

Abundant Life Lutheran Church

3486 Raleigh Street, East St. Paul, Manitoba, R2E 1B7
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**Image above from Sundays & Seasons*

Where ALL are welcome!

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Lectionary 13, Year A

4th Sunday after Pentecost

June 28, 2020

Abundant Life Lutheran Church
3486 Raleigh Street
East St. Paul, MB R2E 1B9

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<https://www.facebook.com/abundantlifelutheran/> or <https://www.instagram.com/abundantlifelutheran/>

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you direct our lives by your grace, and your words of justice and mercy reshape the world. Mold us into a people who welcome your word and serve one another, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING - Hebrews 9:1-14

9 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ² For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. ⁴ In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail.

⁶ Such preparations having been made, the priests go continually into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties; ⁷ but only the high priest goes into the second, and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still

standing. ⁹This is a symbol of the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰but deal only with food and drink and various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right.

¹¹But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹²he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

SERMON

Grace to you and peace in Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Amen.

Over the last four weeks we've been making our way through an ancient sermon that we call the Letter to the Hebrews. It's this incredible sermon, with all of these colourful images and metaphors about Jesus. Last week we explored this image of Jesus as our high priest, which is definitely an unfamiliar image for us. We're used to talking about Jesus as a teacher, a healer, a miracle-worker, a friend... Jesus as a high priest is probably a real stretch for most of us.

Our reading today from Hebrews 9 really digs deeper into this image of Jesus as our high priest. And it starts off by taking this deep dive into the ceremonies and rituals of the ancient Jewish people. You see, it all starts in the Book of Exodus, when the LORD delivers the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. And the LORD leads Moses and the people to Mount Sinai, where God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. Now on Mount Sinai, God gives Moses all sorts of instructions – not just the Ten Commandments, but all sorts of rules about how to live together as the people of God. And along with all this, God gives Moses the blueprints for the Tabernacle.

Now the Tabernacle was basically this portable Temple. It had an outer court, and a big altar for making sacrifices, and a large tent with two rooms, divided by a heavy curtain or veil. The first room was called the Holy Place, and inside there were lampstands and a table with the Bread of the Presence. And the Jewish priests would enter the Holy Place to perform their daily rituals. But the second room – was especially sacred. It was called the Holy of Holies. And no one could enter the Holy of Holies *except* the High Priest, and he could only enter it on one day of the year – Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. And Jewish people worldwide still celebrate Yom Kippur today, with fasting, and prayer, and repentance, and forgiving one another.

Now the Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant, which was a large golden chest that held the Ten Commandments. And if you'd like to earn some bonus points this week, you can learn more about the Ark of the Covenant by watching Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark. Which isn't entirely factual, but it makes for a good story.

Now the Holy of Holies was so sacred because it was the dwelling place of the Presence of the LORD. And the Book of Exodus says that, as Israel was wandering through the desert for forty years, the LORD would lead them in the form of a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. And when they made camp, the presence of the LORD – that pillar of cloud and fire - would dwell upon the tabernacle, and so everyone would know that God was right there, with them.

And so the Tabernacle was like a physical symbol of God's covenant with Israel. And that's the reason why the author of Hebrews spends so much time talking about it – because of God's covenant. Now a covenant is like a promise or a commitment. It's sacred. A marriage is like a covenant – when two people gather in front of their community, and they make promises to one another, to be faithful to one another, and they exchange rings as physical symbols of those promises – that's a covenant! And at Mount Sinai, God makes a covenant with the people of Israel. God says, "Here are my commandments. This is how you are to live as my people. And as long as you honour these commandments, then I will be among you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God."

And so the Tabernacle reminds Israel of God's covenant with them. That no matter where they go, wherever they set up camp, God is there with them, dwelling among them, in the pillar of cloud and fire. It's this powerful symbol of God's faithfulness to the people of Israel.

So now that the Tabernacle no longer exists, does that mean that God's covenant is no longer valid? Absolutely not, says the author of Hebrews! Because God has made a new covenant – a covenant prophesied in the Book of Jeremiah, when God said, "I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall *all* know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and remember their sins no more."

And God has made this new covenant with God's people through Jesus Christ. That *through* Jesus' sacrifice - through his death on the cross and his rising from the grave – that God's covenant is now for *all people* – not just for those who have been born as children of Israel, but for you and me as well!

You know, I wonder if we sometimes feel like the people of Israel these days, as they wandered through the desert. We have left the familiar behind – we are in this new, uncertain world, a world that is unfamiliar and strange. We used to have a beautiful, sturdy building to meet each other and worship together. And now, though our building still exists, we must instead worship through this strange and intangible thing called the internet. It's not the same. We're grieving the loss of what was, and we're not sure of what comes next.

But God's promise to us – God's covenant with us – remains. Just as the people of Israel were reminded of God's presence when they saw the pillar of cloud and fire dwelling among them – in the same way, God has made a promise to us, to be with us, even in this time of disconnection. That even though we are a community scattered, Christ is among us, Jesus is in our midst. Because through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God *has* made a new covenant with us, a covenant that can never be broken:

“I will put my law within you, and write it on your hearts.
And you will be my people.
And I will be your God.”
Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, send your Spirit to guide and sustain congregations and faith communities across the globe in this time. We pray especially for our own congregations in the ELCIC, our Synod, our Bishop, Jason, and our national bishop, Susan, as well as our partners in the Anglican Church of Canada. We also pray for our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon. Hear us, O God,
Your mercy is great.

God of wisdom, we give you thanks for students as they complete the school year. Bless students who are graduating this year. We especially pray for your blessing upon the Grade 12 Grads in our Shared Ministry: Kaden Azevedo, Robbie Gerstner, Colin Schmidt, Ryan Werner, and Ashleigh Laubstead. Guide them as they look to the future. Hear us, O God,
Your mercy is great.

