

**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”*

October 2nd, 2022

...We Gather to Worship God...

Call to Worship: God calls us to worship with these words from Isaiah 43:

But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel:
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. Do not
be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the
west.

I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’

Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called
by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Let us worship God!

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

- **Birthday Prayer Train:** We have two birthdays for the week of Sunday Oct.2 - Saturday
Oct.8 and they are: Monday Oct. 3 David Rial Gau, Monday Oct. 3 Samya Gatwech Mawau.
Happy Birthday to David and Samya may they be blessed with many greetings on their
birthdays.
- **Choir practice:** Thursday evening - children’s choir at 6:30 and adult choir at 7:30.
- **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
through PAR, email transfer, in person or by mail. We thank you for your continued support and
prayers.

Hymn: 462 All my hope on God is founded

Opening Prayer of Confession

Eternal and merciful God, you have loved us with a love beyond our understanding, and you have set us on paths of righteousness for your name's sake. Yet we have strayed from your way; and we have wandered from your pathway. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, through what we have done and what we have left undone. As we remember the cleansing water of baptism, O God, we praise you and give you thanks that you forgive us yet again. Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin, and to rise daily to new life in Christ, who lives and reigns with you forever. Amen.

Choir

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

Word of God:

New Testament: Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2: 6-10

Hymn: 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

Message: Remember what you have

Today's theme in our Enduring the Race series, which focusses on remembering the benefits of our baptism in Christ is Remember what you have. Remembering what we have in our baptism instantly struck me as an easy theme to preach on...until I saw the text from Romans they were recommending. A text which focusses on dying to sin; a text with a call to sacrifice, to dying to sin and living a resurrected life free from the bondage of sin.

I confess I scratched my head a bit over this. How is sacrificial living a benefit of our baptism?

I believe the answer is this: we have a call to a higher way of life, a sacrificial way of life that is to be a blessing to others, and especially to each other. In week 2 of this series we looked at remembering where you belong, and I spoke on how the church calls us and unites us and blesses us with each other. Each of us is called and gifted in a special way, and we are to unite together in using our gifts to build up one another and the whole body of Christ. While this seems like a "no-brainer," we also know that it is a bit more difficult than we make it out to be.

As a way of illustration, I would like us to remember a scene from Finding Nemo, a favourite movie of my family from our younger years.

There's a scene in the movie where Nemo's father Marlin, together with the forgetful Dory, are in their relentless search for Nemo who has gone missing in the wide abyss of the ocean.

In one scene they encounter a pelican who saw Nemo and can take them to where Nemo was last seen. To do this, they have to hop in the pelican's mouth to be flown to the location. Enter the seagulls, ever-present and always watching in the movie. I love these seagulls in Finding Nemo. Of course, they are humanized in some sense, and caricatured like most animated characters, but that is what makes them so funny. They are focussed and concerned about one thing and one thing only. Each one of those seagulls wants a taste of the fish. (Nemo's father, Marlin, and Dory). "Mine. Mine. Mine!" they say, over and over and over again. You can't help but laugh as they relentlessly chase after the pelican and the fish. But it is in this relentless chase that the humanization of the seagulls becomes a bit disturbing, even as it is funny. We begin to see in the seagulls something of ourselves.

How often have we chased after something with all our might? How often have we put ourselves above all else and selfishly pursued a dream or object only for our own gratification? Loved ones, I imagine that this is true for most if not all of us in this room today. But part of the truth in this reality is the fact **that this is the way our culture has conditioned us.** That is, our society teaches us that we should always be "looking out for number one." Our lives should be centred around ourselves: advancing in the professional world, climbing the social ladder, and acquiring the greatest "toys." (I remember as a young insurance salesman buying the fake Rolex watch to make an impression....worked until the Rolex decal fell off and rattled around the inside of the watch...what do you want for \$25 bucks?!))

In short, modern society, is individualistic, "me"-centred. And we in the church are overtly and subversively influenced by the world, and we have allowed ourselves as Christians to be consumed and defined by what we accomplish or acquire rather than by who we are in relationship to God and one another. Like the seagulls, we are so often a resounding chorus, of "me, me, me." The result is that in engaging such individualism we in the church have disengaged ourselves, unable to truly relate to one another, and most especially to God. We have lost sight of our identity as ones created, claimed, and called by God to be in relationship and service to one another in this world, and instead we are absorbed by the cultural trappings of our modern society.

So the call of this text today is a radical call to self-sacrifice and service to others that is counter-cultural, against our deep programming, and yet vital to a life of freedom in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The point I want to make is that in our sacrifices for the gospel, we free ourselves from the clutches of society and sin. Greed, money, selfishness all lead to disconnection to each other and a diminished relationship with our Father of blessing. So in every instance, dying to sin is actually our road to freedom and joy.

