**3rd Sunday of Pentecost- June 21, 2020**

**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philipsburg**

Welcome to everyone on this 3rd Sunday of Pentecost where we gather in love for one another from the safety of our homes. Happy Father’s Day to all the Dad’s and Father figures in our lives. I hope each of you enjoy the day! Today is also National Indigenous Peoples Day, where we recognize the many contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and cultures in Canada. It is a day to stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples who are working to reclaim their language, culture, and the sacred ways in which they connect with the land. Parts of our service today come from Eastern Synod resources for NIPD.

Today at 11:00 we will have another GoTo Meeting coffee hour. An email was sent out with instructions on Friday. 7 of us attended last week, we hope to see more smiling faces and hear more voices this week. Please note that there is a phone number to call in as well, you do not need a computer to join our coffee hour.

I will be on holidays from June 26-July 7. We were originally supposed to go to Yellowknife to visit family but will now have a staycation. I will be available for pastoral emergencies. Please leave a message on my cell phone and I will return your call. I will not be answering emails. Sunday services will still be posted for each Sunday and we will celebrate communion on my return at the July 11th service.

Thanks to Susan M and Gwen for all that they do each week in helping with the services. Please remember that Zion relies on your continued support each week to meet our monthly expenses. Thank you to all who support and pray for our congregation.

**LAND ACKNOWLEGEMENT-** written by Sherri Wilker

We are walking hand in hand on this safe and bountiful land, which is part of the Grand River Watershed, traditional territory of the Haldimand Tract, and the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosauonee people, fellow sojourners.

We give thanks to the creator for this great gift and recognize our responsibility

as treaty people to care for the land and waters that nourish us and give us

strength. We also acknowledge that it is our duty to do more to learn about the

rich history of this land to better understand our roles as residents, neighbours,

caretakers and sojourners.

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**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 to help us overcome our fears and have the courage to endure, so that we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the Good News of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN- O Jesus, I Have Promised- ELW 810**

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 20:7-13**

A reading from Jeremiah.

7O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me.
8For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, “Violence and destruction!”
For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.
9If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name, then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. 10For I hear many whispering: “Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. “Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him.”
11But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. 12O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. 13Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers.

The word of the Lord.

**SECOND READING: Romans 6:1b-11**

A reading from Romans.

1bShould we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? 2By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? 3Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
  5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. 7For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 10:24-39**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] 24“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; 25it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!
  26“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.
  32“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. 34“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.
37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**SERMON**

 Our gospel reading this morning is a continuation of last week’s gospel reading where Jesus “sent out” the disciples to be apostles in the world, healing, sharing, and preaching the good news as followers of Jesus Christ. In our reading today Jesus continues to speak of the hard truths that the disciples will face and the truth of taking up the cross in following him. This passage may be difficult for some to hear because Jesus speaks of violence over peace in the name of a sword, and the dividing of family all for the sake of following Jesus. These are hard truths to hear and no doubt would have brought a sense of fear and anxiety to the minds of the disciples. In fact, Jesus mentions it no less than 3 times in our text the need to not fear, to not be afraid. Sometimes that is easier said than done!!

  Fear is always present in our lives; it can be debilitating but also a powerfully motivating force that keeps us safe. I am sure many of you remember telling your kids or hearing someone tell their kids not to touch that pot on the stove because it might be hot or not to go to near the road for fear of getting hit by a car. As adults, who has not felt fear in these past few months since the pandemic began? There is a fear of catching Covid-19, there is a fear of giving it to a loved one, there is a fear of instability in the financial markets, in business, in healthcare, and there is anxiety in not be able to hug our loved ones. I have certainly felt the fear and anxiety in these past months. Fear impacts each of us and our behaviours differently. But Jesus says to fear not….

         You may or may not have heard this week that there was another pipeline oil spill this week on Indigenous land in BC. 190,000 litres or 50,000 gallons spilled onto an aquifer where the majority of the Sumas First Nations people get their drinking water from. This is the 4th spill in 15 years. Can you imagine the fear of not having clean drinking water for your family? What about having adequate fire protection? A 2010 report states that First Nations residents are 10 times more likely to die in a house fire than the rest of the Canadian population.[[1]](#footnote-1)  There are also no rules or regulations that govern fire protection in First Nation communities and risk assessments are lacking so there is no data available to be able to quantify the adequate level of fire protection needed for a First Nation’s community. These too are hard truths to hear in a country like Canada where the turn of a tap gives us clean drinking water or to know that if we call the fire department they will arrive in minutes with the proper equipment to help put out a fire. Sadly, fear is alive and well among our Indigenous brothers and sisters in Canada. And again, Jesus says do not be afraid…..

