

Service in English and German for Martin Luther Church, Toronto in Collaboration with All Saints Lutheran Church, Calgary

7th Sunday after Pentecost, July 19, 2020

A warm welcome to watch this devotion and related videos at
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjEQnirqCMOhsLbSSYaHFyZstap8EITf>

A. GATHERING / ERÖFFNUNG UND ANRUFUNG

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

Words of Welcome / Begrüßung

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

Good morning and thank you for joining us. As you may have heard from Vicar Silke over the past three weeks, during the summer we are focussing our Wednesday discussions and Sunday preaching on the lectionary readings from Romans. This series continues today with the passage from Romans chapter 8, verses 12-25. We've heard feedback that it's been helpful to focus on a series of readings and I hope you have been able to enter a bit deeper into this dense letter of Paul a bit more over the past few weeks.



Today I want to give a special welcome to the congregation of All Saints Calgary. They reached out to me in May to see if there was an opportunity to partner on a service during the summer and we managed to arrange things to happen today. We have a number of people from both All Saints and Martin Luther Church participating in our readings and prayers and this is yet another way that we have been able to try new things and meet new neighbours (from far and wide) during the pandemic.

Our service today follows the bilingual format used at Martin Luther Church. There will be a mix of German and English elements throughout but there will always be an English translation on screen, except for when we sing our hymn of the day.

Whether you are from Martin Luther Church in Toronto, All Saints in Calgary, or you are joining us from somewhere else, it's a joy to worship with you and spend this time together.

Prayer of the Day / Tagesgebet

Let us pray:

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

B. WORD / VERKÜNDIGUNG UND BEKENNTNIS

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

Psalm 86:11-17, read by Beth & Martin

¹¹Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
¹²I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name for- evermore.
¹³For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the pit of death.
¹⁴The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent
people seeks my life;
they have not set you be- fore their eyes.
¹⁵But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.
¹⁶Turn to me and have mercy on me;
give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your
handmaid.
¹⁷Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me
may see it and be put to shame;
because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.



Readings: Romans 8:12-25 read by Teddy and Irene

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the
flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live
according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put
to death the deeds of the body, you will live.¹⁴For all who are
led by the Spirit of God are children of God.¹⁵For you did not
receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have
received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba!
Father!”¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit
that we are children of God,¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with
Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.



¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory
about to be revealed to us.¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of
the children of God;²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the
will of the one who subjected it, in hope²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its
bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²²We know
that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;²³and not only the
creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we
wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that
is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see,
we wait for it with patience.

12 So sind wir nun, liebe Brüder und Schwestern, nicht dem Fleisch schuldig, dass wir nach dem Fleisch leben. 13 Denn wenn ihr nach dem Fleisch lebt, so werdet ihr sterben müssen; wenn ihr aber durch den Geist die Taten des Leibes tötet, so werdet ihr leben.



14 Denn welche der Geist Gottes treibt, die sind Gottes Kinder. 15 Denn ihr habt nicht einen Geist der Knechtschaft empfangen, dass ihr euch abermals fürchten müsset; sondern ihr habt einen Geist der Kindschaft empfangen, durch den wir rufen: Abba, lieber Vater! 16 Der Geist selbst gibt Zeugnis unserm Geist, dass wir Gottes Kinder sind. 17 Sind wir aber Kinder, so sind wir auch Erben, nämlich Gottes Erben und Miterben Christi, da wir ja mit ihm leiden, damit wir auch mit ihm zur Herrlichkeit erhoben werden.



18 Denn ich bin überzeugt, dass dieser Zeit Leiden nicht ins Gewicht fallen gegenüber der Herrlichkeit, die an uns offenbart werden soll. 19 Denn das ängstliche Harren der Kreatur wartet darauf, dass die Kinder Gottes offenbar werden. 20 Die Schöpfung ist ja unterworfen der Vergänglichkeit – ohne ihren Willen, sondern durch den, der sie unterworfen hat –, doch auf Hoffnung; 21 denn auch die Schöpfung wird frei werden von der Knechtschaft der Vergänglichkeit zu der herrlichen Freiheit der Kinder Gottes. 22 Denn wir wissen, dass die ganze Schöpfung bis zu diesem Augenblick seufzt und in Wehen liegt. 23 Nicht allein aber sie, sondern auch wir selbst, die wir den Geist als Erstlingsgabe haben, seufzen in uns selbst und sehnen uns nach der Kindschaft, der Erlösung unseres Leibes. 24 Denn wir sind gerettet auf Hoffnung hin. Die Hoffnung aber, die man sieht, ist nicht Hoffnung; denn wie kann man auf das hoffen, was man sieht? 25 Wenn wir aber auf das hoffen, was wir nicht sehen, so warten wir darauf in Geduld.

Sermon / Predigt, Vicar Jordan Smith

“We are debtors.”

Our reading today starts with a strong statement from Paul and one that I think resonates with many of us. We are debtors. We owe something. Whether we connect that to our business, or our home life, our governments or our spiritual life – most of us feel, at least at times, that we are debtors.

