September 13, 2020 – 15th Sunday After Pentecost

A Blessed Sunday morning to you, and welcome to our twenty-eighth online worship service ☺ Last Sunday we had our gathering on the lawn for a time of visiting. Also last Sunday, at Parklawn cemetery, Artur Pinnau's life was celebrated. His was the first funeral service I have officiated since the COVID closures, and as such, the first one of our congregational family whose death I attended without our usual congregational bereavement ministry that happens in our sanctuary and our fellowship hall. It felt for me like a double loss: Artur's death, and the absence of our church community.

Last Friday, September 11th, our dear Uncle Otto Kiefer was laid to rest, also at Parklawn. His celebration of life happened at a funeral home, and again, due to COVID restrictions, the capacity to accommodate congregational support was limited. These are the unfortunate realities of keeping ourselves safe.

For both Artur and Otto, their services celebrated their unique lives of faith in the context of our scriptures. This is usually how I celebrate our congregational family members on their passing, because I know them and their families well enough to reflect on how they, as individuals lived their witness of faith. Today, our readings are both from the letters of St Paul, and the Corinthians reading and the reflection shared are from Artur's service. Next week I will share the Ecclesiastes reading and the reflection from Uncle Otto's service.

Weather permitting, our visits on the lawn continue on Sundays, 10 am to 11 am. This is an informal visiting and fellowship time, for us to see each other safely distanced, and talk without the requirement of masks. You are encouraged to bring your lawn chair and complete all toileting before coming out (as the church building is awaiting sanitization and remains closed). The goal of this time is to gently re-open the experience of in-person time, in preparation for re-entry to the building. I offer closing prayer before we leave.

Hazel & Nyle have confirmed to me that at least 10 people have stepped up to help with various tasks when we re-open. Also this past week, a sub-group of the Ministry of Facilities Use met to work through some of the property specific items which need to be addressed before we re-open. Our custodial contractor should be in to sanitize the building within a fortnight of this service. Then our training for ushers, inside greeters, outside greeters and those who will help with cleaning and facilitating gatherings can begin. If these items go according to plan, we should be able to give you a re-opening date for sometime in October. My goal is to have a roster for at least 4 Sundays of volunteers before we re-open for Sunday worship. Of course, as with everything, all these plans depend on whether/how a second wave of COVID outbreak might affect our capacity to gather.

Lorre is working on the Lamplighter, and this issue will have much more detail on our re-opening protocols and requirements. It will also offer options for in-person adult study opportunities, and in-person home communion where you get to be the altar guild.

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

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

Dear church family: One of the items we need to supply 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 disciples volunteering to help in this capacity. 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. 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.

Much thanks - The Church Re-opening Team.

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, it is our tendency as human beings to be critical and judgmental of others. You are able to curb this tendency within us, and re-direct those energies to love, self-awareness and compassion. Please do this work within each of us, so that individually we become people who can speak the good news of your love with our actions, even when words fail us. We pray for this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

The Lesson: Romans 14:1-12

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for *God's* sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:

“As I live and breathe,” God says,
 “every knee will bow before me;
 Every tongue will tell the honest truth
 that I and only I am God.”

So tend to your knitting. You’ve got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God. (The Message Translation)

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

Reading Homework: Matthew 18 and Psalm 103

Acclamation of the Word: Hymn #793 **Be Thou My Vision**

Click Here: <https://youtu.be/hvNjGlp6K5M>

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The Holy Scriptures according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. [NRSV]

The Word of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.** *

Sermon (by Pastor Janaki)

Click here: https://youtu.be/AaZSbi_vBq8 **to access the audio of the sermon, or imagine Pastor Janaki’s voice here:**

It has been said of people who are Christian: “Speak the gospel always, and if necessary, use words.”

When we have a funeral service here at church, we practice that aspect of love that speaks the gospel, not only with the readings and meditations at the service, but with the bereavement ministry of accompaniment, hospitality and presence that enfolds those who are grieving in the arms of our church family. As I reflected on Artur’s life last Sunday, I felt deeply the absence of our community bereavement ministry in the ways I have come to know and rely upon. Yet many of you, with neither sandwich buffets to prepare, nor safe hugging being possible, found ways to help and be present with the family. Artur was a man of few words in my experience of him – but his presence and love likewise were felt by his actions. As we stare down what may be the start of a second wave of COVID infections, please join me in this reflection on Artur’s life, and a reminder that even without our building being open for worship, even without being able to hug, we can always speak the gospel with our actions and our presence. Words are simply one vehicle of love.

