

Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church

April 19th 2020



Good Morning to you from my office – since masks are the ‘in’-thing; I thought I would ‘model’ the ones given to me! There are those who sew in this congregation who are making many different models, if you want one/need one – let me know and I will ask on your behalf.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH:

- Church in our homes continues... may you be disciplined in keeping the worship hour and including all who live at your house to participate in the readings, the listening, the sharing of the various parts of this printed service. If you have difficulties opening the links to musical accompaniment or special features, contact Taeyang (306-999-5113)
- Please take note of this: the NKP website is up and active again. Here's the address: www.nkpchurchregina.ca Check it and our FaceBook page.
- Church events or meetings for April are cancelled or postponed.
- Mom's Pantry raised **\$436.52** for the 'Growth Fund'. Thanks.
- If you have a church key, PLEASE – call or come into the church office to get the code so that you can 'arm' or 'disarm' the new alarm when you come or go from the church.
- The church office is open most daytime hours from Tuesday to Friday.
- Offerings: We are pleased with the faithful contributions of some of our congregation. Others may be finding it difficult to get their donations to the church – if you wish to have someone come to your house to pick up your envelopes just let us know. Please keep in mind that many of our expenses have continued even though the church building is not open for services. There has been maybe some savings on heat and lights...
- On-line giving has become a NOW necessity for many churches. The Board has this on our agenda (although we have not been holding meetings). So we have a couple of members exploring options. **IF** we had this option in place would you use it? Please reply to the church office (yes, no, maybe) which will



help with our progress toward this... And please be patient with us as we try to make adjustments during the pandemic.

- Thanks to Sumi there is a lesson and a craft available and delivered to the Sunday School children. Call the church office to get on the list in order to receive the lesson.
- Fun activity called **'Spring Basket/ Fancy Bag Contest & Auction'** – a fundraiser event will be held on a Sunday after we return to our regular sanctuary gatherings. Be planning your contribution of a unique 'spring – themed' gift bag or basket – any size, any theme for your items...
- A SPRING edition of NEWS KNOWLEDGE PRAISE newsletter will be available next week – we plan to send it out by email with some hard copies for those who prefer it in that format.
- A letter has been received by our M.P. (Warren Steinley) with thanks for the sacrifices and support we as a church are making in regards to Covid 19 measures.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome to corporate *(although social distancing)* **Worship...**

WORDS OF GREETING:

Welcome in the name of Christ. God's grace, mercy and peace be with you
and also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Astonishing Good News!

A surprise beyond expectation!

Christ is alive!

He has risen indeed!

The grave could not contain him!

And the news cannot be hidden!

Come, let us worship the risen Lord.

We will worship with joy and thanks.

GATHERING HYMN: **260 Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U1MuOCHon4>

(Refrain)

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,

Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to His name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.

He is the King of creation. *(Refrain)*

Spread the good news o'er all the earth.
Jesus has died and has risen. (*Refrain*)

We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live forever. (*Refrain*)

Come, let us praise the living God,
Joyfully sing to our Saviour. (*Refrain*)

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving Christ,
Open the eyes of our faith that we may behold the work of your redemption.
Open our minds and hearts to receive you, Lord: your resurrection glory, your
light everlasting.
May this time of worship, reflection and celebration be a worthy response to your
love and your sacrifice for us.

The Lectionary PSALM (responsive) Psalm 16 (*Easy-to-Read translation*) -
*if children who are school age readers, are worshipping with you this morning please have them
participate in this reading.*

¹Protect me, God, because I depend on you.

²**Some of you have said to the LORD,**

"You are my Lord.

Every good thing I have comes from you."

³But you have also said about the gods of this land,

"They are my powerful gods.

They are the ones who make me happy."

⁴**But those who worship other gods will have many troubles.**

I will not share in the gifts of blood they offer to their idols.

I will not even say their names.

⁵LORD, you give me all that I need.

You support me. You give me my share.

⁶**My share is wonderful.**

My inheritance is very beautiful.

⁷I praise the LORD because he taught me well.

Even at night he put his instructions deep inside my mind.

⁸**I always remember that the LORD is with me.**

He is here, close by my side,

so nothing can defeat me.

⁹ So my heart and soul will be very happy.

Even my body will live in safety,

¹⁰ **because you will not leave me in the place of death.**

You will not let your faithful one rot in the grave.

¹¹ You will teach me the right way to live.

