

# **ORDER OF SERVICE FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022**

## **10th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

*Due to copyright limitations, we are unable to print the words to the songs. However, our musicians have chosen music to fit the scriptures. We invite you to look up the words in your worship book and ponder them. If you do not have a worship book, ponder the words to one of your favourite hymns and listen for God's voice. Those who have internet may find the songs on YouTube.*

### **QUOTE OF THE WEEK:**

*"The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than them."*

*~Chinese Proverb*

### **BEFORE WE WORSHIP, WE REFLECT...**

Over the last weeks we have encountered lots of forgiveness in Luke's gospel. This Sunday we hear that God's mercy has a sharp edge, as if in-laws were at each other's throats.

**Luke 12:49-56:** Luke writes that faithfulness to Christ and to the community of the baptized is likely to be countercultural, unpopular, even divisive. Much in current Christianity emphasizes instead the open inclusiveness of the church and its commitment to peace. This gospel reading reminds us that frequently, a statement about Christianity needs to be held together with its opposite. Next to the dove of peace is the sword of the word.

**Jeremiah 23:23-29:** This selection from Jeremiah is set next to Luke 12 to emphasize that God's word has always been unpopular and a challenge to the culture. The human phenomenon of religion is characterized by pleasant dreams that may be far distant from the message of God's word. Both Jeremiah and Luke describe the word of God as fire.

**Hebrews 11:19—12:2:** Also, in the twenty-first century some Christians are tormented, persecuted, and killed for their faith. We trust that Jesus, who in faith endured the cross, will enable us to finish the race of life faithful to God. And if we have no such agonies in our lives, we stand with those Christians who do.

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

We acknowledge that we gather to worship on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional gathering place of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene people and the traditional homeland of the Métis people.

Creator of all, we ask that you fill us with your justice and your passion so that we strive with all indigenous peoples to move forward from the abuses of the past and work hard to build respectful relationships. Open our hearts and minds to learn new ways of being, to embrace new teachings and experience your presence in all we meet.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

In a world uprooted at every turn, come beloved of God for replanting.

**Our hope and weariness are mixed together, yet we come, trusting ancient promises.**

The Holy One who led the people out of Egypt, yearns to lead us, too.

**God will not rest until all are re-rooted, restored, and renewed for rejoicing.**

Let us be joined to God's song of justice, bearing beauty into the life of the world.

**May our lives be formed for faithfulness by the One who is always faithful.**

### **CHILDREN'S SONG: / Will Call Upon The Lord**

Words and music by Michael O'Shields; Source: [LyricFind](#)

I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised.

So shall I be saved from my enemies.

The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted!

The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted!

### **CENTERING PRAYER:**

Loving and Gracious God, form a new song of soul within us. Take every fragment of our lives and fashion a new creation. Plant us deep in the soil of Your love, that your living water might rise in us, forming a fruit of possibility unimaginable on our own. Grant us grace to trust your promised presence already meeting us here, now, and always. By this, gift us with a new strength of heart for whatever Your love demands. Amen.

### **A NEW CREED**

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

### **CHILDREN'S CHAT**

Take a look at the church directory. Families have their picture in there as well as their address and phone number. Now, if you have older copies of the church directory, take a look and see how many of the same families are in those directories. The Bible tells us stories of the faithful families that followed God and believed in Jesus. Well, our church directories show us the faithful families that have continued to worship and work together for God in this parish. These families come to worship and serve others, not because they have to, rather, because they want to. These families are part of God's family. It is good to talk about our faith stories and faith families. It helps others to realize that being part of God's family is fun, can be exciting and gives us love and support.

Ask the people at church how many years they have been part of their faith family. The answer may surprise you!

My dad is 91 years of age. St. John Lutheran Church, Ottawa, is his faith family. He was baptized, confirmed and married in that church. He hopes to be buried from St. John Lutheran Church. His entire life has been spiritually fed through this faith family. Many of the people who inspired my dad in his faith have long since died, yet their memory and faith remain in my dad's life. How cool is that?!

