



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 17 **September 20, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

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

Have you ever been present at a company year end awards ceremony? Most Improved Employee. Highest Profit of Sales Award. Salute to Loyalty Award. The list could go on and on and on. You watch as the last award is presented, “The Employee of the Year Award.” You sit up in your chair, poised to stand when you hear your name and.....your name wasn’t called! Your colleague stands and while making their way to centre stage you think, “wait a minute, I did more this year than this person has ever done in the past five years!” You begin to squirm with resentment. You watch other co-workers congratulate this person – extending accolade

after accolade – laughing, shaking hands, patting this person on the back. All the time, you wear a smile on your face. And finally, being a good “sport”, you make your way over to the person, acknowledging their accomplishment knowing they didn’t deserve the award any more than you did. And then quickly leave before someone has the chance to come to you and say, “Geez Harry, I thought for sure you would have received that award!”

Been there? Done that? Bought the t-shirt?

Often, we have to watch as someone else receives what we think we should be getting. Our nature wants to see things divided evenly. Everyone gets the same number of cherries on their piece of the Black Forest Cake. We want everyone to be treated fairly and with equality. And when this doesn’t happen – our blood turns green with envy. It is at this point the words, “It isn’t fair” come into our thought processes.

We hear this cry in today’s Parable of the Day Laborers or the Labourers in the Vineyard.

The landowner or more specifically, the owner of the vineyard, like those who own land today was doing pretty well in life. By contrast, the day labourers were pretty much at the bottom of the ladder. They would not have a regular job and would wander down to the employment office early in the morning and review the posting of employment. It was there they found that the landowner needed help for the day and was paying a daily wage of one denarius; about the same amount of money required to the family for a day.

It turns out, the landowner needed more help. He returns at nine in the morning and hires more labourers and doesn’t tell them the wage, only that he will treat them right. Again, he returns at noon; again, at three in the afternoon and finally a last time at five – odd don’t you think with only one hour left to the work day.

Evening comes and the landowner tells his manager to settle the accounts. The people who came last and only worked an hour were paid first. And here is the thing, they received a full day’s wage. Can you imagine the shocked look on their faces! And can you imagine what was going through the minds of the workers who laboured for the full twelve hours? The sound in their minds must have been, “cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching” with the bonus they should be receiving. But this doesn’t happen; they get the same and here begins the conflict.

Our world invites us to identify with those working in the gruelling, scorching heat of the sun all day – for twelve hours who deserve more and get the short end of the stick. “It isn’t fair!!” They are angry and we get it!

They demand to know what is going on. They expect the landowner to acknowledge the mistake and say, “Of course you should be paid more!” Instead, he calls it as it is, ““Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous? Ok, we know he is right but it still isn’t fair!

We have been told over and over again, since we were children: life isn’t fair. And here is the thing, Jesus isn’t telling us a parable about this world as it is, he is telling us a parable of the

kingdom as God wants it to be for us. A world where everyone is treated the same despite what they have or what they have given; a world where everyone is afforded the same dignity, respect and honour.

My Friends in Christ! The parable reminds us that we are called to be God's Kingdom in the world; where the last shall be first and the first will be last. Where God's goodness and generosity prevails. Where dignity, respect and honour is given and received in love for one another. We have been gifted and called to transform the world. Let's start today. The hour matters not. It is time to head into the vineyard. 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.....Casey Wierzbicki, Joanna Spencer, Marie Lenser, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, 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.

Offering Envelope Box Set Review.... The Finance Committee is issuing a survey letter to those who received a 2026 box set of offering envelopes. You are asked to identify how you would like to make future offerings starting in 2027. Options are described in the letter. Responses are due by October 13 to the Church Office or on-line using a provided QR code. Thank you.

Rally Sunday.....mark Sunday, September 27th on your calendar. Blessing of backpacks and activities for the children will take place during the service and a special fellowship following. You don't want to miss this Sunday!

Homemade frozen apple pies can be purchased today in Jubilee Hall following the service. Cost is \$15.00 each or 2 single serving pies for the same price! Proceeds will help off-set the cost of the new tables for Jubilee Hall. Thank you for your support.

Smile! In celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the congregation next year, it is time for a new Pictorial Directory. The dates for the photo sitting will be the week of October 4th. Callers will be contacting you to set up an appointment for your photograph. Keep working on your best smile.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Denbigh invites you to attend the closing service of their church on Sunday, October 4th at 2:00 pm. Please see the "Our Community" bulletin board.

Ottawa Valley Ministry Area Team invites you to....

Reformation Service on Sunday, October 18 at 3:00 pm at the Rankin Community Center. Guest preacher is Rev. Matthew Brown, Parish of the Valley. Dinner to follow at 5:00 pm. Tickets for the dinner are \$35.00 and available from the church office or Pastor Bruce until October 4th. Please see the "Our Community" bulletin board for more information.

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