

Sunday Devotion for Martin Luther Church with Readings and Sermon by ELCIC Bishop Susan Johnson in English

2nd Sunday after Pentecost, June 14, 2020



A warm welcome to watch this devotion and related videos at
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjEQnirqCMPS8BS8f70s3_tVgV2_2BkP

A. GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

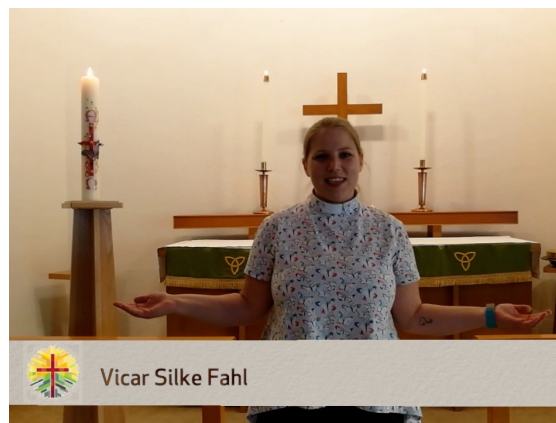
Words of Welcome

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Good morning everyone!

It's been a while since I preached here at Martin Luther and I'm glad to be back. Even though the pews are still empty and we continue to gather online for worship.

Today, the English sermon comes from Bishop Susan, the national bishop of the ELCIC. She is going to preach on Matthew 9:35 to 10:8. The ELCIC is providing a Summer Sermon Series for every congregation to use. So from time to time the English sermon will come from the bishop's office.



Since we are using her sermon, I'll be preaching in German. Instead of the Gospel reading, I decided to preach on the other New Testament reading for this Sunday which is from Romans 5:1-8. (See German version for Vicar Fahl's sermon.)

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

B. WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Psalm 100

¹Acclaim YHWH with joy, all the earth!

²Serve YHWH with gladness!

Enter into God's presence with joyful song!

³Know that YHWH is God!

YHWH made us, and we belong to the Creator;

we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

⁴Enter God's gates with thanksgiving and the courts with praise!

Give thanks to God! Bless God's Name!

⁵For YHWH is good; God's steadfast love endures forever,

And God's faithfulness to all generations.

(The Inclusive Bible – First Egalitarian Translation)

First Reading: Romans 5:1-8

¹Now since we have been made right in God's sight by our faith, we are at peace with God through our Saviour Jesus Christ. ²Because of our faith, Christ has brought us to the grace in which we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to the day on which we will become all that God has intended. ³But not only that—we even rejoice in our afflictions! We know that affliction produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and character, hope. ⁵And such a hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. ⁶At the appointed time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for us godless people. ⁷It is not easy to die even for a good person—though of course for someone really worthy, there might be someone prepared to die—⁸but the proof of God's love is that Christ died for us even while we were sinners.

(The Inclusive Bible – First Egalitarian Translation)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

³⁵Jesus continued touring all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of God's reign and curing all kinds of diseases and sicknesses.

³⁶At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Jesus said to the disciples, "The harvest is bountiful but the laborers are few. ³⁸Beg the overseer of the harvest to send laborers out to bring in the crops."

¹Jesus summoned the Twelve, and gave them authority to expel unclean spirits and heal sickness and diseases of all kinds. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: the first were Simon, nicknamed Peter—that is, "Rock"—and his brother Andrew; then James, ben-Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew, the tax collector; James, ben-Alphaeus; Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. ⁵These twelve Jesus sent out after giving them the following instructions: "Don't visit Gentile regions, and don't enter a Samaritan town. ⁶Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, make this proclamation: 'The reign of heaven has drawn near.' ⁸"Heal those who are sick, raise the dead, cure leprosy, expel demons. You received freely—now freely give.

