



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 12 **August 31, 2025**

Prayer of the Day

O God, you resist those who are proud and give grace to those who are humble. Give us the humility of your Son, that we may embody the generosity of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 14:1, 7-14

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

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

We find it easy to connect with Jesus as a healer, as our savior, as a teacher and even as a prophet. But Jesus as a countercultural revolutionary, someone who speaks against the way our society works? That's harder to stomach, especially when we realize that he is preaching against behavior that we engage in regularly.

Our lives are filled with subtle status signals and we use them to communicate who we are and how we want others to see us; the corner office with the window, who gets the Employee – of – the – Month parking space, or how many friends "like" us on Facebook. Our clothing, what car we drive (or whether we have a car to drive), what neighborhood we live in, where we

socialize—it all sends a message about our worth and prestige, usually based on our economic power. We buy a rung on the ladder as often as we “earn” it.

So, when it comes to this story just read, I think it’s rather difficult for most of us to imagine the reaction Jesus’ words would have elicited. The story is rather “humdrum” polite subtle advice. But it isn’t. To Jesus’ first-century hearers, living in an honour-shame society that was intensely sensitive to issues of status and recognition, it would have seemed ultimately offensive.

There were few things that would be more humiliating than to have a host ask you to move to a lower position at a social gathering. You would feel like you’d been named an upstart, someone who thought too much of him or herself, one who didn’t know his or her place, and at the physical act of standing and moving lower would mirror the drop in your prestige and social status.

Jesus didn’t stop with merely offering advice on social etiquette. He continued by cautioning his listeners not to take into account the social payoff or reward of their invitations and hospitality. Jesus says they should not invite to dinner those who already respect them or who are in a position to reward from their hospitality or who would invite them back in return, but rather to invite the outcast – the poor, the sick, the socially undesirable.

While living in Kitchener, my routine for Saturday morning was simple: go to the market and have breakfast at a restaurant. The establishment was close to home and many times I sat at a window table. There I could watch the activity in the parking lot or people coming into the restaurant. I enjoy studying people and their habits. One day, I observed a group of three sitting at another table. They were within, what you would say “ear shot” and I couldn’t help but to comment on their conversation. Their bantering momentarily ceased. They turned, looked at me and began to laugh. The next Saturday I was invited to join them at their table; I was the stranger.

I left these friends when Charlotte and I moved to Brockville. Now Brockville had a very small market – all out doors and only operated from spring to fall. Rarely did I go to the market, the selection was limited but Charlotte did encourage me to go for breakfast. Very few eateries were open early Saturday morning. Jon’s Restaurant was within walking distance of the parsonage and there I became a regular. The restaurant was rather cozy so one left the table for couples and larger groups. People who were “singles” enjoyed Mike, the owner and his company at the counter. One day, Mike introduced me to the gentleman sitting beside me at the counter. His name was Larry. Larry was a Brockvillian and a famous artist of the area. The next week he invited me to sit next to him at the counter. I was the stranger yet in time we became friends.

We are truly creatures of habit and coming to Pembroke it only seemed natural that I would search out the market and look for a restaurant to have breakfast. I tried a couple of restaurants and decided to give one of them a second chance. Sitting at the counter, watching the news channel, sipping on a cup of coffee, waiting for my breakfast I heard a voice

something to this effect, "If you want to gain knowledge you are welcome at the table." I knew this person! I picked up my coffee and made my way to the back of the restaurant. There I took a place at the table and was introduced to the others. Was I the outcast, the poor, the sick the socially undesirable? In their eyes yes to some degree but I knew I was the stranger and I was invited and I was welcomed. They shared with me their blessings and I was and still am blessed by them.

Isn't this the whole life of Jesus? Jesus' life was centered on inviting in the presence of God to those who neither expect nor deserve such an invitation. And he expects us to do the same. God expects us to stop counting the costs, benefits, and rewards of our actions and live from a sense of abundance and blessing.

I believe Jesus is pushing us today to consider who is missing from our tables, to examine who we have written off, who we value less. God wants all of God's children, from the youngest to the oldest, around the table in order to experience the Kingdom and it is up to us, Jesus disciples, God's helpers to invite and share our blessings.

My Friends in Christ. I wonder what it would be like to live into the freedom to stop calculating our social prestige and stop worrying about what others think and simply be kind to everyone around us, particularly those who are not often the recipients of kindness. What would it be like if we started to give and bless others. What would it look like at work, at school, and at the places we volunteer or socialize, to look out for those who live in the margins and invite them into our lives. I wonder what it will look like when the last seat is filled at the table. I wonder.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us.....

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.

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STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....

Sheila Zadow-Purdy, Danny Schultz, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori, and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Crisis in the Holy Land...the ELCIC National Office and Eastern Synod are launching an appeal to support the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). Our goal is to raise \$50,000 to assist in supporting this vital work that embodies faith, resilience and hope of a just peace. More information can be found on the "Our World" bulletin board or at <https://elcic.ca/holy-land/>. Donations can be made through your offering envelope or virtual number by noting ELCJHL Appeal on it. Thank you for supporting our friends.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Receiving God's gift of baptism at the font this morning is Laelynn Kaylor Marie Gutzeit-Molsontait, daughter of Serena Gutzeit-McMillan and Dakota Molsontait.

We welcome Laelynn into the body of Christ and our community of faith and rejoice with the Gutzeit-McMillan and Molsontait families on this special occasion.

