



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Lent II **March 1, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, the One who died for us. Amen.

It was noon hour on a warm summer day in early September. I arrived at the Seminary to attend an afternoon course. The small parking lot adjacent to the school was filled to capacity and I waited patiently for the next available parking spot. There, walking down the stairs to the lot was a familiar face. It was Paul Bosch. Pastor Bosch was called to the Seminary in the eighties as Lecturer in Liturgics and Spirituality as well as the arts of worship. He later became Dean of the Chapel. I informed Paul that I was now enrolled in Seminary full-time. If you know Paul, he had a famous smile and I was an honoured recipient of it that day. He also said these

words, “You are entering an exciting time of the church.” I couldn’t disagree! Besides……I wanted his parking spot.

This was nearly seventeen years ago. Yes, he was right! We were entering an exciting time for the church. Changes in the church had already started: new contemporary music was being offered; statements on abortions had been developed; discussions on sexual exploitation, human trafficking and same-sex blessings were taking place. The world was changing so fast the church had trouble keeping up.

Change. Who likes change? Put your hand up if you like change. Thank you; just as I suspected very few.

It seems we have a gut reaction to the idea of change, especially in church. We think it’s a negative thing, a scary thing. The idea of change opens up doors that can seem risky. What might happen next? Often, it appears we would rather not know. It is safer to avoid it, to keep our head in the sand and maybe, just maybe it will go away.

The story of the call of Abram is about change. God does not ask Abram to leave, but rather tells him to go. Not in a negative or angry way, but without room for debate. Go! Leave your country and your home. Leave your cherished ideas, the things you hold true and dear to your heart to. In Abram’s day change was a negative thing. To leave meant “Go and don’t plan on ever coming back.” It’s as if God said to Abram, I want you to leave everything you know, everything you are familiar with. It is that basic; that simple; even that frightening. God simply says “Go.” And Abram goes trusting God is with him.

In the Gospel reading we find Nicodemus in the midst of change.

Nicodemus was a leader of the Jews; a Pharisee. In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees were the well-known group who challenged Jesus. Nicodemus had been watching Jesus and watching carefully. He has witnessed his miracles; he was no doubt present when Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple. Nicodemus admits the signs and wonders have shown Jesus to be one who has come from God. He calls Jesus Rabbi, and comes to learn from him, and we guess to make some decision about him. And so, Nicodemus comes as a sincere seeker of change.

Here is where Abram and Nicodemus differ. Abram goes; does not question but trusts God. Nicodemus goes into the night, into the dark to find Jesus; to find out more. He interacts with Jesus. Jesus responds by saying we must all be born anew; born from above.

Nicodemus to inherit the Kingdom, you must change. Nicodemus is confused by taking the metaphor literally. He questions the Son of God.

“Do not be astonished,” Jesus says to Nicodemus, “that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

What did Jesus just say? What did Nicodemus just hear? Jesus declared the Spirit and those born of the Spirit, blows where it chooses and this gives Nicodemus and us tremendous

freedom, yes freedom; when we think about how best to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented to us in this time and in this place.

Changes in our culture have demanded changes in how we worship, preach, and organize ourselves as the church. We need to recognize that people's lives are much busier, even frantic, than a generation or two ago. "Time saving" innovations like email have all but eliminated and sense of the Sabbath and as a result, work knows no bounds. Sports and other activities that used to treat Sundays as sacred, have now claimed this precious family time part of the calendar as prime real estate for additional practices and or tournaments.

And then there is what I will call cultural duty; doing things, like going to church simply because we're supposed to has eroded into a culture of discretion. People today, after given all the options, exercise discretion to determine what activities are most rewarding.

Taking this into account, the emerging generation does not and will not go to church simply because their parents did, but only if the hour on Sunday meaningfully connects to the other 167 hours of the week.

Cultural discretion is a concern and does bring on anxiety for church goers and church leaders. The tried and tested framework that once was successful tends to be no longer: worship that lasted an hour, the three point sermon, the stewardship campaign, the theologically grounded lectionary. These practices that once provided reliable patterns for our lives, recipes to organize our lives, what it meant to be the church, are no longer clear road maps. And we, we the church and we, St. Timothy's feel like we are sailing in uncharted waters and driving down unmarked and foreign roads.

To some degree, I believe Abram and Nicodemus felt this way too. But they were not alone and neither are we. The Spirit accompanied and empowered them and us to face a future that we may feel is uncertain. You see, the anxiety that *there no road map!* – can be transformed into excitement *there is no road map!* Which means we are free. Free to experiment, risk, fail – yes fail – learn and grow because the Spirit of Christ will blow us in directions we hadn't imagined.

My friends in Christ. Pastor Paul was right, "It is an exciting time for the church" if we let go, if we are free, free to follow God's Spirit. "Trust in me" God said to Abram and Nicodemus. "Trust in me" God is saying to us, "Trust in me and go!"

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC COMMUNIQUE

In Our Prayers Today.....Nancy Briscoe, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

We are doing it again! Lenten Food Drive – in support of St. Joseph's Food Bank starts today and will continue until Easter. If you are able, please support this drive as the need is great. Watch as the table in the entrance grows with food as we support others. (Please check the expiry dates on the items.) Also, clean, empty egg cartons (one dozen size) are now being accepted as these can be re-used.

Please note.....cash donations should be given directly to them and not through offering envelopes. Thank you.

Camp Lutherlyn Camper Sponsorships – St. Timothy's is sponsoring up to 5 children/youth for 1 Week each at Camp Lutherlyn this summer. You can obtain an Application Form from the church office and you can register your child online at lutherlyncamp.ca and then going to the Registration Page.

Lenten Services at St. Timothy's

Our Lenten journey with our Lord to the cross has begun. This season of Lent prepares us for our Easter celebrations. It reminds us that to rise with Jesus we have to first die with Jesus.

Midweek Lenten Services will be held each Wednesday during Lent at 7:00 pm. We will be joined by the congregation of The Parish of the Valley Anglican. Come, bring a friend and worship and then join in a time of coffee and fellowship in Jubilee Hall following the service.

