



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 19 **October 4, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet. er you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Homily

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

Charlotte and I, come from a time and place where one closes off the day by watching the late news. I will say, we are usually good for the first fifteen minutes and then its off to bed. News programs tend to lead with key worldly or national events that are sensational in nature; ones that draw you in. Currently we tend to be fixated on the trade war with our neighbours. The news would not be the news with out a piece of tragedy or violence reported. Shootings. Gang murders. Thursday evening, we both gasped at the updated story of the stabbing of the Flydubai pilot, who was stabbed by his co-pilot while flying from Dubai to Tel Aviv. The cabin door was locked at the time. Tragedy was averted by the actions of a few passengers on board

who over took the situation and landed the aircraft safely. Just the thought of what could have happened is terrifying for the 170 people on board the aircraft.

Violence. More and more threatening, inexplicable, seemingly random acts of violence. Which is part of what is most frightening. Not only is it becoming clear that there is no easy way to protect vulnerable people from violence, but also that we can discover no motive, which simultaneously makes this act of horrific violence more random and harder to understand and also makes us all feel more vulnerable. Who next? What next? When, not if.

Violent stories such as the pilot, got me to think about this week's Gospel reading a little differently. It, too, is violent. The violence of the tenants, the assumed and anticipated violence of the landlord. This event drew me to focus on the answer to Jesus' question at the end: "Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" As he is referring to the tenants who beat, stoned, or killed two sets of servants who came to collect the vineyard owner's due and then murdered outright the owner's son and heir, the Pharisees have no difficulty in answering: "He will put those wretches to a miserable death."

Jesus' next words, as recorded by Matthew, seem at first glance to confirm this instinct to respond to violence with yet more violence, as he references the Psalms (118:22) to explain how those who oppose and reject him are missing God's plan for salvation and therefore will lose the kingdom. That shouldn't be terribly surprising, as even a quick read of Matthew reveals a harsher attitude toward Jewish religious authorities than you find in Luke or Mark. Historians have suggested that members of Matthew's largely Jewish community, perhaps worn down by distress and danger in the wake of the destruction of the Temple, were contemplating returning to the faith of their youth and that Matthew consequently saw the Pharisees as competitors for their loyalty.

When we keep in mind that Matthew's community was a vulnerable religious minority of the day, we can sympathize with his plight and response. Yet, when Christianity went from minority to majority religion of the Roman Empire and grew into the most powerful political and cultural force in Europe, these same verses and others like them helped to justify centuries of mistreatment of Jews by Christians. Violence yet again.

Violence of today and references to it in the parable upsets us and makes us wonder if there is any alternative. And then we look beyond the passage and thought about where Matthew's narrative is taking us. And it, also, leads to an act of violence: Crucifixion. Of the innocent Son and heir. Just like in the parable. But then all of a sudden, it's not the same. Because rather than return violence for violence, in the cross of Jesus God absorbs our violence and responds with life, with resurrection, with Jesus triumphant over death and offering, not retribution, but peace.

Whatever we may make of the words Matthew shares, Jesus' actual deeds are quite different. He does not shrink from the sacrifice on the cross, he does not return with vengeance, he does not kick anyone out of the kingdom of heaven. Instead, the resurrected Jesus, having taken on the worst that our violence can inflict, comes back and instructs his disciples to take the good news of the Gospel to the very ends of the earth, promising to be with them always.

And for you and I, this week, that good news means in part that violence does not and will not have the last word. That the only response to violence is not more violence. That tragedy and death and loss and hatred are, in the end, no match for love and life and forgiveness and peace.

We may never know what truly motivated the copilot. And there's a lot of work to do to take action on policies and procedures that will make people safer from gun violence and other forms of terrorism. But in the meantime, we have the promise that even when it looks like violence is the only outcome and response possible – "He will put those wretches to a miserable death." – it's not. Perhaps that's all the religious authorities in the story could imagine, or maybe it was all Matthew the Evangelist could imagine. Maybe at times it's all our leaders can imagine, and perhaps all we can imagine, too. But there is another way forward. For while Jesus' words, Matthew's words, and our words all matter, Jesus' deeds matter even more, as Jesus' death and resurrection creates more possibilities than those we can see, including the possibility of peace

- Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid (John 14:27).
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Mt. 5:9).
- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (Rom. 12:15-18).
- And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt. 28:20).

My friends in Christ. These passages of scripture does not erase our grief or lessen our call to act to make such violence less likely. But it does, in the meantime, offer us hope, and hope is the birthplace of faithful action, compassion, and resolution. 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

Go out in Joy. Be led forth in peace.

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.

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.

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. Photo sittings are this week. This is it! Bring your best smile! If you were unable to book an appointment for a sitting and would still like to support you may do so. Please contact the church office for more details.

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.

The Altar Care Committee will be decorating the chancel for the Thanksgiving celebrations. If you have any vegetables, fruits, etc. to donate, please bring them to the church on or before noon, this Saturday, October, 10th. Thank you.

Thanksgiving Food Drive begins next Sunday.