I hope that you also discover how amazing God is through your faith family! I hope you will have many stories to share with others to help build their faith.

Thanks be to God!

### **MINUTE FOR MISSION: PODCAST INVITES CHILDREN TO ENGAGE DEEP SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS**

Are you a parent or grandparent with children home for summer vacation? Looking for healthy, screen-free, and imaginative ways to engage them and nurture their Spirit at the same time? *The Scribblers Story*, a new Christian children's podcast, just might be the answer.

The podcast takes a creative approach to encourage children to explore their imagination and faith without using screens. Described as "Narnia with kid actors and a soundtrack," the adventurous storyline released in 15-minute episodes every Monday through the summer, takes children on a purposeful and fun journey to engage with deep spiritual questions.

"Especially over the past few years, children have been spending more time on screens. Podcasts and audiobooks inspire the use of imagination and creativity in children, and are more portable than TV shows and movies. Perfect for bedtime or car rides!" says Amy Van Wensem, the show's Executive Producer.

Not only are the podcasts convenient, portable, and allow listeners to relax or multi-task while tuning in on their own time, they also give blossoming young actors like Paige, Isaac, and Jakob an opportunity to grow their faith and skills in a professional, exciting environment.

Supported by Vision Fund and Embracing the Spirit grants, *The Scribblers Story* is one of a stellar lineup of exciting projects to receive funding. Both grant programs are designed to inspire innovation and are supported by generous gifts to Mission & Service.

Best of all, *The Scribblers Story* is a **free** resource for children and families, and it's available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart, and Buzzsprout. Please share it widely with your communities and networks!

And, as always, thank you for supporting innovative ministry projects through Mission & Service.

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### **READINGS AND PSALM**

#### **First Reading: Jeremiah 23:23-29**

*Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.*

<sup>23</sup>Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? <sup>24</sup>Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. <sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed!" <sup>26</sup>How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? <sup>27</sup>They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. <sup>28</sup>Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

#### **Psalm 82**

**R: Arise, O God, and rule the earth. (Ps. 82:8)**

<sup>1</sup>God stands to charge the divine council assembled, giving judgment in the midst of the gods:

<sup>2</sup>"**How long will you judge unjustly, and show favor to the wicked?**

<sup>3</sup>Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy;

<sup>4</sup>**rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked. R**

<sup>5</sup>They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

<sup>6</sup>**Now I say to you, 'You are gods, and all of you children of the Most High;**

<sup>7</sup>nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.'

<sup>8</sup>**Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own. R**

#### **Second Reading: Hebrews 11:29--12:2**

*The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this "cloud of witnesses," we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.*

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. <sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled

for seven days. <sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

<sup>32</sup>And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—<sup>33</sup>who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup>Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup>Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—<sup>38</sup>of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup>Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup>since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

<sup>12:1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **Gospel: Luke 12:49-56**

*Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>49</sup>"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup>From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

<sup>54</sup>He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. <sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

### **HYMN: VU 580 Faith Of Our Fathers**

**SERMON:** Rev. Prema Samuel, Assistant to the Bishop – Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Welcome to this summer sermon series that our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is providing for congregations. I am Rev. Prema Samuel and I serve as the Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Life of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. It is great to be with you this Sunday.

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, I honour and acknowledge that I live and work and pray on traditional and ancestral territory of the many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries. I am speaking to you today from Treaty 6 territory and Metis Nation of Alberta, Region IV, in Leduc. Leduc is situated on the traditional territories of the Peoples of Treaty 6, which includes 16 Alberta First Nations, as well as the Peoples of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

I acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. I am grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. I make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory I reside on or am visiting. I invite you to take a moment in gratitude to acknowledge the land from which you are joining us.

Gee, somebody got up on the wrong side of the bed! Somebody give this Jesus some coffee. Who is this guy?

