



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 12 **August 16, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

The sermon for this morning is provided by:

Rev. Katherine Gohm, Assistant to the Bishop of the Eastern Synod and a story from Pastor Bruce

I greet you in the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour. Amen.

And so, this religious debate between Jesus and the Pharisees on what defiles is an interfamilial argument; differing viewpoints on what defiles. It's a debate, however, that cannot stay there. Religious faith and understanding is to be lived out, in the world, through daily encounters. The scene shifts in Matthew's gospel today, but the topic stays the same. The meeting between Jesus and his disciples with the Canaanite woman in the area of Tyre and Sidon is where, pardon my use of fossil fuel product imagery, the rubber hits the road. A mother's desperate plea to find healing for her child is where Jesus' own teaching about defilement, about what comes from the heart, must be lived out.

As preacher Barbara Brown Taylor writes in a sermon on this same text, all the talk about clean and unclean, about what defiles, is really talk about barriers and lines drawn. The gospel hands them to us: it is a woman who approaches Jesus, a Canaanite, a common ancestor "othered" through occupation and force, a pagan worshiper of Baal and other gods, an outsider, separated through ethnicity and religious practice.

We hear her desperate plea: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David." What she receives is silence. Yet her anguished words keep ringing out - so much so that the disciples are irritated by her and want her sent away. But she keeps shouting into that barren space, out of love for her child. This mother, this Canaanite woman, is the conclusion of Jesus' debate with the Pharisees.

In this scene shift are we getting the same frustrated Jesus? Because only when Jesus' disciples say something to him does he respond - not to the woman's desperation - but rather to lecture her on his mission: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Her sad plight does not seem to be enough to move him. Recognizing who he is, this insistent mother kneels before him, praying, pleading. Then, we hear some of the harshest words that leave Jesus' mouth: "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Not only does he not respond to her desperate appeal, he insults her while remaining untouched by her circumstance. Children, that is the Israelites, are to get the food, to be included in the community of God. Dogs, this woman and her kind, are not meant to be fed and are excluded from the community of God.

It's hard to understand this Jesus. I would prefer this encounter between Jesus and the woman to be a literary device by Matthew; tension which drives the narrative forward. That way, Jesus' reputation, in my eyes, would remain intact: that is, his response to people was always compassionate and inclusive, as I've both preached and proclaimed.

But what if Jesus *is* frustrated? What if we consider that a very human Jesus also struggles with who is in and who is out, with barriers erected and drawn lines?

The Canaanite woman keeps pushing. She takes on the insult and says, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." More than a smart comeback, she is saying, "I know who you are and I believe in what you can do."

Jesus hears. He hears her faith. With her unrelenting urging, Matthew tells us that Jesus steps beyond the traditions of his religious understanding and moves across seemingly barren spaces to encounter her and her need.

International Youth Day was on Wednesday, August 12 with a theme, *Different Contexts, Common Aspirations*. I cannot help but think about the youth and young people in our church and across the globe.

Are we listening to their pleas?

Do we understand what it means for them to be young today?

Do we trust our younger selves and remember what we dreamed of and hoped for?

Do our encounters across generations open our hearts to what they dream and hope for?

Or are we too caught up in lines drawn, barriers erected, to invite young people fully into our shared life together? To incorporate their experiences, wisdom, and understanding into our common life - both in and outside of the church. Perhaps the rubber of our faith hasn't always hit the road of the gospel. Perhaps we have not let ourselves be shaped by the encounter.

I am reminded of time at my first parish. (Pastor Bruce's story.)

Over time, myself and others of the congregation had noticed garbage and cigarette butts appearing at the back of the church. It was a quarter to twelve on this day and I was getting ready to leave the office for home to have lunch. I began to hear noises coming from the back of the church. I looked out the office window and couldn't see a thing. There was a shed situated at the back of the church which blocked my view. I decided to investigate. As I approached the back door, the noise, the voices were louder! Quickly I opened the door and found a number of students numbering about twenty, "hanging out" having lunch and of course smoking. They were shocked seeing me.....the pastor! They began to scatter like ants. I called out, "Stop right there!". Some did; others kept on running. I told them who I was and my comment was that they were welcome to have their lunch here and hang out; just do me a favour.....clean up your garbage especially your butts! I am hearing this from the members.

With that, one of the students broke the silence and he said in a loud voice, "Hey guys! Listen to the pastor. We are welcome here just clean up when we leave." Some left. Some finished their lunch. There was nothing left behind.

My Friends in Christ. That day the line in the sand was eased. A bridge was mended and built stronger. Hearts were opened, listened to. A gift was given.

May we be the ones who erase the line. May our rubber of faith hit the road of the Gospel. May we be the ones who welcomes the stranger.

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.

Dismissal

Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Joanna Spencer, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Parents of Post Secondary Students – Applications for the J. Wilmot Harvey Educational Bursary are available in the church office and must be submitted to the Church Secretary by September 30, 2026.

The Venasse Family tragically lost their home and all their belongings the morning of July 26. Kaitlyn, Eric and their daughters Ava and Rhea were able to escape. The family have been part of our community in recent years. Kaitlyn is the daughter of Karen and James Kutschke.

How can we help?? Throughout the month of August, a jar will be available in the narthex of the church for you to make a monetary gift to support the family. Please note, these donations are not receiptable and go directly to the family. Thank you for your caring acts of kindness.