

**WESTMINSTER CHURCH
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 3B5

*“Trusting God, nurturing disciples for Christ,
being empowered by the Holy Spirit”*

September 25th, 2022

...We Gather to Worship God...

Call to Worship: Psalm 16: 7-9

Come, bless the Lord who guides us, whose wise teaching directs our days
and focuses our minds at night;

whose presence sustains us
and surrounds us here.

We bless the Lord who is present among us.

We will not be shaken or live in fear,
but will sing God’s praise and worship with joy!

Announcements: We are glad you are with us today and welcome your online voices joining with us.

- **Birthdays Prayer Train:** We have one Birthday Train member this week and it is Alice Hollingsworth on Saturday, Oct. 1st! Happy Birthday. May she be blessed with many greetings on her day.
- **Choir practice** - Thursday evening - children’s choir at 6:30 and adult choir at 7:30.
- **Celebration of Life** - for Carl Meierhoff on October 1st at 1pm.
- **Communion** - October 2nd.
- **Thanksgiving.** We will again be making gifts for those who are shut-ins. Charlene will again be looking for drivers to help distribute those.

Offerings and Tithes: Our Session would like to encourage our members and friends to prayerfully consider your contributions to our ongoing ministry. Contributions may be made in person or by mail. We thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Hymn: 337 - Eternal, unchanging we sing to your praise

Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God, companion and guide, we would be lost without your direction—wanderers in wildernesses of our own making.

We praise you for dealing so graciously with your people in the past, when you guided them

to freedom and a promised new life.

We are heirs of that promise fulfilled in Jesus, our Redeemer and Lord.

Through him, you have established for us a permanent direction for our lives and as we dwell in him, our lives are blessed with fruitfulness.

Holy God, may this time of worship be a joyful response of praise and thanksgiving for all that you have done, for all that you are doing, and for all that you will continue to do for us and all people through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, praying as he taught us to pray, saying, Amen

Assurance of Pardon

Christ is our peace; those who are divided he has made one.

He has broken down the barriers of separation by his death and has built us up into one body, with God.

To all who repent and believe he has promised reconciliation.

So live as people reconciled. Amen.

Choir: O What a Wonderful Name

...We Listen to God's Word...

Word of God:

Old Testament: Daniel 1: 6-21

New Testament: Titus 3: 1-8

Hymn: 644 May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Message

We are now week three in our series entitled "Enduring the Race: Remembering your baptism." This is a five part series looking at the titles - Remember who you are, Remember where you belong, Remember what you are, Remember what you have, Remember how to live. So we have looked at Remembering who you are - a beloved Child of God. We have looked at Remembering where you belong - in a Community of Christians to be and to grow. Now we are looking at remembering what you are.

Some of you will remember this song: *I've been redeemed, by the blood of the Lamb. I've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. I've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, filled with the Holy Ghost, I am. All my sins are washed away, I've been redeemed.*

Great little tune. I have sung it with great gusto many times. It is a song that speaks to the status of Christians. They are redeemed - but what does this mean? I could answer this morning's question 'what are you' with the answers 'you are redeemed'. It is a great answer. However, I think it is just the beginning of the answer to this question. After all there is the question, 'what does it mean to be redeemed?'

This can be an easy and a difficult question to answer. What are you? The people in the time of

Jesus were also pondering this question. Paul writes to Titus with some answers to this question. He wants to tell Titus that his congregation is not to forget that they are a forgiven people. They have been reconciled to God through the forgiveness of sins. They have been redeemed. This new status should impact everything that they do. They are to live in humility knowing that it is amazing that God would even know them let alone care for them enough to make them a special people.

The answer - I am redeemed - is supposed to be reflected in everything that we do. Everything. Now the translation of this letter to Titus in the NIV version makes a shopping list of things that this group of Christians should be doing because they know what they are. The shopping list reads like this - Be subject to rulers and authorities, be obedient, be ready to do whatever is good, slander no one, be peaceable and considerate, and always be gentle toward everyone. Six things. As John would say to me, it is more than two items, you will have to write it down. So this list is written down.

Here is what I know about this list. There is often much attention given to number one and number two. Be subject to rulers and authorities, be obedient. There is some attention given to number three which is be ready to do whatever is good. Don't slander, be peaceable and considerate and be gentle are left off. I mean we know that they are important but we often do not treat them as being significant.