(The Inclusive Bible – First Egalitarian Translation)



Sermon by Bishop Susan Bell

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is a real joy to be able to worship with you in this way today. This time of pandemic is, and has been, very challenging and tiring for all of us. Your bishops wanted to make sure that rostered leaders could take their vacations for much needed rest and that congregations would still be able to gather in worship. That is why we, and the synodical assistant to the bishops, are providing these sermons for use today through the middle of September. Because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are getting exhausted!



In our Gospel lesson today we hear that Jesus has compassion on the crowds that were following him. I hope that during this time of pandemic you have felt Jesus close to you and having great compassion for you and for all God's children who are struggling now with the pandemic, with racism and police brutality, with homelessness, with hunger, with war and displacement, with loneliness and isolation and countless other needs.

Jesus continues to come to each and every one of us and speaks to us a message of hope, of love, of grace and of peace.

But that is not all Jesus says to us.

Jesus is still calling us, each and every one of us, to go out into the harvest to proclaim the good news in word and in deed. And please hear me now, Jesus is not just speaking to pastors. NO! This is a call to each of us who want to be followers of Jesus.

I know that some of you may be already starting to cringe. And it gets worse. Jesus warns us before we go that it is not going to be easy. In fact, it may be very hard.

However, let's remember that the realities of first century Palestine, living under Roman occupation and oppression, and our 21st century Canadian context are very different. Granted there are some worries and dangers now as provinces are opening up. Although we are now painfully aware that Black, Indigenous and other people of colour face more dangers. We all still need to take COVID-19 very seriously as we head out into the harvest.

So today, Jesus would not warn us about the possibilities of flogging or being dragged

before governors and kings. Jesus might instead tell us to wear masks, wash our hands frequently, keep 2 meters apart, and to gather in groups of 25 people indoors and 50 outdoors as long as there is physical distancing. Or at least that is what he might say in Manitoba.

Our current reality is that we have learned during this pandemic time that there are people hungry for hearing the good news. I have heard stories across our church of inactive members returning to participate in online worship, of total strangers joining in worship, of larger attendances online than there were in person. I have also heard about amazing generosity both in terms of financial donations and in people continuing to be willing to contact isolated members, to provide worship leadership, to continue to run feeding and outreach programs within guidelines for safety and on and on.

We have proved in a crisis that we can be creative and responsive to God's call. We are reaching out and sharing God's good news in ways that we have never imagined and with effects like we have never experienced. Let's face it, we have been struggling for a long time about how to take evangelism seriously in this time and place. And I remind you that evangelism, sharing the good news, is a part of discipleship to which we are all called. Each and every one of us.

My mom and I have been reading *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We are trying a COVID-19 book club via Facetime. In his chapter on ministry, Bonhoeffer talks about evangelism as the ministry of proclaiming, one of the ministries that we are all called to take part in. For those of you who haven't read the book, or who haven't read it for awhile, the other ministries Bonhoeffer calls us to are holding one's tongue, meekness, listening, helpfulness, bearing, and authority.

Bonhoeffer acknowledges our difficulty. He writes "Added to the fear of one's responsibility to speak there is the fear of the other person. What a difficult thing it often is to utter the name of Jesus Christ in the presence even of a brother!... Who dares to force himself upon his neighbour?" I know it's difficult and I know it's uncomfortable. But Bonhoeffer goes on to remind us it is our right and our responsibility to do so.

What I'm trying to say it that this topsy-turvy time we have been living through has shown us that people are hungry for God's good news of hope, love, grace, and peace. People are yearning to know that Jesus has compassion for them in their lives.

I'm asking you, I'm pleading with you, let us help each other to learn how to go out into the harvest so that we are ready when our cities and provinces open up to listen to the needs and the yearning and the opportunities to share a word of good news and invite people to come and see. To come and worship. To know the compassion of Jesus.

God bless and strengthen each and every one of you as we all continue to deepen our discipleship in answer to God's call. Amen.

Hymn: Amazing Grace ELW 779

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound / that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; / was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,/ and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear / the hour I first believed!

O wunderbarer Gnadentag,/ ich wurde Gottes Kind,
Er suchte, was verloren war/ und nahm mir meine Sünd.

