

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *All Are Welcome*

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,

rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

Refrain

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Refrain

3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:

a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

Refrain

4 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

Refrain

5 Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

Refrain**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. Almighty God, in the self-giving love of Christ you have revealed the path of salvation; give us courage to deny our selfish desire and bear the cross of discipleship, that we may live as those who have no fear of death and receive the joy of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the LORD is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

SECOND READING: ROMANS 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflinching standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

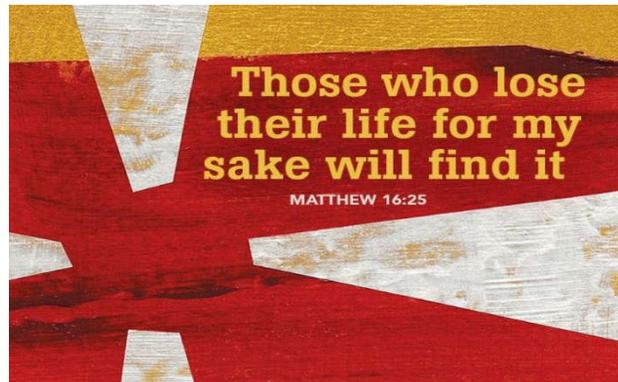
PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

By the power of your Spirit, O Lord, *Jer. 15:16*
make your Word become a joy to us
and the delight of our hearts. **Amen.**

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 16:21-28**Glory to you, O Lord.**

After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a "rock."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON PASTOR LEENA****Take up my cross?**

When we study the bible in bible classes one of the first questions to get the conversation started is, What stood out to you in this reading. Today starting at verse 24, stood out for me.

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. "

Take up their cross and follow me. What does this say to me?

A Cross is a symbol, wearing a cross identifies one of the Christian faith, usually.

Do we see someone saying I suffer and it is my cross to bear?

Do we see someone saying, I live by the light of God, I follow Jesus?

Our world is filled with symbols, Commercial Logos are very popular. Many consumers will only wear or purchase a certain brand. Its important to their identity in some way.

The "Nike Swoosh", for instance, graphics designer Caroline Davidson¹ came up with the Nike Swoosh, a check mark shape that is fluid and indicates movement and speed. The image also resembles a wing and hinted at the brand name, Nike, named after the Greek Goddess of Victory. High end, quality sportswear.

Another recognizable symbol/logo is "Lacoste" the little green crocodile. It is a French company, founded in 1933 by tennis player René Lacoste

¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carolyn Davidson

and André Gillier. It sells clothing, footwear, sportswear, eyewear, leather goods, perfume, towels and watches. The company can be recognized by its green crocodile logo.² René Lacoste, the company's founder, was nicknamed "the Crocodile" by fans because of his tenacity on the tennis court. While thousands of people around the world wore "alligator shirts," or other items the emblem always had a deeper significance for Lacoste's friends who knew of its origin and meaning.

Another clothing line you might see a lot of is GAP, the name came from the growing differences between children and adults, called "the generation gap",³

Even though it has been popular since the hippie movement of the 60s, personally I could not understand why I would buy a sweatshirt with the GAP logo. No offense intended, it's just me.

My point is, what does wearing symbols or labels say about us? Do people identify with the quality of the product, or is it a status symbol?

Are people identified by what they wear? Or their character?

This bring me back to the cross in Verse 24 of today's gospel says: "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

²⁶For 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?

Jesus tells his disciples to bear their cross to follow him. What does it mean to bear your cross? Let's first consider what bearing your cross is not. When facing a difficult circumstance, people often say, "I guess that's a cross I have to bear," generally with a poor-pitiful-me tone of voice. This is not bearing your cross. When people speak about bearing a cross in this manner, they are speaking about circumstances and situations that, given the

choice, they wouldn't choose it. What they might say instead is they understand their situation and will find a way to deal with it. I don't say this to make light of the unfortunate and tragic situations we find ourselves in, but it's just not bearing a cross in the sense Jesus intended. When we suffer from sickness, disease, and mental anguish, it's a horrible misfortune, but it's not bearing a cross. Bearing the cross is a choice. Bearing the cross is a voluntary form of sacrificial obedience that identifies us completely with Jesus Christ. Bearing our cross is not making the best of a situation or circumstance. It is something we deliberately take up and bear. We don't usually like that, for we would rather wear a cross than bear a cross.

The cross is a symbol of Christianity that holds special meaning for every one of us who identify with Jesus Christ. Whenever we see a cross, it speaks to us of Christ's determination to do His Father's will by dying for us on Calvary.

