



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 13 **August 23, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Lesson: Isaiah 51:1-6

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the Lord will comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

Second Lesson: Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

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

Who do you say that I am?

With this question it seems that Jesus is taking a step back in his life and from his ministry. A pause. A time to reflect.

He had been traveling with the disciples. Teaching. Listening. Reaching out to people. A divine energy was being released into the world through him. An energy that included passion for justice. Healing and compassion for all people. Acceptance for the unacceptable. Yes, something special was happening in the life of Jesus. Yet even when good things are happening, it's important, to step back every now and then and ask: What is really happening? Where have I been? Where do I want to go? What is my life all about?

In a similar way, Jesus begins asking the disciples step-back questions. He asks: "What are people saying about me?" It's a good question. The disciples begin rattling off the results of the most recent public opinion poll: "A certain percentage of people say that you are John the Baptist, or at least like John the Baptist. And some think you're the second coming of the great prophet Elijah. And still others believe you're like Jeremiah or one of the great prophets from our tradition. In other words, Jesus, people are beginning to put you on the Mount Rushmore of Jewish prophets! You're really making a name for yourself. You're really going places, Jesus. Isn't that fantastic?"

How easy it would have been to stop there. Jesus was trending and going viral and lighting up social media in his first-century world. It all looked so positive. What more could he have wanted?

Yet, Jesus wasn't taking a poll. Jesus was trying to take the disciples to a deeper place. And that's why he turned to them and asked a more penetrating question. He said: "But who do **you** say that I am?"

This is the question of the week. This is the question that strikes the fear of God in us; doesn't it? Get it wrong and..... It is like the days of public examination before Confirmation Sunday. If the truth be known many of us would have been standing with disciples and with the crowds. We too would have been the ones who say Jesus is like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. It is not what we would confess today. When it comes time to answer the question in public, you and I are quick to join ourselves to Peter's insight.

I have to wonder if the disciples were in a quandary. They knew there was something special about their friend. They wanted to believe in God's Kingdom. Yet their actions did not acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah.

How often have you heard, "The disciples just don't get it." Remember last week's story of the Canaanite woman and her daughter who was tormented by a demon? The disciples urged Jesus to "send her away." Is that what Jesus taught? Grant it, Jesus wasn't having his best day either in this story but in the end he did instantly heal the daughter.

We too often sense this disconnect between our public confession and our every day actions. I recall when I was in the work place by Wednesday it could be a struggle to remember what I heard at church on Sunday; at times it was a struggle to live what I confessed on Sunday. Today, as a pastor, I too have bad days and for this I do ask for your forgiveness. But don't you feel that gap sometimes? Really.....it's not intentional and certainly not malice. We just want the words that we say on Sunday not just to align with the rest of our lives but actually matter day in and day out.

So.....let's start today.....this Sunday. Who do you say Jesus is? It is not just repeating the Creeds but in your lives; with your relationships, your time, your energy, your blessings.

What we actually **mean** when we say with Peter, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, the second member of the Trinity, light from light, very God from very God, begotten but not made.

My question I have for you is this, how would you describe Jesus to someone who never heard of him before: to a child, or adult or stranger who happened to ask you about Jesus?

So let me share with you who I believe Jesus is.

Jesus is God's way of showing us how much God loves us and all people. We are God's children. There are times when I think God is so big to us that we have a hard time connecting. So, God came to us in Jesus to live with us; to show just how God feels about us. Jesus reveals God's heart; a heart that aches when we suffer from depression and think seriously about ending our

lives; a heart that is upset and angry when a young black person is shot dead for no reason; a heart that is upset when violence tears apart the land we call "Holy"; a heart that loves us like an adoring parent who loves us unconditionally and is always eagerly waiting to welcome us home with grace, forgiveness and love.

Jesus came to show us the Kingdom of God. He came to show us what is possible. Jesus healed. Jesus fed the hungry people. Jesus refused to be satisfied with the status quo. Jesus invites us to do the same. Jesus' life and death shows us how much God loves us. His resurrection shows us that love is more powerful than death. In short, Jesus shows us that God's love wins!

My friends in Christ. After the hymn of the day we will share in saying the Apostles Creed. I don't think Jesus asks us to confess who we believe he is for his sake, but for the sake of others. It means that we try to live our lives filled with and sharing God's love and grace and power of the resurrection. It means that we live lives created by seeing God's heart in Jesus. 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.

Dismissal

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

Thanks be to God.

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.



*"you are Peter,
and on this rock,
I will build my church"*

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