I want us to look at some of the story of Daniel because I think that he lived out this list as he was living in captivity in the land of the Babylonians meaning that Daniel was a slave. He had little choice about what he was to do. We see Daniel in the opening scene not wanting to eat the royal food of the Babylonians but the foods that were permitted in Jewish culture. Up to this point, Daniel had been obedient to his authorities. He and his colleagues learned the language of the Babylonian people and other subjects as instructed. Daniel now took the opportunity to present an issue that he had with the way he lived. You will note that he is very careful when he does this. He still knows that he needs to be subject to the rulers and authorities of where he is - if he wants to live.

We see Daniel being obedient. He willingly became part of the training program to so that he could work in the palace and be a servant to the king. This would not have been easy since he was a young man with his life ahead of him now being dictated by a foreign leader in a foreign country. However, because Daniel worships God, he lives this way even in his captivity.

That brings us to number three on our list. Be ready to do what is good. Daniel has a gift of interpreting dreams. He does what he can for the King giving him the interpretation that God has given him. Daniel also looks after three other men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. As he decides to eat only the permitted foods of Jewish culture, he helps the other three to be able to do this as well. Daniel just does many good things. This is why he is chosen for the position he is given.

Number four is interesting. Slander no one. Daniel has opportunity and motive to slander King

Darius. King Darius likes his Jewish advisors but some of his Babylonian advisors do not. They are jealous. So they figure out a plan that will cause King Darius to have to get rid of Daniel. King Darius is encouraged to make a decree that he is the only one that can be worshiped in his kingdom. He makes this decree without thinking what it would do to those of his servants who were Jewish. The King tries to correct his decree but it is not allowed. Daniel does not slander the King though I think he would have every right. There should have been a very long FB post as to how outrageous this decree was. It should have included how hateful the King had been to him at times, how the King should have known what would happen and how Daniel is more righteous. Daniel chooses to take the punishment for continuing to worship God. He is peaceable, considerate and gentle. All of the things on this list given in Titus.

I have often admired Daniel for his stance on his faith. It is so commendable. However, I also see that there is a way that he took this stance which is also very admirable. He convinces the earlier king to just let them try to live by their Jewish diet. They thrive on it. It is also cheaper for the king to provide! Daniel does not argue or become angry about his situation. He takes the time to persuade the King that he should give them this allowance for a few weeks and see what is best for the Jewish servants.

I have a suspicion that the Christians that are with Titus are in a similar situation. They are not part of the ruling nation which is Rome so they have to find a way to worship and live as Christians. They do not need to fight for God, he is quite able to do that himself if he so desires. They are to live by the grace and mercy that they received from God during their baptism. They are not to live in hate and anger but in the patience and love that they have experienced from God through Jesus Christ. They are to let God challenge the authorities and they are to live as Christians where they are.

We are not slaves living under the rule of another nation. This is an important distinction. We have the ability to challenge those in authority because we are part of the 'ruling class' for lack of a better term. However, this does not mean that the rest of the list is then unimportant. As we are reminded in Titus, all of these qualities are what it means to be redeemed. They are to define what we are. This means that we are to consider our words carefully when we address issues with people. Road rage and Facebook rants are not uncontrollable impulses that we absolutely have to indulge. We are able because our society allows for this but it is a choice. Paul writes to Titus saying that this should not be the choice of a Christian because this was not how God treated us. We see this in Christ.

It is humbling to take this list and try to live by it. This is the challenge of the Christian life. To live as Christ lived. To treat others as God has treated us. To live redeemed knowing that this was not our holiness but God's love and care for us that caused this to happen. Our baptism calls us to know what we are. We are the redeemed of the Lord and this should be something that others are able to notice.

...We Respond in Service...

Prayers of the People

Heavenly Father, bring stillness to our hearts, empty our minds of other things and direct our thoughts to those who especially need our prayers.

When we reflect on how you have supported and cared for us in the past, we cannot fail to give you thanks.

When we consider the way you give us courage and help for each new day, we are filled with a sense of gratitude and praise.

When you lift us from the pit of doubt and despair, our whole being feels renewed and refreshed. What a comfort it is, to know the love and support you bring to us through your Son and by your Spirit.

In our joy, let us not forget those this morning who know little else but sadness.

In our sense of gratitude and praise, let us not forget those whose lives are filled with regrets and heartbreaks.

In our feeling of support and guidance, let us not forget those who feel they have struggled against life's difficulties and disappointments alone and uncared for.

In our desire to give You praise, do not blur our vision of the hardship in this life.

The despair of the homeless in our inner cities.

