

RADISSON-LANGHAM LUTHERAN PARISH

First Saskatchewan Lutheran Church
Langham, SK

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Radisson, SK

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST August 30, 2020

St. Paul, Radisson/First Saskatchewan, Langham
Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Ministers: Members of the Congregation
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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 you all.

Prayer of the Day:

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Psalm 26:1-8

Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Holy Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

Reflection - Peter Kingsmill

When I was reminded earlier this week that it was my turn to come up with a reflection on this week's Gospel selection - Matthew 16:21-28 - I realized that this reading is not one of the easy ones, the warm fuzzy ones, the ones about loving one another or caring for the children or celebrating the glory of the risen Christ. Instead, this reading tells would-be followers of Jesus exactly where the rubber hits the road on

the journey of discipleship: ***If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.***

In a commentary based on this Gospel reading, Greg Carey, a Professor of New Testament at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, points out that Jesus directly confronts us with the gap between His gruesome fate and our own modest discipleship: "So we face the chasm between Jesus' call to discipleship and our own lives as part-time volunteers for the Gospel. Few Christians abandon everything for the Gospel's sake. Most of us simply fit our Christianity into the open spots on our calendars. But in this passage Jesus links the life of discipleship with his own path."

Carey points out that while many of us know we constantly fall far short of Jesus' standard, it is our culture that needs the reminder. He talks about the "prosperity gospel", saying that it holds greater sway than many of us want to admit. (Prosperity theology views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, He will deliver security and prosperity.)

But Carey goes further: "Whatever the threat posed by the prosperity gospel, a more insidious assumption definitely lurks among us: that God wants us to be happy. Countless praise choruses celebrate how much Jesus loves us, how much we love Jesus and how great God is... This happiness assumption has sunk so deeply into our collective psyche that even the words of Jesus can hardly challenge it. Are we even capable of hearing that God might call us to radical sacrifice, even to danger?... Precious few of us lay everything on the line for the Gospel, but neither can we ignore its call."

Answering the call, in faith, can be a life-saving response. Carey recalls some Nashville students who joined the Freedom Rides in the southern USA, sixty years before the Black Lives Matter protests of today! In 1961, faced by fire-bombings and beatings, those students signed their last will and testaments and sang hymns before leaving home to participate. He points out that no one could deny that these students experienced joy during their trials, but they

were fully mindful of the potential cost as well: "**Singing hymns after signing one's will: the cost and joy of discipleship.**"

Prayers of Intercession:

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A Brief Silence

God of faithfulness, you bid your people to follow Jesus. Set the mind of your church on divine things. Grant us trust in you, that we lose our lives for the sake of Christ and thereby discover joy in life through him. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it. Heal your creation and give us eyes to see the world as you do. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, that they advocate and genuinely care for those who are poor and most vulnerable in their communities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of salvation, you promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love. Accompany those who are uncertain, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick (especially...). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. Make our congregation a workshop of your love. When we quarrel, bring reconciliation. Help us overcome evil with good. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all grace, you give us everlasting life. In love we recall your holy ones who now live in your undying light. In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing: 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.**

Let us remember in our prayers: Gloria Hamp recovering from surgery, Ida Muller, Sonia Zacharias, Darren Wilkie, Carla Wilkie, Connie Verishine, Susan Wonko, Guy Norton, Heather Penno, Inga Abrahamson, Genie Thompson, Linda Hartshorn, Logan Kane, Lynn Sherstobitoff, Don Wenner, Alma Krueger, Anthony Flath, Elsie Flath, Conrad Olson, Ethel Kuny, Mark Anderson, Roger Wilkie, Lisa Hamp and to everyone affected by COVID 19

THIS WEEK

Monday, August 31: 7:00p - First Sask Church Council

Pastor Melissa will not have worship videos this week or next. Re-opening is now tentatively re-scheduled for **September 27** so we will have videos again September 13 & 20.

For other worship services/devotions you could check out the following:

- Livestreams are available at:
<https://elcic.ca/publichealth/livestreaming.cfm>
- Pastor Randy Fiege is live, 10:00a Sunday on Facebook, as well as YouTube.

Sask Synod office's new address is:

#6 - 2220 Northridge Drive, Saskatoon, SK
S7L 6X8

LuMinHos Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for Sunday, August 30, 7:00p at Faith Lutheran Church, 2801 Preston Avenue, Saskatoon, SK. COVID-19 protocols will apply. Please bring your mask. 2020 Bulletin of Reports can be found at <https://www.luminhos.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-BULLETIN-OF-REPORTS-.pdf>

ABOUT RE-OPENING:

September is always such a busy time of year. Harvest, kids headed back to school, getting the house and yard prepared for winter... that all seems so normal. But this year is more complicated: we have also been trying to second-guess a nasty and potentially deadly disease so we can return to regular worship services after more than five months of keeping the church doors shut.

It's complicated because it's all new territory. We didn't have a roadmap for a pandemic, so we're learning as we go. Bishop Sid (and Pastor Ali Tote, himself an epidemiologist) have been informing our decisions, and we have learned that pandemic responses around the ELCIC synod in Saskatchewan have varied. Back in early summer, Council chairs Peter and Eric at St. Paul and First Saskatchewan had - with support from the Councils - tentatively planned for re-opening our buildings for regular worship in mid-September, using best-available advice from Synod and the province's health department at the time. However, things change. After a series of "Zoom" meetings over the last week (to which congregational chairpersons and rostered pastors were invited), we have learned that current wisdom suggests we should coordinate our re-opening plan with that of the schools, waiting for two full weeks after schools go back so the impacts of school and church on virus spread can be assessed more fully before moving forward into autumn. Certainly, the potential exposure of our children and grandchildren (and the teachers among us) can have a rapid impact on the health of the whole community.

Bishop Sid and his colleagues at Synod are very obviously passionate about the safety of our congregations, and Eric and I are inclined to accept his strong recommendation that we wait until September 27th to re-open for in-person worship. First Sask Council is slated to meet **Monday, August 31** and St. Paul Council will meet **Tuesday, September 8**; be assured that the flexibility needed for pandemic response going forward will be front and center on our agenda!

If we ever doubted that life is an experiment, we are being shown. With Jesus' help, we will learn and move forward. Peter K.

Thank you to those who stay connected and in touch with our members who may feel isolated and lonely, the elderly and others in our community by a phone call or sharing online worship services with those who do not have internet.

Donations to your church can still be given:

First Sask - You can mail your cheque to Roxanne Elke, P.O. Box 272, Grandora, SK S0K 1V0.
St. Paul - You could send your cheque to Darlene Kindt, Box 97, Radisson or drop it off at the church.

Happy Birthday this week: Brittany Anweiler, Sandra Chery, Doris Hamp, Jackie Meister, Wade Schreiner

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 15:15-21

15 O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

16 Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;
for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

17 I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

19 Therefore thus says the LORD:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.
It is they who will turn to you,

not you who will turn to them.

²⁰ And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the LORD.

²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 12:9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 16:21-28

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord!

This must never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."