When we most often see cute babies being baptised and when the child is sprinkled with

water rather than being immersed in it, it is easy not to connect baptism with drowning, with suffering, and even with death. But water is powerful and at times destructive.(we know this in Canada...which is why we all take efforts when are children are young to teach them to swim. We know we have to do this). We know water isn't always safe.

When we use the dying and rising again illustration of baptism- being immersed in water where the sin of the old sinful body is drowned in the death of the water and the we are raised to new life in Christ, redeemed and renewed-we must also be clear that being united with Christ also means that we are united with him in his suffering and death. As Christians we are to live a cross-shaped life, one modelled after Christ's willingness to lay down his life, to put others ahead of ourselves, even to be willing to die for our faith, to be willing for ourselves to die for another, because of our love for all. There is a truth in this life that we will not escape suffering. But the good news is that as a baptised child of God, united with Christ, we don't journey alone...we have each other.

Of even greater news is that we are also united with Jesus in his resurrection. So just as surely as Christ has been raised from the dead and sits at the right hand of God the Father with his resurrected, scarred, physical body, so too will we be raised from the dead with new bodies and one day stand before God's Throne. This is fantastic news that should bring us much hope and courage for all we face in this life—including death itself.

And finally in remembering what we have through our baptism into Christ's family let us also remember these things.

Firstly, we have assurance of whose we are...we are the Lord's. We, in our baptism, are declared Children of the Lord. And since we are His Children and He is our Heavenly Father, then we know that he will provide for us. And we know that God meets our needs and desires to give us good gifts because it is His very nature to do so. He cannot fail to give. He cannot fail to love. God's gifts to us flow from his goodness. God's very nature of goodness motivates Him to give good gifts to us, and to give them, and give them and give them. There is no end to either God's desire to give gifts to His children or his ability to give gifts. Therefore we can never fully exhaust the storehouse of God's gifts that are laid up for us. (And if we can lean in to the truth of God's generosity to us in all things then we can really let go of the worlds' push for us to look out for number one!...for us to think less like seagulls and much more like sacrificial givers)

Secondly, we have each other, to encourage us when we're down, to stand with us when we are facing challenges from this world.

Thirdly, we have "all the fullness of Christ in us"... on a spiritual and supernatural level we have a power of protection that is stronger than any force of supernatural evil...we need

not fear when oceans roar and mountains tremble, nor when the dark thoughts of doubt, despair and disappointment come slinking in to our night time thoughts.

Remembering what we have through our baptism into Christ, even into dying to sin- to a sacrificial life which gives generously to others- is actually our doorway into freedom from the bondage of sin, the limitations and dead ends of our sinful life.

...We Respond in Service...

Hymn: 543 Here, O my Lord, I see thee vs. 1-3

Invitation to Baptismal Remembrance:

(Loved ones in Christ, our baptism is the sign and seal of our cleansing from sin and of our being grafted into Christ. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken and God's Kingdom entered our world. Through our baptism we were made citizens of God's Kingdom and freed from the bondage of sin. Let us celebrate that freedom and redemption through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism. I ask you, therefore, once again, to reject sin, to profess your faith in Jesus Christ, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we were baptized.)

Apostles Creed #539

Communion

Hymn: 543: Here, O my Lord, I see thee vs. 4-7

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 28th, 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 had one birthday for this week and it is Alice Hollingsworth on Saturday Oct.1, may the Lord bless Alice richly.

Praise

Grayson's Mom has expressed her gratitude for the prayers of this group. 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 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.

Special prayer

Pray for all of those folks in Atlantic Canada and Florida for safety during these terrible storms.

Continued prayer for the people of Ukraine, Lord give them courage and hope found in You.

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 the celebration of his life takes place Sat. Oct.1.

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 just finishing treatment for cancer. Lord please draw Les near to you and remind him you love him and have him in the palm of your hand.

Pray for Joan's friend Rose who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. We pray for Your Hand of care and healing to be on her.

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.

We pray for Dennis as he moves to a maintenance plan on immunotherapy and has had a number of complications. We continue to pray for him to know you are his Great Physician. Give him and his wife rest and stability as this has been a time of challenge.

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

We pray for Ursula Hagen as she moves to Maple View long term care. 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 and other health issues. Lord bring healing to him and relief from pain and discomfort.

We pray for Penny's friend's sister Nancy who came through surgery, we pray for ongoing healing.

We pray for Susan Myers's cousin Bev who is still suffering from crushed discs in her back and experiencing excruciating pain.

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 know now it is MS. It is very hard as she has an 11 year old daughter. Lord may Irene know she is not alone. We ask Lord that you reverse this diagnosis and miraculously heal her. Please give them all your peace.

We pray for Beth's father-in-law who is dealing with Alzheimers 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 has a new cast on his broken foot, that will be on for the next three weeks, pray for patience in his healing and that the cast will be removed at that time.

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.