Just being with you will bring complete happiness.

Being at your right side will make me happy forever.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN:



- Did you colour last Sundays picture? Rael did and sent it to the church. We will put all pictures on display so send yours back please. I wonder who's picture I can include here next week...

- **A BIBLE VERSE TO LEARN:**

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead"...

(1 Corinthians 15:20a)

- **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:**

GOOD NEWS – can you think of what would be good news for you right now? Maybe it'd be Good News if school would open and you could go back to see your teacher and your friends! Maybe it would be Good News if you could play outside or at a playground! Maybe it would be Good News if the virus that has hurt our world would go away! Good News makes us feel 'joy' – joy is a little bit like happiness but more like super happy. People can often tell if we are feeling joy because we have great big smiles on our faces. The best joy the church experiences is the good news that Jesus is alive – Jesus was raised from the dead like the Bible verse says. So, let's be joyful and let others know we are by our smiles and our excitement.

- **A PICTURE TO DRAW**

Could you draw a picture of Jesus and his friends after they believed that Jesus was alive again? That was news that made them very joyful- the Bible tells us this – "The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord." Please send your drawing back to the church and we will add it our picture display.

- **A SONG FOR THE CHILDREN: 'I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy'**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LylgwOEI7AY>

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy

Down in my heart,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart,
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay. And I'm so happy,
So very happy;
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.
And I'm so happy,
So very happy,
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

WE CELEBRATE OUR EASTER SALVATION

The Call to Confession

In the time that has passed since Easter Sunday, have we become a changed people? Have we lived with hope and promise, trusting in the Risen Christ? Or have we been more like the earliest disciples, still gathered behind locked doors out of fear? Trusting in a second-chance God who meets us as dedicated yet doubting followers, let us confess our sins in the presence of Christ and one another

Prayer of Confession: (unison)

**Almighty God, you have accepted our Lord's sacrifice for our salvation.
By your power you have raised him from the dead,
you have clothed him again with flesh
so that his disciples might recognize him.
We humbly confess that, while we know the story and believe it,
it often has made too little difference in our lives,
and at times we have been silent when we should have spoken of it.
Forgive us, we pray, of these sins.
Enable us today to reflect more deeply on the sacred story,
that our obedience may be increased
that our service may be more joyful,
and our testimony may be more courageous.
Hear us in the name of our risen Saviour. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon:

"My children, I am writing this so that you won't sin. But if you do sin, Jesus Christ always does the right thing, and he will speak to the Father for us. ²Christ is the sacrifice that takes away our sins and the sins of all the world's people." (1 John 2:1-2)

Song of Faith: "I Serve a Risen Saviour"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF6aBDS3drA>

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

In all the world around me I see His loving care
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast
The day of His appearing will come at last

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Living God, help us so to hear your Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe; and believing, we may follow your way in all faithfulness, seeking your honour and glory in all that we do. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING:

The Gospel of John 20:19-31 (NRSV)

(online Bible resource for various translations can be found at www.biblegateway.com)

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

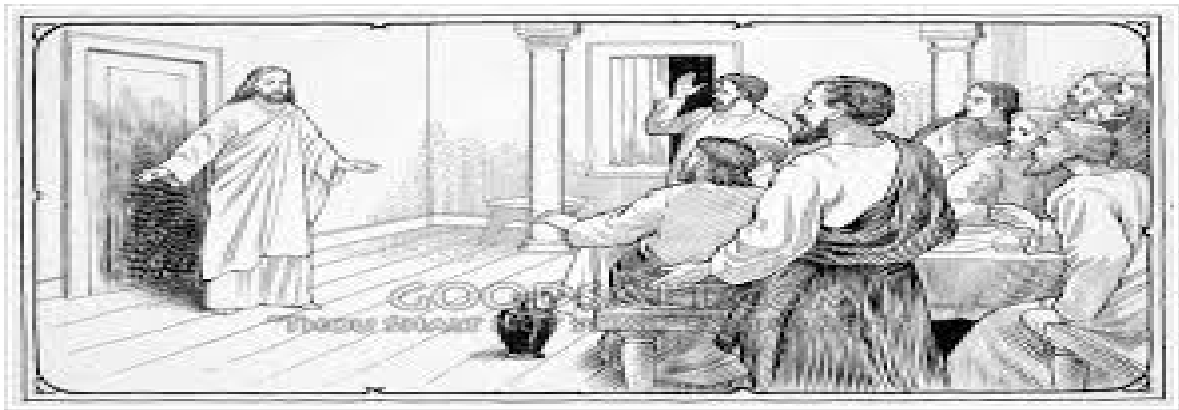
²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believeⁱ that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God



