



Church At Home

St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 9

July 26, 2026

Prayer of the Day

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily – Rev. Christie Morrow-Wolfe - Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod

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

This past school year, I spent a fair bit of time at the kitchen table with my daughter, wrestling with middle school math. A leap in the learning curriculum this grade year made some concepts more challenging for her, so we would find ourselves trying to figure it out, together. What she was learning, I learned a generation ago so the method was different even if we were working towards the same answer. There was a lot of "that's not how we learned it, Mom!" and usually in her showing me how and what she learned in class, it would click for her at the quiet hush of the kitchen table in a way she hadn't been able to grasp in the busyness of the classroom earlier that day.

To be honest, even though there were tears of frustration (from both of us), I cherished this time with her. And what I hope she remembers is not the math help she might have received (because, honestly, that's truly forgettable...there's a reason I studied theology and math is not it!), but what I hope she remembers is the time we spent together. The formulas may fade; the worksheets will be recycled; the test scores won't matter so much anymore...but what I hope she remembers is the time we sat and faced a challenge, together. I hope she remembers that when something felt confusing, she wasn't alone. I hope she remembers that someone showed up with her...that there was laughter mixed in with the frustration. That there was patience on some days and grace on the harder days. That there was a place at the table for her questions and curiosities.

Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed; like yeast hidden in flour; like a treasure buried in a field; like a pearl of great value. God's kingdom doesn't always arrive in dramatic moments.

Sometimes it is hidden in ordinary Tuesday evenings and math homework spread across a kitchen table. The kingdom of heaven looks like people showing up for each other again and again, even when the task itself is rather forgettable. In this case, the treasure wasn't really the math. The treasure was relationship.

Jesus keeps talking about the kingdom of heaven—but not in ways that are obvious or easy to grasp. There are no grand thrones here, no mighty armies, no clear lines of power. Instead, we get seeds. Yeast. Treasure buried in a field. A merchant searching for pearls. A net scooping up all kinds of fish. It feels...almost...underwhelming.

And yet, if we listen closely, there is something quietly radical unfolding in these stories. Jesus is shaping our expectations—not just of God's kingdom, but of where and how we encounter the holy.

The kingdom of heaven, he says, is like a mustard seed—tiny, easily overlooked. In fact, mustard was often considered more of a nuisance plant than any kind of noble crop. It spreads wildly, unpredictably, taking over gardens and fields. This is not the image of orderly growth or controlled expansion. It's, in fact, messy. Subversive.

And yet, from this small, unruly beginning comes shelter—branches where birds can rest, where life can flourish. The kingdom, then, is not about dominance. It's about unexpected belonging.

Then Jesus moves to yeast—another strange image. Yeast is hidden—mixed into flour, invisible to the eye. And yet it transforms everything it touches. Quietly. Gradually. Irreversibly. The kingdom of heaven is not always loud or obvious. It works beneath the surface—in conversations, in acts of compassion, in the slow work of justice, in the healing of relationships, and in the courage to begin again. It's the kind of transformation that doesn't make headlines, but changes lives.

And then, treasure. A person stumbles upon something hidden in a field, and filled with joy, gives everything to claim it. A merchant finds a pearl of great value and does the same. There is something here about recognition—about seeing what truly matters...like realizing it's not finding the right math answer at the kitchen table, but it's the relationship that's deepened by working through the hard things together.

In a world that constantly tells us what is valuable—success, wealth, status, control—these parables invite us to reorient our hearts. The kingdom is not something we earn or achieve or solve. It is something we discover with curiosity and joy, and when we do, it has the potential to reshape everything.

Jesus ends his kingdom snapshots with the image of a net, cast wide into the sea, gathering all kinds of fish—without distinction, without pre-sorting, without exclusion. The sorting comes later. And if we read this through the lens of grace, we remember that God's justice is not about punishment. It's about restoration and truth-telling and making things right – not on our terms, but always on God's terms. And here's the thing...it's not up to us to do the sorting. Our call and what God is asking us to do is to simply cast the net wide. That's it. And by casting the net wide, we create communities where all are welcomed, where diversity is not feared but celebrated, where questions are honoured, and where healing becomes possible...because the kingdom of heaven is not a gated community; it is an ever-expanding table...perhaps a table covered in middle school math homework where God comes to us in a new untraditional way...in a way that reinforces that we are loved, not because of what we do, but because of who God is.

For us, this means that God continues to reveal God-self to us and the world in sometimes small and unassuming ways...by the quiet acts of kindness; the moments of connection and relationship; in the small seeds we plant that we trust will grow...in the sometimes; hidden work of transformation which takes root in ourselves; in our communities and in the world.

We are called then to stay open to the delightful surprise of God and the possibility that the kingdom of heaven might show up in places we least expect...at a kitchen table; in a difficult conversation; in the courage to forgive; in the decision to begin again. It means that God calls us to hold loosely to what the world tells us is valuable and lean more deeply into what gives life. And, it means we cast our nets wide. Because the kingdom of heaven is not about scarcity or exclusion. It is not about getting it all right. It's about grace and relationship ... grace that grows like a weed offering shelter to more life than we know; grace that rises like bread to then be broken to feed the world; grace that is hidden in plain sight, waiting to be discovered and shared. Grace in middle school math and the connection formed when wading through the hard together.

So you see, the kingdom of heaven is already among us. In you; in me. In the communities we call home. I pray that we may have eyes to see it; hearts to trust it; and the courage to live it. Amen.

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 has come near. Go, share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

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STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Joanna Spencer, Marie Lenser, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

At the Congregational Meeting of June 28th, it was decided to enter a call process with St. Peter's Alice and Grace Rankin. Your input is important to the call committee. A questionnaire is available for you to consider. Please return your responses to the church office by August 3, 2026. Your voice is important.

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.

Vacation.....Pastor Bruce and Charlotte are on vacation will be returning August 3rd. If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please contact Pastor Jim Goos at 613-401-8750.