With Artur Pinnau, words were not necessary. Artur had that rare gift of being a quiet, relatively unspoken, incredibly bright and beautiful light ... and it is this light he bore, this light he exuded and shone into the world which we are here to celebrate today: the light of love.

Born in 1930 in East Prussia, the third of five boys, in his early teens, Artur had to flee during the war with his family ... traveling by horse and buggy. He studied in Germany to be a “molkerei Fachmann”, a dairy craftsman.

Born to a deeply faithful family, Artur's dad negotiated with a pastor the family knew, so that after the war the family moved to Chile, aboard an Italian ship which served so much pasta that Artur came to hate noodles (though he always loved Rosina's spätzle)! After five years in Chile, he came back to Germany, and then came alone to Canada in 1957. He made a toehold for himself, starting in London, making cheddar, then moving to Galt where he met the love of his life, Rosina. After a short stint working nights in New Dundee, the Pinnau dairy products business was started in 1971.

Artur was the loving father to Heide & Marli, and the constantly present & attentive Tata of Alex, Michaela, Cameron, Carson, & Connor.

For Rosina and Artur to literally drop everything for their grandchildren was not uncommon, and when Cameron was born in California, and Marli made the first-time mom's call for help, their response was "there's nobody better than us", and they came to California to babysit for seven weeks!

Spending time with family was a priority for Artur, and even when he was working long hours, he never missed sitting for dinner with his family (and the chance to steal Marli's favourite morsels off her plate).

Never a Sponge Bob Square Pants fan, Tata would sit for hours with the boys watching what he called the "stupid squarehead", or once sat in the garden dressed by them as a scarecrow while they played around him for hours.

His love was shown to his family, whom he supported in their migration to Canada. The Pinnau home was the first home for many when they landed, until they found their feet. Such hospitality and generosity yet another mark of gospel love.

A story Rosina told me about Artur involved Artur biting into a pear from a tree in their beautiful garden. Inside the pear, unknown to Artur, was a wasp, and he got bitten on his tongue. Although his tongue was sore, he spent the evening at a dinner they had planned on attending with friends, never once complaining – because the time spent in friendship with loved ones was a bigger priority than the irritation of a wasp bite. Throughout the duration of his health decline, I have never encountered anyone who remained so pleasant, so encouraging, and to the last with that beautiful twinkle of love and light and kindness and gentleness in his eyes.

I know Artur through the lens of his daughters and grandchildren, the youngest three of whom I had the pleasure (and sometimes the challenge) of nurturing through their faith confirmation years. These boys, I quickly learnt, were always quick to forgive and say "I love you" and give hugs – traits that run through the family not only with the words "I love you", but with all the thoughtfulness, compassion, hard-work and sacrifice which these words so often mean, but greeting cards and the big screen so often neglect to show.

Such thoughtfulness, compassion and hard work in the living out of love are the marks of the gospel, the instructions of Jesus: love each other as I have loved you. Artur learned these lessons of faith through his own discipline of presence at church, and perhaps most importantly his non-judgmental presence to the deep realities of the lives of others.

This was the presence that helped him to know that it was not his place to cast judgment, or to speak criticisms of others ... Artur was an encourager, friendly, always willing to listen, and make a joke.

I heard from the family that Rosina used to regularly check with him on the quality of the food she made ... until one day Artur said to her, "it tastes good, forever" so she need not ever wonder again ☺

As we gathered last Sunday to remember Artur and his life, the way he loved each one of us, and made us feel seen, made us feel heard, made us feel affirmed and encouraged ... I want you to remember that sometimes, the gospel doesn't need to be spoken in words. It is spoken in volumes louder by our actions.

And, if I may steal a little bit from Artur's humour and his words of constant affirmation ... not only "it tastes good forever" but "he loves you forever" for Love never ends.

The words of the hymn of the day are sung in Italian today, but their meaning in English roughly translates to "The Lord comes to restore you, God never turns away; The Lord comes to meet you; The Lord comes to meet you." God comes to meet us always, because Love never ends. Amen.

Hymn of the Day Il signore. Taizé; Bradley Moggach, piano, Debbie Lou Ludolph, vocal

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93PRP79QbIQ>

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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 Koelhofer, 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 are preparing to return to school,
 And for those who have lost beloved family members in the past weeks:
 May your Spirit walk alongside them to comfort them. 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 – Flute Sonata in B Minor J S Bach; Bradley Moggach, Piano, Gregory Stroh, Flute

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpEuz9x8UMw>

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: Spirit of Gentleness

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww7lx8t7Ls0>

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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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