Sermon Title: 'A New Normal'

I don't think I have ever started a sermon with a quote from the Prime Minister – but we have listened to him every day since March 12th when it became apparent that the coronavirus was not limited to the few who had travelled home from China with symptoms. I recall that here in Canada, by media attention, we took real notice of this after Sophie Gregoire Trudeau arrived home from a trip to England with mild symptoms. At least that's when the daily news conferences began outside the front door of Rideau Cottage, the home of our Prime Minister. And in those daily conferences a lot has been said - here is one of his statements – “Normality, as it was before, will not come back full-on until we get a vaccine for this... That will be a very long way off.”

Normality is extremely hard to define. But as we have been forced to accept a different way of living than what we have been used to – well, I think most of us feel this to be quite 'abnormal'. Maybe some aspects of this unusual way of life are appealing – more reading time, more home-cooked meals, more movies, more deliberate connecting (virtually) with family or friends, more peace & quiet. **But** – but we long for a return to normalcy. How discouraging it is to hear our Prime Minister tell us that such is a long way off! Specifically, as you once again read this Sunday Worship service, listening to and singing along with hymns on 'Youtube', and mailing in your offerings – you and I both ask 'how much longer'? When can we come back to church, to our church building, to hold our regular meetings and events, to be with each other, to sing and pray and

celebrate and learn together? Will what we are currently experiencing or some variation of this be the 'new normal'?

New normal was what the disciples were faced with immediately after the resurrection of Jesus.

For 3 years they had a life with Jesus – a life very different from what they all thought they'd be doing. When Jesus had first appeared on the scene and invited some to come on the adventure of being his disciples – they left their previous jobs, their homes and what had been their 'normal' way of life. For all of them, it was a drastic change – some had been labourers, some in business, all had meaningful work. They gave it all up to become students. As students of the master Teacher, they learned by watching, listening, experiencing, travelling, and generally living under the shadow and wisdom of Jesus.

Until things unravelled. Suddenly change was thrust upon them again. No more normal.

After the arrest of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, most of the disciples immediately went into hiding (we recall that only Peter lurked around in the darkness to observe some of what was happening to his Lord but when confronted immediately denied that he knew Jesus).

The passage in John's gospel for our consideration today opens with the disciples still hiding – hiding behind locked doors in the same room they had likely 'borrowed' for their celebration of the Passover 3 nights previous. They had received the amazing resurrection news from the women. Peter and John had ventured out (even running toward the tomb) also to see for themselves when the news of seeing Jesus alive reached them from the women who had gone to the tomb in the early dawn. They believed and were excited. However, retreating back to their hidden location, one wonders how the excitement and confusion and unbelievability went over with the other disciples.

I suspect mixed emotions all around. The days after the death of a loved one are often filled with mixed emotions. What to do, what to say, how to handle details and each other is difficult – but now it is not death but resurrection which confuses their thinking. John picks up the story in the evening of resurrection day. An evening one might assume would be full of celebration – but it is not. The disciples remain in hiding and are keeping very quiet. They were still very much afraid for their own lives. Something, a few days ago, had gone terribly wrong and yet there was something today that was terribly new. What had happened, what was happening, what will happen next – surely their minds were confused and their hearts pounding with the uncertainty of what next.

Without unlocking a door, Jesus appears. The same Jesus who they had spend the last 3 years with, the same Jesus who had washed their feet 3 nights before, the same Jesus who had heard them promise their loyalty and their commitment to do all that He had commanded, the same Jesus who (in spite of their promises to him) they had still watched as He was arrested, dragged away, beaten and crucified, the same Jesus who just that morning had appeared outside the tomb to Mary, to Peter and John – now Jesus stood in the upper room with 10 of the disciples (Judas was no more, and Thomas was strangely absent). And yes suddenly, this same Jesus is back with them – not to accuse them, or discipline them, or show disappointment in them – no, Jesus appears to introduce them to a new normal. That ‘normal’ was a resurrected, an alive again Jesus who would continue to use them as His Faithful Disciples. His very greeting ‘peace be with you’ – although an everyday eastern greeting – also means literally ‘may God give you every good thing.’ Jesus knew what afraid people needed to hear – they needed to hear that good, that peace will come. And in his appearing and in his words – the disciples could now rejoice.