And each of us has a different history related to debt and how we relate to it. For some, it might be gratefulness that the federal government supported millions of people with CERB cheques at great cost. For others, it might be fear about the long-term implications of that debt. It might be student loans that seem to hang over our graduates’ heads for longer and longer with each new cohort, holding them back from opportunities because of financial restrictions. Or a new debt might be a sign of opportunity, of taking out a loan to start a new company or to buy a new home.

But no matter what type of debt or who takes it, there are two questions that apply to every kind – who is it owed to, and how much is it worth?

And so while we tend to talk in our churches about our debt being paid by Christ, we have here today in Romans a pretty clear declaration that we are debtors. To who? To the Spirit of God. And how much? For that we go back one verse – chapter 8, verse 11, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.” We owe our very lives as a debt.



Yet, this debt must be considered in a different way than we usually think of when we owe something. Because this is a debt of life, of opportunity, of being called a child of God today and a hope of things to come. And maybe this is where other translations can help us understand Paul's point – some Bibles translate the phrase of “we are debtors” as “we are obligated,” or, perhaps the one that demonstrates the point best, the Revised English Bible puts it this way: “Our old nature has no claim on us; we are not obligated to live in that way.”

We are not obligated to live in our old ways, with our old fears, in our old death, because the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead is also giving us life, obligating us not to go back to how things were before, but to a new future. I think of this like someone taking out a loan to turn their passion project into a new business – they are obligated to look forward, to dream about what is to come and how the business can grow. But unlike the business obligation – there is no investment banker to appease, no risk of defaulting – because the lender, the very Spirit who gave us our start is right here beside us, encouraging us along.

In these nineteen weeks since we at Martin Luther Church have gathered in person, in nineteen weeks where much of North America has been changed, where the entire world has shifted its very being, most of us are looking ahead. The first few weeks of the pandemic were spent reacting to what was happening around us, then the next couple months were spent catching our breath. But for the last while, perhaps since mid-May, we have been looking ahead. Sports leagues, looking ahead to holding events with no fans. Hoping to restart their seasons, hand out their trophies, restore some sense of normalcy, but it's certainly not the full version with packed arenas and stadiums filled with people cheering.

Churches are looking ahead, to smaller gatherings, with different liturgies, a taste of our tradition but certainly not what we are hoping for.

Social supports have been put in place during this pandemic, giving an indication of what is possible for supporting the vulnerable, but these supports have all come with an end date.

Calls have come to look at our police budgets, to prioritize funds for those in need, a discussion that started in the heat of the moment but seems to be dropping off the radar quickly.

Paul says in verse 18 that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.”

We look around us, at what has changed in the past nineteen weeks, and take some comfort in hearing that the sufferings of today are nothing compared to the glory to come. Mary Hinkle Shore takes this thought further though, explaining that “the suffering Paul speaks of is suffering that comes from knowing what the world could be, even as we live in the world as it is.” (1) For those early Christians in Rome, and for us today, part of our suffering comes not from the persecution or pain we are currently experiencing, but because we have been affected by the Spirit, we know what is possible and we have a vision of that beautiful future. And we suffer in anticipation of its coming.

As we sit in our communities, processing our present suffering and dreaming up ways to put things back to “normal” in the coming months and years, I think the Spirit is pushing us to

1. Mary Hinkle Shore, https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4515



dream beyond a return to what things were like in March. Because life in March might have felt good, for some of us. It might have seemed pretty good, to most of us. But I think over the events of the past nineteen weeks we are being shown, to use Paul's language, that we were too much in the flesh. We as a society, we as a church, we as individuals, were too often doing what draws us away from God and away from God's creation. The creation to which we are intimately tied. The whole creation that is also being set free from bondage and decay has been "groaning in labour pains until now" and we have been unable to hear the cries as we were stuck in our patterns of work and life and trying to get ahead. We were so distracted by the ways of the flesh that we forgot what we heard last week, that the Spirit, the same spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in us.

And because of this we are debtors. Debtors to a gift that has no end, that can grow exponentially if we let it. This is not a debt that needs to be paid back; all we need to do is recognize that we have been woken up yet again to the Spirit's presence and she is pushing us forward, urging us to use what has been loaned to us to do something new. To look with hope for what's ahead. Not looking ahead by looking backwards, at what we did before, but looking ahead to what's possible. At what the great banquet where all are invited might look like, here, today.

David Greenshaw writes that as Christians we have hope because "in Christ we already have come to know the power of life over death. We already know freedom. We already know love. We have tasted the first fruits, and they have whetted our appetite for the final banquet". (2)

The Spirit has raised Christ and the Spirit lives in us, giving life to our mortal bodies. The Spirit is active and moving us to look ahead: 2 months, 6 months, 1 year, and gives us a chance to have a foretaste of the full glory yet to be revealed.

This journey is hard. This journey is emotional. This journey is filled with pits and valleys and challenges. But we are not alone. We are children of God and we have received a spirit of adoption so "when we cry, Abba! Father! It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:16). The Spirit is bearing witness with our spirit and with our voices. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that people will gather again. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that the Church matters. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that society's broken structures can be rebuilt to be likened to the coming kingdom. And we wait with patience for what is not yet seen, with the Spirit dwelling in us, encouraging us to live into our debt, not to the flesh, but to freedom.