         For some, there is a fear of what is happening to our world that God so lovingly created. Over the years our earth has become more polluted, the oceans are full of plastic, trees are being cut down to make room for progress, farmland is turned into residential land, electronics have become commodities that we throw out when a newer model comes along. And Jesus says do not fear…

         If there is one positive thing that has happened during this pandemic it is that the world has begun to heal itself; pollution levels have gone down making the air cleaner, wildlife has returned, we notice more birds in the sky. We have been given the opportunity to slow down, to listen, to heal, to reflect on what creation means to us. Perhaps because of the pandemic, we will be more careful about treating our land as sacred with deep respect and integrity. Perhaps we will recognize that we have not been good neighbours with our Indigenous brothers and sisters who have lived off and taken great care of the land long before colonization began. It is time for us to come together, it is time for us to move beyond our fear and work towards a healing and mutual relationship with one another. It is time for us to prophetically speak of the need for all in Canada to have safe and clean running water, and proper emergency services. There is a need for us a church to listen and reflect on the stories of grief, frustration, loss, and anger that Indigenous families have been living with for generations. The loss of language, the loss of culture, the loss of land can no longer be ignored. If we are true followers of Jesus Christ, if we are truly living out our baptismal promises, we can pick up our crosses and reflect and learn from one another, from what was lost, to what can be rebuilt. And Jesus says do not fear…..

         When Jesus speaks to the disciples and tells them not to fear, he is not making light of their situations, he is not saying “get over it and move on. ” Jesus knows that there is suffering and pain in their lives, in our lives, that life is not easy. Jesus is being honest and authentic in naming the fear and suffering because when fear is named it helps to release the power that it holds on our lives. In naming the fear Jesus reassured the disciples and us that we are not alone and that the love and strength of God is always with us. God knows us intimately and sees value in each of us, in each and every one of us. God knows us so intimately that he knows how many hairs we have on each of our heads. We are known and loved and there is no need to be afraid….

         In following Jesus, we trust that God is with us through the fear and suffering we face in our lives. We trust that with the presence of the Holy Spirit we can grow in faith to learn what it means to truly love and walk with our neighbours who struggle with fear and suffering. In following Jesus we are invited to name our fear and know that our faith is strong enough to overcome the fear and that we too can take up our crosses with strength and courage knowing that it is a sign of God’s never-ending love for all. Amen. May it be so.

**HYMN OF THE DAY- WILL YOU COME AND FOLLOW ME- ELW 798**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HNr1fdAbi0>

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

Expansive God, you bring diverse voices together to form your church. Open our hearts and our ears to learn from one another, that differences might not overshadow our baptismal unity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Providing God, your creation shows us that life comes from death. Renew the places where our land, air, and waterways have been ill for too long. Direct the work of all who care for birds and their habitats. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Protecting God, sustain and keep safe all who work to defend others across the world. Revive and strengthen organizations dedicated to caring for refugees and migrants while their homelands struggle for peace. We remember our Indigenous brothers and sisters on this National Indigenous Day, may we stand with them on the injustices they face due to the loss of their culture, land, and language. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you promise to be with all who are persecuted for your sake. Guide all who speak your word of justice and console any who are tormented or targeted for being who they are. Heal the sick and the injured, the grieving and the sorrowful, we remember especially today Eddie, Elaine, Mary Ann, Ruth, Susie, David, Donelda and those we name in the stillness of our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you are with us and we are never alone. Bless all fathers and father figures who strive to love and nurture as you do. Comfort all who long to be fathers and all for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Reigning God, you bless us with guides and caretakers in the faith. As we give thanks for those who have died increase our care for one another until we walk with them in newness of life. Remember all fathers who rest in your eternal love. 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.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**BLESSING**A prayer written by Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson, 2017

Holy God, as we gather today around your redeeming and reforming will

for this world, we acknowledge You: in grand rivers rippling with grace, in soil saturated with stories of Your faithfulness. In mighty forests bearing You, and here, in this place. Your fingerprints in wrinkles, dimples and folds of skin; your scent in bannock, curry, sausage and sage; and in your desire for a church as supple as a moss on rock and as solid as tall cedar tree. We celebrate you and pray your passion for peace among us. We plead your impatience for justice within us. Form us that we might be living sacrifices in your reign coming to us here, now in your Son, Jesus.

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. May the Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING HYMN- I Love to Tell The Story- ELW 661**

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1. Matt Prokopchuk, "'The System Is Broken,' Ontario First Nations Firefighters Say of Fire Protection in Indigenous Communities," CBC, May 6, 2019, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ontario-native-firefighters-ki-fire-1.5124368>). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)