Jesus has been teaching as he goes. A parable here, an exhortation there. In fact, earlier in chapter 12 of Luke, Jesus' teachings feel rather reassuring and cozy...he tells his followers not to worry, to consider the birds of the air and lilies of the field, reminding them that they are precious in God's sight. And hear these words of comfort, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) This is my kind of Jesus.

Our text for today gives us real pause. Here is the Prince of Peace, the one the angels sang their praises about at his birth, the love of God incarnate, Jesus, The Christ, telling his listeners that he has come to bring division. By following him, families will sunder. Communities will sunder. This isn't peace. This isn't comforting. This is chaos. And we don't know what to do with this passage.

It feels like Jesus has had a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day. "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and oh how I wish it were blazing already! Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No! I've come for division!" Jesus is confronting and disrupting and turning things upside down. Well then. What happened to considering the lilies? And our preciousness in God's sight? I mean, Jesus! Where did this angry guy come from? One commentator that I read as I prepped for this verse even called this passage embarrassing. It wasn't Jesus as we understood him. This was an angry, demanding Jesus who made us uncomfortable and uneasy.

In the children's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, four British siblings enter a coat closet and discover a whole other world called Narnia. This magical world is filled with talking animals and the original Lion King, a lion named Aslan, who rules over all of Narnia. The youngest child Lucy strikes up a conversation with Mr. Beaver, asking about Aslan, "is he quite safe?" to which Mr. Beaver replies, "'Safe?' Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. 'Of course, God isn't safe, but God is good.'

Perhaps this text is so uncomfortable for us because it doesn't match our experience. That isn't what being part of a church is all about. But what we don't understand in this part of the world is something that my relatives in India understood all too well.

My maternal Grandmother, who I call as Ammamma was known as a prominent evangelist and faith healer. Her Ashram stands to this day outside of Bangalore, India. I spent much of my time there as a child and when my Ammamma died, her children by blood and in ministry continue to run the Ashram to honor the life of her mother and the ministries that had been established there over the years. Education for rural children, a church, an orphanage among many. I saw many things there that I can only call a miracle in the most real sense of the word. Yet it wasn't always that way.

My Ammamma was in fact a convert from Hinduism. While she was a Hindu, her family comes from the Brahmin caste and were temple builders, deeply honoring the faith they had been born into. A family that was deeply respected and was wealthy. She was loved, adored, and spurned.

But when my Ammamma encountered the Gospel and converted, everything changed. Her husband, my grandfather, my Thatha initially was not in favor of her decision. He knew what the repercussions were likely to be. Eventually, her faith and her passion won him over, and he joined her in her new faith.

That brought the change. Their families tried to convince them, threaten them. But when it didn't work, they shunned them... ostracized them. But many of her family members never reconciled themselves to the fact that she was now a Christian. Her family shunned her for the rest of their days.

Her brother, who adored her, didn't want anything to do with her or anyone associated with her. She was dead to him, as long as she remained a follower of Christ.

Despite everything that she had to endure, her faith continued. She never wavered in following the one whom she had encountered, the Risen Christ and her devotion to him was absolute, even when it cost her family. She was a Christian. It was who she was.

Just as my Ammamma performed great acts of love and compassion, her daughter, influenced deeply by her mother, went on to a life of service. Her ministry was quite different than my Ammamma's. She was the consummate church diplomat, but her life had an incredible impact on so many others as she strove for justice for women, the Dalits and all those who were vulnerable to the whims of those with power. And it all started when my Ammamma chose to follow Jesus.

Things are so different in this part of the world. Many of us were born into our church and have known nothing else. The Canadian society is one where various religious practices have a place and most people are open to that wonderful tapestry of faith traditions. Any persecution that does arise is decried by most people. I wonder, how would we react if we were put into a position like my Ammamma, when we stand to lose everything just by following Jesus?

We may believe that this is a hypothetical consideration which we will likely never encounter, yet we face an important crux in our history. The role of faith groups is being tested right now in North America. Often, our name as Christians has been attached to a lot of questionable behavior (to put it mildly).