Amen

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen

Hymn / Lied: Die Kirche steht gegründet EG 264 / The Church's One Foundation ELW 654

Die Kirche steht gegründet allein auf Jesum Christ,
sie, die des großen Gottes erneute Schöpfung ist.
Vom Himmel kam er nieder und wählte sie zur Braut,
hat sich mit seinem Blute ihr ewig angetraut.

2. David M. Greenhaw, "Pastoral Perspective on Romans 8:12-25," in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year A*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, vol. 3 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 258.



Erkorn aus allen Völkern, doch als ein Volk gezählt;
ein Herr ist's und ein Glaube, ein Geist, der sie beseelt,
und einen heiligen Namen ehrt sie, ein heiliges Mahl,
und eine Hoffnung teilt sie, kraft seiner Gnadenwahl.

Through toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation of peace forevermore;
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth has union with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
Oh, blessed heav'nly chorus! Lord, save us by your grace,
that we, like saints before us, may see you face to face.

Prayers of Intercession / Fürbitten, Written by Barb and Vicar Jordan, Read by Joe

Let us pray together for the Church, the world, and all those in need.

Merciful and gracious Lord, you alone are God. We pray with the disciples, that you would teach us your ways, so that we may walk in your truth. We give you thanks for your steadfast love, that you are slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness. Grant us your strength and favour, that we may be a bold witness to the world.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



We give you thanks, Lord God, for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and for the work that is done by all parts of this church in sharing the gospel. We pray for our Bishops, especially remembering today National Bishop Susan Johnson, Bishop Michael Pryse of the Eastern Synod, and Bishop Larry Kochendorfer of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. Continue to grant to these leaders, and to the bishops of our other synods, Greg Mohr, Sid Haugen and Jason Zinko, the wisdom and discernment to shepherd this church. Guide leaders in all expressions of this church to the transformation that is emerging through these days of challenge and unrest. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray, Oh God, for all political leaders of this country, from federal to provincial and municipal leaders. We remember before you today Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Premier Doug Ford, and Premier Jason Kenney. Grant them wisdom to deliver policies that provide justice for all people regardless of color or creed, and that reflect appropriate stewardship of the lands that we inhabit. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray your blessing during this growing season on the crops that are planted across this country. Preserve fields from destructive weather, from excesses of rain and hail or heat and drought. We pray for the safety of farm workers. Protect those who come from other parts of the world to work in Canadian fields. We pray for a harvest that is plentiful, so that the hungry of the world will be fed. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of compassion, we lament the pandemic that grips the world. We are weary of limitations that have restricted our lives, and we pray for an end to COVID. Grant us



perseverance, that we not grow weary of doing the good that is needed to protect others and ourselves. Comfort all who have lost loved ones, who have been isolated in care facilities, and who are in hospitals battling the virus. We give you thanks for all who are required to work on front lines - sanitation workers and grocery clerks, cooks and truck drivers, and all who work in health services. Preserve them from fear, anxiety and discouragement, and keep them safe. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of mercy and healing, we pray for all who are suffering from physical or mental illness, addictions, grief or loss. Send your Spirit to comfort each person, especially in these Covid days, when many are isolated and lonely, and activities that normally provide comfort are restricted. Preserve us from fear, and infuse us all with your Spirit of peace. Hear our prayers for those that we lift up to you by name, either in our hearts or with our voices. Gehrd, Jen, Kate, Regeena, Sindy.. We pray for healing of mind, body and spirit. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of joy, we pray for those who have celebrated birthdays this week. Be with those who have marked another year of their lives in unexpected ways. We pray especially for: Ursula, Elly, Heinz, and Catherine.

We lift up all our prayers of joy and grief to you O God. In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



The Lord's Prayer/ Vaterunser, read by Maya & Vicar Jordan

**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,
geheilligt 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 / SENDUNG UND SEGEN

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

Blessing / Segem

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 / Entlassung

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements

In light of COVID-19, **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 on Zoom (invitation sent by office)
- [Sunday School lessons](#) on our website (April-June)
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm on Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl. Email vicarfahl@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.
- [A Summer with Romans: Sunday Sermon Series](#) until August 30 & [Bible Study](#) on Sunday's sermon text: Wednesdays until August 26. A 30-minute weekly discussion of Paul's letter to the Romans. Two opportunities: Roman Coffee at 8:30 am and Roman Lunch at 12:15 pm. Email vicarsmith@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Give Peas a Chance](#)- A grow some, give some movement hosted by Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran with donated seeds.
- [Masks for Good](#) - S project to ensure that everyone has access to masks. Everyone who wants to get involved can find an activity that suits them. Contact Vicar Adam McComb if you'd like to volunteer, vicarmccomb@martinluther.ca
- [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 or to give feedback on what we're offering
 - ◇ if you'd like to volunteer by doing Sunday readings
 - ◇ to support our church and [donate](#). Best ways are PAR or send cheque to church office.

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