The feelings of guilt by parents who cannot feed their children.

The worries and fears of those in hospital.

The isolation of the lonely.

The deep sense of loss to those in bereavement.

Heavenly Father, you are not only the God of this world, you are the ruler of your heavenly Kingdom.

Strengthen us while we live out our life on this earth, to show the compassion and the caring of Jesus.

Hold before us the reality of your Kingdom, where there is no suffering, pain or regret, so that we may share it with those who are without hope.

For we ask all these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: 626 - Lord of all power

Sending: As you leave this place of worship, know that you leave as the ones saved through the washing of rebirth and renewed by the Holy Spirit. So live that way, extending to others and to yourself the same grace and forgiveness that God first extended to you.

Benediction

Prayers - Wednesday September 21, 2022

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Birthdays

We have one birthday only. It is Alice Hollingsworth on Saturday October 1st.

Praise

Sharon's friend, Patsy, has had her last cancer treatment and rang the bell!

Grayson is wrapping up his treatment and is scheduled to go to London next month and ring the bell there with his primary care team!

Praise for a clear result Penny received today from her quarterly monitoring cystoscopy.

Praise for Susan Myers's friend Dennis who has responded as prayed for to chemo treatment. He moves to a maintenance plan on immunotherapy, and we continue to pray for the Lord to sustain him.

Praise for progress for Charity who while still healing is able to get out and prayers have been answered for her, we pray too for continued improvement.

Prayers for comfort in loss

Lord, comfort the friends and family of Carl Meierhoff, from our Westminster family who passed away recently. Be with them as plans unfold for a celebration of his life.

Prayer for the family of Peter Dwyer, who passed away this week and is cousin to Melinda, Sharon and Penny. Pray for his sister Lee-Anne in particular who lost both her brothers within this year and a sister a few years ago so all her siblings are now gone. May the Lord comfort Lee-Anne and all of Peter's loved ones.

We pray for Susan Edward's cousin Marina and her children who recently lost her husband and their father. Comfort them in their grief Lord we pray.

Lord, we pray for those who are dealing with cancer.

We pray for Susan and Michael Edward's friend, David, who has been diagnosed terminal. Lord, we pray that you will be with the family and may they find ways to

make their remaining time meaningful. May David know your gift of salvation and eternal life.

We pray for Charlotte as her cancer journey continues. Give her and her family strength and courage.

We continue to pray for Peter's sister-in-law who is still battling cancer. Be with her and be with Peter and his family as they try to support her.

We pray for Les Dool as he is now facing a diagnosis of cancer. Lord please draw Les near to you and remind him you love him and have him in the palm of your hand.

We pray for Charlene's friend Rev. Steve Smith, whose cancer has returned. He is to begin treatment in October. May the treatments be successful and may he be able to continue in his work.

Lord, we pray for those who are facing a variety of other medical issues.

We pray for Ursula Hagen who is in hospital and awaiting a move to a nursing home. Be with her in this time as it is a big change for her and her daughter Reagan.

We pray for Charlene's friend Gord Walford who has been diagnosed with gout. Lord bring healing to him and relief from pain and discomfort.

We pray for Penny's friend Michelle's sister Nancy as she has upcoming surgery. We pray for excellent outcomes and that she knows you go before her Lord.

We pray for Susan Myers's cousin Bev who is suffering from crushed discs in her back and experiencing excruciating pain, she is 84 and this is really challenging. Pray for pain management and wisdom from a specialist as to any options for relief. Bev is a lay minister in a Presbyterian Church in Littleton CO.

We pray for Karli Dionisi's Aunt, Holley Davis who suffered a stroke in July. We pray for her recovery and rehabilitation.

We pray for Debbie and Neil Matthers as they support their daughter Irene. They are awaiting a diagnosis and we pray Lord you give them your peace, come what may.

We pray for Beth's father-in-law who is dealing with Alzheimer's and end of life issues. We ask for comfort for him and his wife and all of the family at this time.

We pray for Adam who should be heading back to school but is having great difficulty doing that. Lord, we pray that Adam would try returning to school and that he receives help for his ADHD.

We pray for Jackie and his ongoing health issues.

We pray for Brendan, as he recovers from a broken bone in his foot.

Lord we pray for all of these folks as they journey along. Help guide the medical teams looking after them. Please give them hope, patience and courage as they face these challenges.

Other prayers.

Lastly, Lord, we pray for the churches of St. Paul's and Victoria as they face changes again. May they put their trust in you and experience your presence with them at this time.