Except Thomas – the one who missed Jesus’ visit – when he comes back to the upper room, he is told “we have seen the Lord.” Thomas was one of the disciples always with a label – doubting Thomas he became known

as by all readers and interpreters of scripture. We are critical of him for his spoken doubts concerning the story the others told him. But just for a minute, put yourself in Thomas' shoes or sandals. Despite that morning's resurrection accounts, the disciples had stayed hidden, locked in and fearful. Hidden, locked and fearful could make anyone's imagination play tricks. Thomas may have been aware of that possibility.

Why Thomas was out and about while the others remained locked in, we are not told – but could he have been the only one who was brave enough to go out to see and possibly meet up with Jesus. The eyewitnesses (the women along with Peter and John) had already confirmed they had seen Jesus. If anyone else was anxious or excited about this news – would it not be possible they would want to go and check out this news? Could it be that Thomas already believed that Jesus had risen – and he would just go out and find him? Thomas' expression of doubt when he came back to the upper room was a doubt that **they** (*meaning the others who stayed hidden*), **that they** had actually seen Jesus. His doubt was maybe more about the state of mind of those who remained fearful than a doubt that Jesus was alive. We could read this story of Thomas and his emphatic “unless I see” as a straight forward meaning that he just really really wanted to see for himself. And so, his emphatic “unless I see” could be his way of telling the others that their experience of seeing Jesus is not enough for him. He needs a personal experience; he needs to see for himself.

John's account indicates that another whole week goes by and the disciples have continued to remain hidden – and so Jesus comes to meet them again. This time Thomas is with the rest – and immediately (*literally -no- he didn't even need to physically **touch** the scars*), he sees with his eyes and accepts that Jesus has risen and is alive. Thomas has now had the 1st hand experience of the greeting – “peace” – ‘may God give you every good thing’. That good thing he was blessed with was a personal encounter with the living Christ. And Thomas is blessed. Another word for blessed is happy – or full of joy. The Gospel writer immediately tells us that from this point on Jesus was in the presence of

the disciples doing among them many other things to ensure them that this was their new normal, their new reality.

What's our normal about Easter? The things we missed last Sunday had a lot to do with traditions, atmosphere, décor, and the highs of enthusiastic praise. It's easy to forget that the Easter morning of the year (?) 33 A.D. didn't come with lots of fanfare. Despite the overwhelming excitement of the early morning and the sharing of the news with a few – the disciples huddled together in fear, not faith. Their belief and their worship came back slowly. In fact, it even seemed for awhile they would just go back to their old way of life – back to fishing. Only after Jesus' appearances and visits on a few occasions – and ultimately it was after 40 days when they would begin to fulfill all that Jesus had commissioned to them to do. Eventually their lives were turned upside down and all that Jesus had taught and demonstrated during their 3 years of schooling with him began to make sense and become everything that they would live and die for... that's what the rest of the New Testament is about.

A new normal is what we experience when we come to believe that Jesus death and resurrection was for us. Jesus still comes to us with his greeting of 'peace' – the word that means 'may God give you every good thing.' That good is our salvation, that good is the Holy Spirit living in us and enabling us to be true and faithful disciples. That good is the hope we have even when the world around us is in a mess – coronavirus and all.

Thomas was never the same after he stated his belief in the risen Lord Jesus. Neither are we.

Normal needs to be shaken up every once in a while.

A new normal began with the resurrection – believe and live and witness to the truth of Jesus – the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and with Thomas call him "My Lord and My God."

"Blessed are you who have not seen yet have come to believe." Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION

INVITATION & PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

(Dear Congregation – we give because we have already received. And there is great joy in offering our thanksgiving to our Lord and Saviour for such great salvation...)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFQ_H4c8WW0

Doxology: (Traditional 'Praise God' music...)

Let trumpets sound and voices sing!

Let all on earth their praises bring!

For Christ has conquered sin and death

And given life eternal breath. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication:

Bless these offerings, O God, which we return to you,
that in our seeking and our serving, our ministry might illumine paths and uplift
the heads of those who seek you.

Guide us in your wisdom and love that we may use these gifts
to manifest your presence in the world in all that we do. **Amen.**

WORDS AND SONGS OF HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

(an additional message for these troubling times... feel free to read this at another time when you may need an encouraging word throughout the week. This was written by a Presbyterian minister (Nan St. Louis) from Durham Ontario.)

