



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 19 **October 19, 2025**

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, tireless guardian of your people, you are always ready to hear our cries. Teach us to rely day and night on your care. Inspire us to seek your enduring justice for all this suffering world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

The Holy Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

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

Navigating this week's parable from Luke calls for the wisdom of not one, but two wise elder statesmen from the ages—Yogi Berra and Winston Churchill.

From Yogi Berra, the famous catcher for the New York Yankees and later manager of the team and other teams in the Major Baseball League we learn, "When you get to the fork in the road, take it."

And from Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister during the Second World War who once said regarding the Soviet Union, that it was "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." Churchill's three-storied analogy detects three levels of frustrating confusion when it comes to figuring out what this parable means.

The riddle—a story about seeking and granting justice

The mystery—a lesson about God's ways and faith in God

The enigma—a lesson about persistence in prayer and hope

Pondering which way to go – go with Berra or go with Churchill – I decided to go with Yogi Berra and take the fork in the road!

What I find interesting about this parable is that the details of the situation are nearly non-existent. Luke reports Jesus saying there is an unjust judge and a widow demanding justice. That's it. No word on what her cause is, who has wronged her, or what she wants. And no details about the judge's reluctance to do so.

We know – not from the parable but from biblical and historical context – that there is a significant power differential between the two. She is a widow, among the most vulnerable in her society. Throughout the Bible, widows are regularly defended by God and commands that we, also, should care for, protect, and advocate for the widow. In this story we might also suppose that because she comes to the judge on her own, she has no advocate and so is doubly vulnerable. The judge sits at the other end of the spectrum, a male with authority and respectability and the power to grant or refuse requests. This is a true David (or perhaps Danielle) and Goliath story.

And it plays out that way. Because about the only other thing we know for sure is that her persistence pays off. Eventually, the judge grants her request not from a change of heart, or any particular sympathy for her or her cause, but from fear she will tarnish the judge. In Greek; black and blue! You might say, this widow was a tough old bird and that's how the judge saw her. She is like an angry little hen peck, peck, pecking, day after day, until he was black and blue. Perhaps every day after court the other judges were poking fun at him down at his favourite watering hole. To put an end of being the centre of attention; the judge gives in.

History is full of people whose success can be directly attributed to their persistence. His story claims that Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken tried to sell his chicken recipe over 1,000 times before it was eventually picked up. More heroic figures like Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela sought justice and social change through careful, thoughtful, bold persistence. If any of these people had gotten tired or burnt out and had given up—which likely crossed their minds from time to time—the world would be a very different place. The pursuit of justice requires perseverance; the ability of individuals and communities to persist in seeking justice can change the world.

The Gospel assures us that God is not like the unrighteous judge. God does not respond to our needs only when we have pestered so much that it would be easier to just give in. The Gospel says that God will bring us justice – “quickly” (Luke 18:8). So, how does God bring justice? How does God respond to our prayers? God did not settle a court case for this woman. God did not end slavery in the United States or pass legislation to protect the civil rights of all people; God did not end colonialism in India or Apartheid in South Africa.

That's our work. It's our job to persist, to advocate for ourselves when we feel helpless; to advocate for others when they are the most vulnerable. God's justice is much more inclusive than what can be achieved through legislation or courts. The Gospel promises us that God will respond to our prayers much faster than the unjust systems of society. If even an unrighteous

judge can be merciful in the face of a persistent woman, then how much more merciful is God who loves us and created us and knows every inch of our being.

We have a God who is always at work, changing hearts and minds, transforming lives, bringing dead things to life, turning the normal systems and power structures on their heads – making the weak strong and vulnerable powerful and giving resounding voice to those who have been ignored for too long.

God is in the cries of the helpless. God is with us all the time; encouraging us to keep on going back; keep fighting. So often we may be weak by the standards of society yet God sees us strong and full of value.

My friends in Christ. The hope that we have in God is not the same as the hope we have in society. Society will change; and through it all, God is with us. God's love for us will give us the strength to persist; and that God's justice will transform our lives and the hearts and minds of everyone in the whole world.

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.....

Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori, and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Ministerial Acts

Baptism

Theodore Edward Daniel Wallace, October 11, 2025
Son of Bailey Laird and Daniel Wallace

Funeral

Anna Peter, October 16, 2025. Age 93.