



Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church

June 21, 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH:

Exciting News. The SK Gov't guidelines for Places of Worship give permission for re-gathering in person with a limit of 1/3 of our capacity seating in the sanctuary. The Session of NKP feels confident that **starting Sunday JUNE 28th** we can and will return to our church building.

Please note the following:

- ✓ the service will begin at **10:30 a.m.** (this will be the chosen time for all summer – June, July & August)
 - ✓ designated (social distancing) seating will be necessary – you may not be able to sit in your usual spot. An usher will give directions.
 - ✓ a bulletin will be available which you can pick up upon arrival
 - ✓ offerings can be deposited in a plate at the back as you enter or exit
 - ✓ hand sanitizer will be available and you are encouraged to use it as you arrive
 - ✓ weather permitting, doors will be open and left open so no need to touch door handles
 - ✓ No Sunday School classes – parents are advised to bring a story book from home for your own children or to help them focus and learn about what is happening in public worship
 - ✓ hymns will be projected on the screen or will be printed in the bulletin
 - ✓ please bring a face mask to wear during singing times (disposable ones will be on hand)
 - ✓ our max. capacity is 45 and we feel confident that for all who want to come, there will be room
 - ✓ if you are sick or have a compromised immune system please stay home or take extra precautions
 - ✓ an email version of the service will be available and sent to those who request it
- It will be wonderful to come back to the church – remember next Sunday **JUNE 28th @10:30 a.m.** we will meet you at the church!
 - On our first Sunday back, we will have a **flower/plant display** which will be our 'in memory' display. This is in lieu of what would have been our Easter Flower display. You can still contribute to this display in memory of your loved ones – as long as you send in your donation along with the name by **TUESDAY of this week!**
 - TODAY is the last Sunday for the 'all church' email service – unless you indicate to the church office you wish to continue receiving it in that way. If so, there may be some parts not included (i.e. Children's Time which will happen more spontaneously within the Gathered Worship Time).
 - Summer Sermon Series (The TEACHER according to Matthew) – please read through the **Gospel of Matthew** this summer. Suggestions are to read 1 chapter each day in

each of the months June, July & August or to pace your readings so you read the entire Gospel during the 3 month period.

- **NOTICE to the CHILDREN:** every Sunday during 'at home worship' when your family received the Worship service text, there was a Bible verse for the children to memorize. Next Sunday when we are back at church, I would like each child to recite for the congregation one of those verses. Come prepared please.
- Copies of **The Daily Bread** (June, July & August) are still available so- pick up your copy when you are at the church.
- **LADIES** – you are all invited to a **LUNCH & FELLOWSHIP** Time on **Tuesday June 30th** at 12 noon at the Church. The invitation is to all – a welcome is extended by the Ladies Fellowship Coordinator even if you have not attended the Ladies Fellowship meetings - this is just for connecting & conversation– **all NKP Ladies are welcome.** We will order in Chinese Food and have 'social distant' fellowship in the church hall. Let Mae Morris know by Sunday, June 28th if your will come as that will be the last day to reserve a spot!
- **BOOKCLUB** –meeting at the church on Wednesday, June 24th 7 p.m. to discuss the book we started in January and to choose something for the summer. Come with suggestions please.
- **COMING SOON – FAMILY FUN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES-** for 5 Tuesdays 6:30 -7:30 p.m. starting July 7th. This is an outreach to the neighbourhood event and we need to get the word out. A **Flyer Delivery** to mailboxes will happen this Wednesday (June 24) from 1:30-3:30. Come by the church, get a route and a stack of flyers – head out for a walk dropping them in mailboxes. Donuts and coffee (or ice tea) served at the church at 3:30! The walk will be good for you, and the flyers may bring new families out for the fun evening.
- Please take note of this: the NKP website is up and active again. Here's the address: www.nkpchurchregina.ca Check it and our FB page.
- The Synod of Saskatchewan has employed seminary students to provide resources to help churches and families over the Summer – these can be found at <https://pccweb.ca/synodsaskatchewan/>
- Special music contributions are provided for our 'email' worship services. Thanks to those singing and to Sumi & Taeyang for recording these parts of our worship.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

WORDS OF GREETING:

Welcome to Norman Kennedy Church today. We are pleased to offer today's time of worship in this email and text copy. In 1 Peter we read "cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you." May you come this morning with whatever are your 'cares' and then to leave from this time with the knowledge that God indeed has and will always care for you.