Ich rühm die Gnade wunderbar, / die mich den Sünder fand.
Der ich ein Feind des Kreuzes war, / bis Gott mich überwand.

When we've been there ten thousand years, / bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise / than when we'd first begun.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray:

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Holy One, you bring us together and call us your own. Bless theologians, teachers, and preachers who help us grow in faith. Guide your church, that we might be a holy people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, the whole earth is yours. Where there is fire, bring cool air and new growth. Where there is flooding, bring abatement. Where there is drought, bring rain. Inspire us to care for what you have provided. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, we have created divisions you will not own. In places of conflict, raise up leaders who work to develop lasting peace and reconciliation. Encourage organizations and individuals who care for all forced to leave their homes. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, you care for those who are harassed and helpless. Protect and defend those who are abused. Heal those who are sick. Feed all who hunger. Empower all whose voices go unheard, and help us respond to the pressing needs of our neighbours. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, you provide a plentiful harvest of gifts and resources. Prepare us to labour and gather the fruits of this congregation, that we might discover new ways of living. Minister to us in our work, that we do not lose heart. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, we prayer for everyone who suffers from physical and mental illnesses. Be with them and give them strength and hope. We pray that they have people at their side who accompany them on their way. We pray especially for Erika Schmitt. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, we pray for all who celebrated their birthdays in the past week, especially for Martina, Klaus, Marianne, Peter, Eric, Friedrich, Silke, Sebastian, Peter, Mark Evan, Dina and Wilfred.

Bless them as they walk into a new year of their lives. Surround them with your love and your grace.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, you bring all people to yourself. We give thanks for the holy people who have gone before us. Sustain us in your mission until the day you bear us up to join the saints in light.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The 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.**

**Vaterunser, der du bist im Himmel,
geheiligt werde dein Name,
dein Reich komme,
dein Wille geschehe,
wie im Himmel, also auch auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute
und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben
unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen,
denn dein ist das Reich
und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit
in Ewigkeit.
Amen.**

C. SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.
Amen.

Dismissal

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

Announcements

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, **all meetings and worship services are taking place virtually.**

- Sunday [Video Devotions](#) are on our [YouTube Channel](#). Please subscribe and comment.
- German [Radio Devotions](#) on our website and Sundays at 9:30 am on CHLO Radio AM 530
- [Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour](#) at 11:00 am through Zoom (link sent by email)
- [Sunday School lessons](#) and [Fabulous Fridays](#) on our website
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm through Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl
- [Coffee or Lunch with Job](#): Bible Reading and Discussion about the Book of Job led by Vicar Jordan Smith starting Wednesday, May 20. Two opportunities: 8:30 am and 12:15 pm. Email vicarsmith@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Virtual Prayer Circle](#), Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 pm through Zoom led by Solveig Christina Voss; we also have a Prayer Request Wall in the Church Foyer
To request a prayer or join our prayer circle, email prayers@martinluther.ca.
- [Give Peas a Chance](#)- A grow some, give some movement hosted by Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran with donated seeds.
- [Corona-Care Calls](#)- Volunteers are continuing to call you with more information and to understand your needs. Let us know if you'd like to join the call team!
- Please phone or email the church office:
 - ◇ if we can help you in any way
 - ◇ if you'd like to volunteer by doing Sunday readings or making masks
 - ◇ with feedback on what we're offering
 - ◇ to support our church and [donate](#). Best ways are PAR or send cheque to church office

Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church

2379 Lake Shore Blvd. W, Toronto, ON M8V 1B7

Office: (416) 251 8293, churchoffice@martinluther.ca, More information: www.martinluther.ca

Pastoral Care: Cell (416) 567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

Vicar Silke Fahl, vicarfahl@martinluther.ca, Cell: 905-717-5937

Vicar Adam McComb, vicarmccomb@martinluther.ca, Vicar Jordan Smith, vicarsmith@martinluther.ca

Organist & Choir Director: Linda Marcinkus

*Member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) &
Partnered with Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)*