God of all nations, we give you thanks for our own country, Canada. We are thankful for the peace and freedom that we enjoy, and for the great diversity of people that live

here. We also acknowledge where we as a nation have fallen short. We continue to tolerate racism and prejudice; we have often failed to care for those who are most vulnerable; we have not done enough to dismantle our systems of colonization; and we have not done enough to lower our environmental impact and move toward a green future. Teach us to transform our society into one where all people can live together in harmony with one another, and with your creation. Hear us, O God,
Your mercy is great.

Healing God, be with all who are affected by the COVID-19 virus. We pray for every country affected by this pandemic, and especially for our own country, Canada, and our neighbours, the United States. We pray for countries in Latin America and Africa who are experiencing rising levels of infection. Heal those who are ill. Hold those who are dying close in your loving arms. Comfort those who grieve. Give strength to families whose loved ones have fallen ill. We pray, O Lord, for a quick and merciful end to this pandemic. Hear us, O God,
Your mercy is great.

God of love, we pray for all in our faith family who are in need of your healing hand, especially *Brett, Kurt, Irene, Steffie, Bill, Lorraine, Chris, Karen & Rolf, Becky, Jon, Michelle, Lynne, Ben, Amanda and Zarah*, as we name them in our hearts or out loud before you. (*A brief silence*) We also pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of Alma & Ernie Streilen. Hear us, O God,
Your mercy is great.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOUTH

Please support Luther Village by donating in support of SLAW youth team at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/s/xecGC> Online donations for the LV Bikeathon can be made until June 30.

UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

July 5 – online with Pastor Jeremy
July 12 – online with Bishop’s message
July 19 - online with Bishop’s message
July 26 – online with Bishop’s message

UPCOMING PASTOR VACATION

July 6-19 and August 10-16 - Pastor Jeremy will be away on vacation

OUTDOOR COMMUNION SERVICE

You are invited to Prince of Peace's Outdoor Summer Communion Services Sundays - June 28, July 26, August 23 (11:15 - 11:45 AM) Your safety is of utmost importance. Come and enjoy yourself! Bring your own lawn chairs, water, bug spray. When you arrive, you will be asked some questions and to fill out a COVID self-assessment form.

FUTURE CAMPFIRES AT ALL

Next couple campfire events scheduled for July 5 and August 9, 2020. More info to come!

NEW EXTERIOR SIGN IS UP!

The new exterior sign is now up at ALL! Suggestions for the future signage (phrases and humour is encouraged!) may be submitted to Kim at chair@abundantlifelutheran.ca Any volunteers wanting to help with updating the phrases and wording may also notify Kim.

HELPING THOSE IN NEED THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC

The Community Christmas Hamper Program for communities north of the perimeter will be providing grocery store gift cards for people in need of food during this pandemic. To help those living outside of the perimeter which are not eligible to access Winnipeg Harvest and are struggling at this time. If you would like to donate to help with this cause you can go online to abundantlifelutheran.ca and under the donate now button choose "Hamper Program". Or click on the link below:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/873687115RR0001-abundant-life-lutheran-church-inc/campaign/hamper-program/> *We will only be accepting cash donations.

OFFERING

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a financially stressful time for many people. At the same time, in order to continue the ministry of our church, we are relying on our members to continue to give regularly. Please consider how you are able to continue to support our church during this time. There are many ways to give to our church, even if we aren't meeting in person:

- Consider signing up for PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance)
 - to sign up for PAR, please email office@abundantlifelutheran.ca for more information
- Donating online through the "Online offering" button on our website
- Sending weekly or monthly cheques in the mail to:
Abundant Life Lutheran Church
3486 Raleigh Street
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We are thankful for your continued support!

RIDE FOR REFUGE IN SUPPORT OF THE URBAN – SAT, OCT 3/20

Who's interested in joining a team from ALL? Join our chair Kim riding her bike for this fundraiser. You can cycle, walk, do arts and crafts, other fitness, board games or whatever you want to dream up in a freestyle category. Let Kim know and she will register you as part of the team in support of the Urban. Pastor Jeremy has already signed up to join the team.

ALL Contact Information:

Jeremy Langner, Pastor - jeremy@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Kim Scherger, Core Leadership Chair - chair@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Lisa van Dijk, Director of Youth Ministries - splc-youth@live.ca

Rylee Innes, Administrative Secretary - office@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Lori Templeton, Financial Secretary - office@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Rick Scherger, Communications Coordinator - rickscherger@fatecommunications.ca

Other ways to stay in touch:

- *Checkout our social media sites, Facebook, Instagram & Youtube Channel*
- *Subscribe to receive email blasts of important information & Online Worship info*
- *Have a look at our website abundantlifelutheran.ca*

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Jeremy's Hours

Tuesday 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM / Wednesday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Administrative Secretary Hours

Tuesday & Thursday Evenings

REACHING OUT

Are you in distress? Here are a few numbers that you may find helpful.

911 Emergency

Dial 911

Winnipeg Police Service Non-Emergency Line

1-204-986-6222

Health Links (Info Sante)

204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.

Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba

24-7 support line for anyone experiencing anxiety: 204-925-0600

Klinic Crisis Line

204-786-8686 or 1-888-322-3019 / TTY 204-784-4097

Manitoba Suicide Line "Reason to Live"

1-877-435-7170 (1-877-HELP170)

Kids Help Phone (national line available to Manitoba Youth)

1-800-668-6868

Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line

204-786-8631 or 1-888-292-7565 / TTY 204-784-4097

