

**September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Email/At Home Missal**

The ZOOM link for today's service, which opens at 9.30 am on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, can be found here:

Sunday Worship September 5th, 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

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87943072549?pwd=RUI5UDlucjdGK3kxTmYvWHBmeXAvQT09>

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**Important Notice About Reopening for In-Person Worship:**

We plan to reopen on Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> for in-person worship! Masks will be required by anyone entering into the church. Please enter by the Church St. door. Please follow all seating instructions to ensure adequate physical distancing between individuals and families. There will be no singing and the order of service will be displayed on the screen.

For those who do not wish to come into the church yet, the service will still be available by a ZOOM link. The link and the order of service will be emailed out next Saturday.

**PASTORAL VISITS:** Even though our church is closed, 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.

**Thanksgiving for Our Presence on This Land:**

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

**Gathering Hymn:** ELW # 777 'Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty' (*Bradley Moggach – organ*)

Click here: <https://youtu.be/4XJVKWcHTyA>

*Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty* Beach Spring Text: Delores Dufner Music: The Sacred Harp, Philadelphia, 1844; arr Selected Hymns 1985  
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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:** Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. *Amen*

**The First Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a**

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water. (NRSV)

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

**Psalm: 146**

Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

***I will praise the LORD as long as I live;***

***I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.***

Put not your trust in rulers,  
in mortals in whom there is no help.

***When they breathe their last, they return to earth,  
and in that day their thoughts perish.***

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

***who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;***

who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the captive free.

***The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.***

The LORD cares for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

***The LORD shall reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!\****

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**The Second Reading: James 2:1-10-17**

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Have a seat here, please,” while to the one who is poor you say, “Stand there,” or, “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and

sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (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 7:24-37**

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.” (NRSV)

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

**Sermon (Imagine Interim Pastor Chun Zhang’s voice here)**

Today’s Gospel reading is one of the most problematic passages in the whole Bible. In this passage, a gentile woman comes to Jesus. She bows down at his feet and begs for her daughter’s healing. But Jesus gives her a rather chilling response: “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” Jesus says.

So what do we make of his first response to this woman? How could Jesus have been so harsh? Why does he, at first, compare this vulnerable, hurting woman to a dog, and refuse to help her?

Because this passage is so troubling, Christians through the centuries have tried to sweeten or at least make sense of it.

I will just give you some examples of those attempts:

- He is testing the others in that house, to see if they understand his true teaching of love or not.
- He is pushing the woman, to see how serious she is about her request.
- Some even go far enough to point out that the Greek word translated here as "dogs" literally means "small dogs," that is, puppies or house dogs. I don't think that softens the insult much. But obviously many people think this explanation is quite convincing. Sebastiano Ricci, a famous 17th-century Italian painter was one of them. In his well-known painting named "Christ and the Canaanite Woman", a smiling Jesus seems to change his mind because that puppy in the woman's arms is just so cute!



What all those attempts are trying to do is to help Jesus and us, followers of Jesus off the hook. But I think none of these attempts works.

And, what I suggest here is to read this passage as what it is. Yes, Jesus did call the gentile woman "dog", and he did refuse her request of healing her sick daughter without any hesitation.

Surprisingly, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, it was not surprising for Jesus to say such a thing and do what he did, for Jews did see all "others" as "dogs." What they believed was that God's grace is for his people only. What was perhaps more surprising was that this gentile woman would turn to Jesus for help, although we all know that a desperate mother would do almost anything to help her sick child.

And surprisingly, Jesus turned this gentile woman away by using a dining metaphor, in which the presumption was that there was always a limited supply of food that only some might eat while others would go hungry.

And even more surprisingly, this story was just shortly after Jesus had managed to feed five thousand people with only five loaves and two fish. Surely Jesus and all his people should know that God's grace is bountiful, that there is always more than enough for everyone.

And this is exactly what the gentile woman pointed out to Jesus. There's plenty of food for everyone; even after all of those recognized as people, as insiders, are fed, there's still food left over for those who were not even considered human, the outsiders, the dogs. And they were all eating the same food; even though, some of it was crumbs from the original serving, but it's the same substance. Whether they were at the table or under it, they were all finding nourishment.

And Jesus, deeply moved by her words, must have said to himself, "Good point. You get the same food as all of God's other children anyway, so why not have a seat at the table?" And without delay he healed her child, and never again in the Gospel of Mark did he refuse to heal anyone or question anyone's worthiness to be healed.

The "dog" became a dinner guest and got to sit at the table with the "children". This powerful moment should always be recalled whenever we gather before the Communion table and share the heavenly food given by Jesus Christ he himself.

Jesus understands our initial reactions to strangers, after all, he had them himself, but ultimately Jesus, together with the gentile woman, showed us that there is no one we shouldn't invite to the feast, and there

is no one we dare to exclude from God's grace. May God help us to find out the "dogs" in our life and ask God to give us strength to invite them to share the best blessings we've received from God.

Amen

**Hymn of the Day:** ELW # 659 'Will You Let Me Be Your Servant' (*Bradley Moggach – piano*)

Click here: <https://youtu.be/pT-YrmucWgo>

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**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 bring your people together in worship. Enliven your church. Guide all evangelists, preachers, prophets, and missionaries who seek to share your love through word and deed. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You provide water for thirsty ground and sunshine to feed hungry plants. Bless all who advocate for healthy forests, unpolluted air, and clean waterways. Inspire all people to show care for the world you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You show no partiality. Increase justice in all nations. Encourage leaders and governments to work with one another for the good of our common world, especially as we celebrate Labour Day, unite us in seeking the health, safety, and dignity of all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You accompany those who are most in need. Shelter all fleeing violence or persecution, protect any who are in danger, and sustain them through uncertain and unstable times. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You support the work of your disciples. Continue to nurture the leadership and ministries of this congregation. 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 and Bryan. 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 embrace all who have died in the faith and brought them into your glorious presence. We thank you for their example and rejoice in their lives. 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.

**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>

**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 # 400 'God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind' (Bradley Moggach – organ)**

**Click here:** <https://youtu.be/nclB0Cl9NJc>

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**Dismissal:**

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

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