I appreciate the way theologian Karoline Lewis puts it, that to carry (or bear) one's cross is to carry the choices and burdens and realities of a life that has made a commitment. A commitment to a way of life that is committed to bring about the Kingdom of God here and now. When we make a commitment to live as people of God, carrying the cross, following, it is about a commitment that is important to us that makes a statement of our life. I would like to suggest that to live a committed life like this, it is about continuing to grow in our faith and making a difference to grow where you find yourself to be. That's the call for us as people of God. May that journey that you are on be mindful that is how we make a difference for people of this world who need to know and need to see that the Good News is lived out in each of our lives.

The cross is all about making a choice. The cross is about discipline and commitment. It isn't easy, but it draws us closer to Christ and makes us more Christ-like, for never has a symbol of such pain and

² /en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lacoste

³ www.gapinc.com/en-us/about/history

torture been resurrected into a symbol of never-ending love and hope.

If anyone wants to be a follower of Jesus Christ, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. Amen

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY Lift High the Cross

Refrain

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod, our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

Refrain

2 All newborn servants of the Crucified bear on their brows the seal of him who died.

Refrain

3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree, as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee.

Refrain

4 So shall our song of triumph ever be: praise to the Crucified for victory!

Refrain

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. Help us to work together, bring reconciliation. Help us overcome evil with good.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Ever present God, as we plan to gather in your name, and prepare to re-enter our churches, however strange or unsettling our new practices may seem at first, help us remember our faithful worship will always be holy, always pleasing to you.

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

OFFERINGS RECEIVED DURING CHURCH CLOSURES DURING PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

Let us give as God has so abundantly given to us.

The Church has received in the mail, through auto bank giving, and personal delivery your gifts and offerings. Thank you.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/DEDICATION

God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The blessing of God be with you,
the love of Jesus fill you,
and the power of the Holy Spirit sustain you,
now and forevermore.

SENDING SONG *For the Beauty of the Earth* (LBW 561)

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Refrain

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light: ***Refrain***

3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild: ***Refrain***

SENDING THE CHURCH INTO THE WORLD

We take up our cross to follow in the way of Jesus,
our Lord.

Go in peace to love and serve.

Thanks be to God.



This worship service is Pre-recorded each week in the chapel of Malcom, Deavitts and Binhammer Funeral home. You will find it posted on their webpage <https://mdbfuneralhome.com/79/Messages-of-Comfort-from-our-Clergy.html>

Links can be sent to your email and are posted on the Grace Facebook page.
Call Pastor Leena to get the link.

ON Television you will find
**St. Peter's Evg. Lutheran Church,
Kitchener Waterloo**
Broadcast on CTV, Sunday at 10:00 a.m. EDT

Questions for Reflection

What does it mean for me to take up my cross and follow Jesus? How do I practice that in my daily life? How is the cross I am asked to bear related to the cross of Jesus?

Do I express my answer well enough merely by good deeds, attending Church, wearing a cross?

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord Jesus, I do not know what crosses may arise before me, but give me courage to resist systems of injustice, strength to reject structures of oppression, and wisdom to unmask powers of evil, that I may live as a faithful disciple whose life belongs to you. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord Jesus,
if I have lived this day for worldly gain,
recenter my life,
set me on the path of sincere discipleship,
and lead me in the way that leads to eternal life. Amen.



Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Since 1946, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has sent aid to people experiencing need around the world. CLWR's We Care program continues to ship thousands of urgently needed supplies every year through the donations of dedicated congregations, service groups and individuals like you. Your gifts of love are received by people affected by poverty or displaced by war, hunger or natural disaster, and are vital to the operation of hospitals, schools, refugee camps and development programs. Your support changes lives.

CLWR Living & Learning Kit

Your gift includes tools for learning like pencils, crayons, notebooks and toys, and also health items like soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Suggested donation: \$15

**QUILTS AND BLANKETS**

CLWR has proudly shipped hundreds of thousands of blankets and handmade quilts around the world. These cherished gifts provide comfort, warmth and shelter, and are a compelling example of Canadian compassion. Quilting groups have supported the work of CLWR for decades and we thank them for their dedicated service. • Adult quilts should be approximately 1.5 x 2 metres (approximately 60 x 80 inches) and of mediumweight and thickness (approximately two kilograms or four pounds). • Simple and sturdy machine-sewn quilts are best. • Tie layers together with yarn or floss. • Smaller children's quilts and blankets are welcome. • Blankets should be clean and in good condition. Also donations of \$5 towards each blanket we ship is very welcome.

St. Peter's Church has been collecting Blankets, in good condition, for the CLWR donation this fall. There is still time to drop off blankets to the church in October. We will pack up the blankets after a dedication CLWR service to be scheduled.

Rankin Parish will start a month-long campaign in September to collect donations for the Health kits and Student kits. Each kit is if \$15.

Mark your donations for CLWR Student kits, Hygiene kits or Shipping and place in offering plate. Donations help cover international shipping costs and are always appreciated. Please mark your cheque "ocean freight."