Will we side with justice and stand up against these practices and for the rights of all people? Will we act as stewards and protectors of the created world? Will we follow the example of Jesus, the justice bringer and risk alienating our friends and family or members of our church? Or will we side with the status quo which would have the church stay silent, concentrating on an easy complacent spirituality, a few fun programs and generally staying out from under foot? That is the easier way. But it is not the way Jesus calls us to. Do we have the courage, even though we know that if we follow where Jesus leads, we may find out firsthand what he is talking about in this passage?

The truth is, whether I am telling the story of my Ammamma or asking us to consider the way of mercy, the result, if we are left on our own, is the same. We would fail. If the Holy Spirit had not been with my Ammamma, she would not have lasted. If the Holy Spirit had not been with the many converts throughout history, they would have failed too. And any justice work we try to do would be dead before we even had the chance to start it if the Holy Spirit wasn't with us.

Thus, this passage becomes less about Jesus being angry to Jesus being prophetic. He knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what would happen if a person was to take his call seriously. It would burn. It would mean sacrifice. It would mean division. It would mean pain. But the world needed those men and women in the world. The world needed the message that they were to carry to all whom they encountered.

The call goes on for all of us and the consequences have not changed. That isn't easy to hear, but it is still the truth, just as it was when Jesus first uttered these words. We will speak truth to power, stand up for the weak and vulnerable, advocate for the created world, and live into the radical love of God. We will have hope when the world falls farther and farther into despair. And it will cost us. But it will also sustain us. It will sustain us with the knowledge of God's spirit with us always, now, and forever. God is breathing God's very life into us so that we can take that next step and the one after and the one after that. And in so doing, we discover a life of purpose, grounded in that same, radical, all-encompassing love.

It was the love that sustained my Ammamma. It is the love that has sustained every Christian throughout the course of time. It is the same love that will sustain us. As the fire burns, the Spirit reminds us that God is with us in the fire. Like the ashes left after the forest fire produce rich soil, the ashes left behind after the strange fire of God's refining are the starting point for new life.

God has used dust and ash to create since the Garden of Eden, kneeling in the soil breathing new life. And God does so with us today. God kneels in the dirt and ash, gently whispering and tending, patiently cherishing, and coaxing new life out of places that appear charred and ruined. Where we see only worthless destruction, God sees promise and hope. Despite everything that may be lost as we follow our Risen Saviour, nothing could be greater than that amazing gift of love.

Amen.

### **HYMN OF THE MONTH: MV 98 *Like A River Of Tears***

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

Arise, O God, and sustain your church. We pray for all who dedicate their lives to serving your people. Renew our commitment to our siblings in faith around the globe, and bless the work of our ecumenical and interfaith partners. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain your creation. We pray for all places affected by natural disasters, especially Newfoundland. Transform the devastation of floods and fires into fertile ground for new life and growth. Fill heaven and earth with your life-giving Spirit. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain the nations. We pray for all elected officials. Kindle in them a desire to administer your justice. Strengthen their resolve to defend those who are vulnerable and to stand publicly against all forms of oppression. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain those who are oppressed. We pray for people harmed by racist discrimination, ableist discrimination, and all people discriminated against based on their gender identity or sexual orientation. Rescue us from all systems that degrade our fellow human beings. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain this assembly. We pray for this community, celebrating with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. In our joy and in our tears, be near us. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, we remember the saints who have gone before us. May we run with perseverance the race set before us until we find our rest in you. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

Amen.

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**SENDING SONG:** VU 397 *O Praise The Gracious Power*

#### **BENEDICTION:**

May you remember, God has planted Your life and given you a song to sing into the world. May it be a song of healing and hope, of justice and joy. And may you discover yourself blessed again and again as you find yourself joined on the journey with Jesus. Blessings on you, + beloved of God. Amen.