What's That I Smell?

2 Corinthians 2:15-17 – For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death to leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life to leading to life. And

who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. (NKJV)

When I entered the grocery store last week, something was different. Not just the lineups, the tape on the floor marking lanes, and the staff who were directing people to the checkout. Not



just the empty shelves. It was the silence. Deafening. People were moving like zombies down the aisles, looking at the floor, their cart, the shelf, focused as if bent on a serious mission. No eye contact. No chatter. The air was heavy with worry and fear. It was oppressive.

I don't think that I am an optimist by nature, but the joy of the Lord in my soul is like a cork that bobs up and rides the waves in a storm. My faith in God carries me day by day. *What can I do here?* I thought. What I always do when I shop: hum a song, talk to people, smile, and depending on the response, comment on God's goodness. By the time I got to the checkout, somehow, the mood had shifted, and people were talking to one another, albeit at a respectful distance, of course. The cashier smiled and even laughed.

On the way home, I thought about the difference that Christians can make in their community by bringing the presence of Christ into a situation. By being who we are in Christ and by releasing joy, hope, peace, love, and faith wherever we are, we make a difference. We are the fragrance of Christ to God and to those around us. This we can do.

Prayer: Lord, forgive us when we get self-absorbed and forget that You are with us, in us. Help us to live the joy, peace, hope, and love that we have through faith in You. May we be the fragrance of *life* to those around us, especially in these days when so many are filled with anxiety and despair. We thank You for all Your blessings. They are new every morning. You are a faithful God! Amen.

Special Music Presentation: (*favourite hymns by Mae Morris on the accordion*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4RSFqWDc18&feature=youtu.be>

PRAYERS of the People and the Lord's Prayer:

Kind and merciful God, you meet us where we are in our confusion, unbelief, or uncertainty. You come to speak words of peace – peace that assures, calms and gives us courage to believe that You love us, that You will be with us, that You will bring us through whatever difficulty we may be facing. May such peace overwhelm us in these days and spread from us to others. We are confronted daily with the fear of spreading a virus – and we are learning the dangers of such and how to withstand and prevent and hopefully soon find a cure.

But your peace needs also to be spread – to be spread from us who know such peace to our friends and neighbours who do not know that peace. We forget that You came into the world to introduce a new way of living – a way that is God first and that places value on community so that in loving and serving each other we follow the example of Jesus.

We have become keenly aware in the last few weeks how much we need each other – that we are not created to be islands unto ourselves but we are to be with

each other and for each other. We thank you that the church is community. We thank you that you bind us together in love and service. And so, we pray for each other today. We pray for the well-being of all. If any are sick among us, bring healing. If any are grieving and keenly feeling a loss (recent or one that has nagged at their spirit for a long time), bring a comfort that will ease the pain. If any are discouraged among us, bring words or deeds to uplift. If any are lonely, may phone calls, emails, and even waves lift their spirits. If any are bored because so much of their normal life has changed, inspire them for new activities or projects that can be accomplished in such a time as this. If any are worried, bring peace of mind and heart. If any are confronting a financial crisis because of Covid, we pray for creativity and insight as to how to make a new way. If any are taking on new activities and / or taking risks because help is needed, provide for their safety in every way.

Heavenly Father, we know that you care about us all in all our times and places of need – and that Your Spirit prompts us in service and ministry. May we have ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to respond when we know of the needs of others. Strengthen us to do your will.

Be pleased to hear these and all our prayers, as we bring them now together with prayer our Lord Jesus also taught us -

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

THE PARTING HYMN: **#358 'There is a Redeemer'**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YM_hYzcPo

There is a redeemer
Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Holy One
Jesus my redeemer

Name above all names
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Oh, for sinners slain

Thank you, oh my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

When I stand in Glory
I will see His face
And there I'll serve my King forever
In that Holy Place

Thank you, oh my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

There is a redeemer
Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Holy One

Thank you, oh my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

GOD SENDS US . . .

***COMMISSIONING:**

Go from this community of Christian friends with hope that overcomes your fears.
Go with the promise of new life. Go with faith in God that anchors you in a
sea of doubts.

**BENEDICTION: Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

***GOING OUT SONG: #252**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTbhnTeF4yE>

**He is Lord, He is Lord
He has risen from the dead
And He is Lord
Every knee shall bow
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord**