



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 11 **August 9, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

There is something about a good story. You know the kind I mean, one that has you on the edge of your seat waiting for the punch line. The punch line could be of a humorous nature; it could be one filled with great meaning and insights to life.

By now you must realize, I do take pleasure in listening to stories as well as telling them; knowing this I must admit to you that I am pleased we have moved on from the parables of Jesus to last week's story of the feeding of the five thousand and this week's story of Jesus walking on water and Peter's fear.

This story is filled with images we can relate to: a boat, lake and storm and plenty of imagery. Sometimes the interpretation of the story goes like this: Peter had the right idea when he got out of the boat, quite literally stepping out in faith. Peter, like all of us, is invited to step out into the storms of life where Jesus calls us to take courage, leave the safety of the boat, and come to him. If we have enough faith in Jesus and keep our focus firmly on him, we will not sink, despite the wind and the waves. If only Peter had not become distracted. When he kept his eyes on

Jesus, he could walk on water. When he got anxious and sidetracked from keeping his focus on Jesus, Peter, went down like a stone. Jesus wants us to be bold in our faith. Jesus wants us to walk on water, dream big, take risks in our lives.

Solid advice for your life –“get out of the boat” and take a risk and keep your eyes on Jesus. Good advice for any congregation, even St. Timothy’s – get out of the comfortable pew and have faith in Jesus to lead you.

And so this morning, I could take us down the road of these two thoughts and finish by encouraging you to “go the extra mile” or “think outside the box” or “when the going gets tough, the tough get going”. And let’s not forget, “with God all things are possible”. But I’m not because I believe we want and need more than good advice. That something more is found in this story – it is the power of fear – in this passage and in our lives.

If we go back to the story for a moment all is going well. Jesus takes care of the crowds and goes to pray. His friends spend a night on the sea and seem to survive a furious storm. And then, good old Peter flounders – not because he takes his eyes off of Jesus, but because he grows afraid. Sitting in the comfort of our quarterback arm chairs, we are with him all the way. Quite frankly, his fear is justified. It’s a storm – the storm of storms. Possibly like the ones we had a couple of weeks ago. My goodness even Mr. Sleep through almost anything was trembling after that first clap of thunder. The storm in the story, for heaven’s sake was raging powerful enough to sink the boat – let alone drown a single person. Peter has good reason to be afraid.

There is a lot in our personal, congregational, work lives that can make us afraid. It could be the return of an illness, a relationship that is very fragile, loneliness after a loss, not being accepted by those we respect, how we will fare in a new chapter of our lives, the future of our congregation, a change in ownership of our employeryou can fill in the rest for yourselves. Fear is debilitating. It sneaks up on us, paralyzes us, and makes it difficult to move forward at all, with any kind of confidence. Fear is one of the primary things that robs us of the abundant life God intends for us.

Jesus knows this and so what did he do for Peter when he was afraid? He doesn’t urge him to courage or instruct him to keep his eyes on him. When Peter begins to sink, Jesus reaches out and grabs him, pulls him up, saving him from drowning. And so with us! Jesus will not let us go. Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us; *is with us!* Jesus will not give up on us. Jesus will grab hold of us when we falter and restore us to where we can be of service.

This is the promise at the heart of the story, and for that fact all of Matthew’s Gospel, and indeed of our faith; that God will never give up, that God is with us and for us, that God, in the end, will do what we cannot. This promise is the one thing that helps us cope with and rise above fear. Yes, rise above, not defeat. You see, fear is and always will be a part of our lives and we need to remember that being fearful does not equate with faithlessness

My friends in Christ. When the disciples are terrified, Jesus calls for them to “take heart,” and when Peter flails and cries out to be saved, Jesus reaches out and grabs him. The future is open to us; for God is with us and for us. God is not done with us yet.

We have real and understandable and too often debilitating fears, yet God is with us to help us overcome our fears and send us out armed with courage and confidence to live and share God's abundant life. For while fear is a powerful part of our lives, God's promise and vision is more powerful still.

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.

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Joanna Spencer, Marie Lenser, 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.