SONGS OF PREPARATION: *'This is the day'*
& *'I will enter His gates with thanksgiving'*

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

This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made
I will rejoice, I will rejoice
And be glad in it, glad in it
This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made
I will rejoice, I will rejoice
And be glad in it, glad in it

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOXL17g6HvY>

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart
I will enter His courts with praise
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice for He has made me glad
He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for he has made me glad
He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for he has made me glad

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Let me tell you the wonderful things God has done!

Yes! The mercy God has shown us! The overflowing, steadfast love!

God said, "These are my people, and they will be true to me."

And God became our Saviour in all our distress.

God, it was not merely a messenger or an angel, but your presence that saved us.

In your tender love you redeemed us.

You have lifted us up and carried us since the beginning. Alleluia!

HYMN OF PRAISE: # 350 *'To God be the glory'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CeBoSQsBR0>

To God be the glory
Great things He has done
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin
And opened the life-gate that all may go in

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the earth hear His voice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the people rejoice
Oh Come to the Father
Through Jesus the Son
And Give Him the glory
Great things He has done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood
To every believer the promise of God
The vilest offender who truly believes
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the earth hear His voice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the people rejoice
Oh Come to the Father
Through Jesus the Son,
And Give Him the glory
Great things He has done

Great things He has taught us, great things He has done
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the earth hear His voice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the people rejoice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the earth hear His voice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the people rejoice
Oh Come to the Father
Through Jesus the Son
And Give Him the glory
Great things He has done

OPENING PRAYER:

We worship you, O God, with joyful noise -
with words of praise and adoration spoken and sung in the name of Jesus who

brought your love song to us in person.

In harmony with you, he puts new words in our mouths and new intentions in our hearts, especially a new understanding of power.

Power shaped by love and righteousness, justice and mercy.

We now know that power is not to be used to exploit or dominate, but to serve others as willingly as Jesus did. His life and death demonstrated how the love of power could be transformed by the power of love.

We gather here today to celebrate your rule of love in our hearts as we experience it in Jesus and through the enabling gift of your Spirit.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Servant King. Amen



- A BIBLE VERSE TO LEARN:

“A righteous person walks in integrity.
Blessed are his children after him.”

(Proverbs 20:7)

- SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

The Bible verse I chose for you to learn this week has the word ‘integrity’ in it – a word that you may not know but today I hope you can learn what it means.

I will give you this definition: **“Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is looking.”**

Let me tell you about a game called ‘golf’. It is one my husband and I play sometimes. It is a game that has to be played on a special field called a ‘golf course’ – and on that field there are markers (flags) that show where there is a small hole in the ground.

There’s at least 9 of those holes, sometimes 18! The hole is only big enough for the small golf ball. The objective in a golf game is to

get the golf ball into that hole by hitting it with your golf club as few times as possible. There will even be a sign that tells you how many strokes (another word for how many times you had to hit your ball) most people might take.

You are supposed to record on a score card how many ‘strokes’ **you** took.

Even though you play golf with other people – each person keeps their own score. In the game of golf, you are expected to follow that rule and write down honestly your score. But it is so easy to cheat. Most people may get the ball in the hole with 3 or 4 strokes, but sometimes I take 8 or 9 strokes.



Guess what I do... I will often write 5 on my score card! Should I do that? Of course not – that is CHEATING. But no one else would really know that I cheated. Now look again at the word **‘integrity’** and the definition I put in this message. Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. The right thing is to be honest. To be honest even when you are alone. So what about the time you took another cookie when your mom had said ‘no’ – but she wasn’t watching you so you took it anyway. What about the time when you broke a toy or maybe a plate or glass from the kitchen and you didn’t tell your parents how it got broken – you got away without being punished. BUT, did you really get away with it. There are always at least two people who know what has happened. You and God. God wants us to be people of high integrity. The Bible verse says that integrity is a very important quality. And it also says that adults especially need to show integrity because that is how you kids will learn to do the same. You should see integrity in your mom’s and dad’s – and yes also in your Pastor. I am sorry that I write down the wrong score when I play golf – but maybe you should come to play with me and then, I promise, I will keep my true score – even if it is really a bad score!

By the way ‘Integrity’ is mentioned twenty-two times in the Bible – God does think this is an important trait for us to have.

Let’s pray: **Jesus, thank you for all you have done for me and help to make me a person of great integrity. Amen.**

SONG FOR THE CHILDREN: *(this song will remind the children that they can hopefully look to their fathers to demonstrate integrity)*

‘Faith of our Fathers’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq5OvNvb-S4>

Faith of our fathers, living still
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene’er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!
2
Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free;
And blest would be their children’s fate,



If they, like them should die for thee:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

3

Faith of our fathers, we will strive
To win all nations unto thee;
And through the truth that comes from God
Mankind shall then indeed be free.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

4

Faith of our fathers, we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife,
And preach thee, too, as love knows how
By kindly words and virtuous life.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

CALL TO CONFESSION:

In the Gospel, God promises to pour out grace and peace on all those who belong to Jesus Christ: to all who turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Let us now, therefore, humbly confess our sins before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (Responsive)

Gracious God, you are the Creator of the ends of the earth,
and yet you call us your children.

You are greater than we can ever begin to imagine, and yet you invite us to call you
“Our Father”.

Always you have loved us:

forgive our feeble response.

You do not keep us at arm’s length, remote in your holiness,
but you reach out your hands in love, wanting us to relate to you, one to one.

Always you have loved us:

forgive our feeble response.

Gracious God, Forgive us that we call you “Our Father”
but fail to live as your children.

We do not trust you as we should, preferring instead to follow our own inclinations.

We are reluctant to accept your will, repeatedly disobeying your instructions.
We are slow to ask your guidance, but swift to forget you and wander from your side.

We all too rarely thank you for what we have, but all too often complain when we do not receive what we ask for.

Always you have loved us:

forgive our feeble response.

Gracious God,

We have returned your love by acting as spoilt children, yet still you have kept faith.

Accept our thanks that, despite our willfulness,

you refuse to give up on us, working instead to draw us closer.

You are always there for us, waiting to welcome us back and set us on our feet again.

Always you have loved us:

forgive our feeble response.

Gracious God, our Father, we praise and thank you for your undeserved goodness, and we resolve today to live more faithfully as your children.

Always you have loved us:

forgive our feeble response.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Friends, hear the Good News! Jesus Christ, whose coming was promised long ago by the prophets, has been declared to be the Son of God by rising from the dead. He has the power to save us from our sins and to send us out in his name to share grace and peace with all people. Therefore, I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ: we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

AMEN.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

(sing this to the 'Be still & Know' tune...OR just read it as a prayer)

Be still and know that God is here.

Be still and know that God is near.

Be still and know that God is here.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

- Lectionary Psalm: Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 (responsive)

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

**² Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.**

³ Be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all the day.

**⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.**

⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

**⁶ Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
listen to my plea for grace.**

⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you,
for you answer me.

**⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.**

⁹ All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.

**¹⁰ For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.**

¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant,
and save the son of your maidservant.

**¹⁷ Show me a sign of your favor,
that those who hate me may see and be put to shame
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.**

- Matthew 2:1-23

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose^[b] and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

¹⁹But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.” ²¹And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

- Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,⁸ being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God



The **TEACHER** according to Matthew (sermon series)

June 21, 2020

*[A bit of information regarding this sermon series (summer into fall probably)– if you are reading through the Gospel of Matthew, you possibly realize by now that the 28 chapters are mostly long and packed with the teaching and activity of Jesus...and you are worried already that it may mean many and /or long sermons! Just to put your mind at ease, I will not be speaking on every chapter or every event but I will endeavour to bring to our attention the teachings which emphasize the kingdom of heaven come to earth – and what that means for how we live for Jesus in today’s world. Now a note about today – and the reading from Matthew 2. It is a Christmas gospel reading – **in June!** But because I direct us to this passage at this time, I hope we can read it and learn from it without the sentimentality that often accompanies Christmas and the Biblical narratives about Jesus birth. For one thing, at Christmas, we seldom give much attention to Herod – afterall that is not a nice part of the story – but*

today we will. I pray that today we can see Herod, powerful though he was, and also a self-centered bully and yet he was not able to derail the plan and will of God – and neither can the Herod's of today's world. Remember that!]

SERMON: 'Herod -Knee Jerk Reaction'

I have often regretted my knee-jerk reactions. We know the expression, right? There are times when we see something, hear something, experience something and our reaction is automatic, impulsive, or a gut response. We realize too little, too late that we should have been more thoughtful, more careful in our response. I find that I am more likely to have those unintended, hurtful responses when I am tired, threatened or angry – even if my emotions are connected to something else entirely.

I doubt if King Herod would have admitted to any regret after ordering the slaughter of all male children 2 years and under – but this was his initial reaction to the unsubstantiated news of the birth of another king. Obviously, if this news was true, then, the so-called infant king would be of concern. But Herod's knee-jerk, spontaneous reaction to that news was certainly uncalled for. After all, this was a baby. Yet he was threatened and he was angry. The very implication that there might be another king – was a positional threat and a personal threat.

Let's remind ourselves of the context.

Matthew, in his version of what was important to the Jewish readers of his Gospel, needs to authenticate that Jesus was born to be king – albeit His kingship and kingdom would be different than the current physical or political kingdoms as the rest of his gospel shows.

One of the facts at the time of Jesus birth had to do with foreign dignitaries travelling to honour a new king. These travellers were called by some as wisemen, surely at the least they were educated and important in their field of expertise, respected as philosophers and astrologers. They were also shrewd observers of the night sky, those who looked for signs of decisive events and clues to the future in the heavens. So, Matthew tells us that just as Jesus was born, these 'wisemen' saw a new star rising in the western sky over Judea, the land of the Jews. Using all their powers of analysis and interpretation, they determined that this star was a sign that a new king had been born. The Jews

had been given a new king, and the lights of heaven proclaimed it. What they did not yet know was that this new king who had been born in Judea was not only the King of the Jews, but the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Saviour of all, and his name was Jesus.

New kings anywhere were/are noteworthy. Being 'star-gazers' they (but we commonly they refer to them as the Wisemen) would want to set out to prove that they 'read the stars correctly.' If the stars lined up in a certain way to announce big events, then new kings would be big events. And new kings deserved honour and respect – the wisemen would bring that – by their presence, by their gifts. And so, they travelled to Judea. When they got to their destination, they went immediately to the city of Jerusalem, to the palace of Herod.

Matthew, in writing the story, had already told us that Jesus was born during the reign of Herod in the city of Bethlehem. In the reading of the stars about this event, the wisemen however did not have a neon sign in the sky saying specifically 'go to Bethlehem'. They made some assumptions.

What they did know was this: kings are born and live in palaces. And Herod's palace was in Jerusalem. Royal births would have taken place there. In fact, the assumption could have been that the 'new king' / 'the Messiah' would have been a member of the royal family. What was unknown by the wisemen was that from this particular palace and in this particular time in Judah evil, corruption and distrust reigned in that palace!

Yet for the wisemen, it was a logical assumption that Herod would surely know if there was another king. Especially if this King was connected to Judah as the star indicated. After all, Judah was the territory over which Herod had absolute reign.

Soon it would be recognized though that the birth of Jesus, who he was, his family, the circumstances of his birth, etc. – that this represented no ordinary king. Lands, dominions, royal status or succession would have no bearing on Jesus. Everything about his coming would be so different. He would come in fulfillment of the prophecies, and as Messiah, the one who would come to seek and to save, - and he would be born among the poor and the least.

Herod - the Great, he was called, but just so in his own eyes for he was reputed to be "a cruel tyrant, even a maniac suffering from a personality disorder, who

introduced the ancient version of a Gestapo state with an extended spy network and imprisonment, torture, and execution of anyone falling under the slightest suspicion” (so wrote Josephus).

Herod was the Roman-appointed King of the Jews and indeed by reputation, he was to be feared. He also took credit for a number of successes or victories – not least being the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. That he did though not for any religious reason – but only because he **could** build it so magnificently that it would be ultimately be known as ‘HEROD’S TEMPLE’. His insecurities, his disregard and lack of respect for the faith of the Jews led him even to execute 46 members of the Jewish Sanhedrin. One writer indicated that he was terrified of being overthrown by rivals. When he feared that his wife was trying to poison him, he had her killed; when he suspected his sons of plotting against him, he had them killed too. No wonder the Roman emperor Augustus once joked, “It is better to be Herod’s pig than his son.” (The joke was that because Jews did not eat pork, their pigs were safer than Herod’s sons.)

To this same, mentally unstable Herod, the wisemen unintentionally tipped the information of a possible new king. And Matthew writes that this news frightened Herod in such a way that the whole city heard about it.

This is where the knee-jerk reaction comes in. Being threatened, Herod sprung into action by ordering a massacre of all children younger than 2 years in and around Bethlehem. Unlike the wisemen who ascertained that a new king had been born and so had undertaken a diligent search to find him and honour him; all Herod could imagine was a rival to his power and position. And his reaction of mass killings was over and beyond logic.

This episode in Matthew’s writing has the purpose of making clear 2 things about Jesus – 1) not only was his birth miraculous but his protection and preservation was a God-thing; and 2) Jesus will be found in the right place, at the right time by the people whose intent in the search is to honour and worship Him.

The wisemen, wised up to Herod’s expression of interest and phony worship and they were able to see most clearly that they must not return to him. Something about Herod the Great was not so great.

They had followed a star thus far, and would go on to seek the star again to lead them toward a true king. They were not disappointed, for the same star appeared again and it led them to the true King. When they found him, they were overwhelmed with joy because they recognized that this was huge – it was revealed to them that a KING above all kings, a STAR above all stars was before them. And their knee-jerk reaction was to bend the knee in worship!

This story makes me wonder if we, too, do not go at first to the wrong places and at the wrong times to find Jesus Christ. Herod represents everything in human beings and human history that is haughty, cruel, violent and vindictive. We go there by believing that earthly powers and pursuits, even our own powers and pursuits, can provide the answers to the world's problems and to my problems. If so, we are on a wrong journey toward a wrong destination.

The other wondering, I have is about the reactions many have to who Jesus is – is your knee-jerk reaction to following Jesus one that concludes it is just too hard, too restrictive? That Jesus – who He is, what He teaches – all that will take the pleasure out of life, it will make you an old fuddy-duddy. Deep down you know you don't want to be labelled or to give allegiance to another, and the Jesus' way is just not the way you want to go. Your knee-jerk reaction may not be outwardly noticed – but it will still be a 'kicking-to-the curb' kind of reaction.

Jesus, the Messiah was not born in **his palace** – the palace of the rich and famous and the powerful. So where is Jesus Christ truly to be found? Jesus, himself, says that he will be found among the truly blessed ones who are the poor in spirit, the mournful, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers. Jesus will be found by those who truly seek Him with all their heart. Later in the Gospel we will hear and see Jesus among the hungry and the thirsty, among the stranger and the immigrant, among those who lack clothing or medical care, among those in prison. He said, "In so far as you care for the least of these, you care for me."

The wisemen didn't know all this, but they knew enough not to go back to Herod who had no desire to welcome a new king. Mary & Joseph with the child Jesus knew they had to escape the king's wrath, so they fled to Egypt, returning only after Herod's death.

My wondering continues – is the presence and power of Jesus still a threat? Does Jesus upset the status quo for you by demanding that He be King? The Gospel of Matthew will tell us a lot about God’s Kingdom and how it operates under a whole different set of assumptions than the kingdoms of our world. If that sounds like a kingdom you and I want to be part of, then our knee-jerk reaction will be the same as the wisemen – we too will bow the knee in worship. We will then want to live as Kingdom people. In the weeks to come, I pray we will really listen to Jesus’ message. I suspect as we do so, it will be unnerving - and not just for the Herods’ of our world, but for us all.

Why? because Jesus’ way is a threat...a threat to our habit of living only as we please. And our reaction may still be to get rid of Jesus -or at the least to ignore him. But another reaction may be to give thanks for the new king, to welcome all that He came to be and to bring – to be our Saviour & Lord and to bring us salvation and eternal life. And for that, my reaction is now and I pray always will be to bow my knee – what about you – what is your knee-jerk response?

Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN OF RESPONSE: ***‘Take the name of Jesus with you’***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWJycJx-1Co>

Take the name of Jesus with you, Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you, Take it, then, where'er you go.

Refrain:

Precious name, (Precious name,) oh, how sweet! (oh, how sweet!)
Hope of earth and joy of heaven;
Precious name, (Precious name,) oh, how sweet! (oh, how sweet!)
Hope of earth and joy of heaven;

Take the name of Jesus ever, As a shield from every snare;
If temptations 'round you gather, Breathe that holy name in prayer.

Refrain:

Oh, the precious name of Jesus! How it thrills our souls with joy,
When His loving arms receive us, And His songs our tongues employ.

Refrain:

At the name of Jesus bowing, Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of kings in heav'n we'll crown Him, When our journey is complete.

Refrain:

INVITATION & PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

God tells us over and over in the Bible not to be afraid. Our gifts this morning are one way that we trust God even in a world that keeps telling us to be afraid. We let go of thinking that we are on our own, and live each day in graceful dependence on God. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise.

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

Doxology: ***Praise God from whom all blessings flow***

Praise Him all creatures here below

Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication:

God, you have given each of us gifts to use as members of the body of Christ. Here are our gifts – the work of our hands, our hearts, and our lives. We pray that they may help to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to our world, today and always, here and everywhere. Amen.

Special Music Presentation: Elizabeth Kaliza

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJV4ZIUqVlo&feature=youtu.be>

PRAYERS of the People and the Lord's Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you are worthy of our praise and thanksgiving – and we bow in prayer to say ‘Thank You.’ Thank you for salvation, thank you for teaching us a better way, thank you for giving us strength for the living of these days. The days in which we live are full of problems – we see and hear and experience the affects of a world-wide issue in this pandemic. On top of that, many places of the world also experience all that comes from corrupt regimes, from violence and war, from the unfair distribution of resources, from the hoarding of the powerful, from the misuse of natural resources - and people are in despair. We know there are still those, who like Herod, make decisions only for selfish gain. Lord Jesus, we need your reign, we need Your kingdom to come. Thank you for the Gospel. Thank you that in the midst of anything and everything that is and has been wrong in this world – YOU CAME. And you still come to seek and to save and to restore and renew. We need that personally, we need that as community, we need that in our world. In so many places war and terror and the killing of innocents continue on and on such that the rest of the world forgets –the civil conflicts of Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, the Congo, Nigeria, - the new country of Ambazonia where even our own church members are from, - Lord God we pray for peace and for order and for good and proper leadership to emerge so that peace might prevail. Heavenly Father we pray today also for the leadership and decisions of our own governments – federal, provincial and civic – we pray that peace, order, and democratic rights to prevail in this land which from sea to sea to sea we ask for Your provisions and protections. Heavenly Father we pray for our immediate community and church – for those who we live beside, work beside, worship with and share life with as families and friends. We pray for each need – for those who have health concerns – may they receive the treatments, medicines, and therapies to improve their health and to bring healing. For those with work and employment concerns – may changes come to give them more security or offers of new jobs and a sense of accomplishment in all that they do. For those who are challenged by their responsibilities, at work or at home, and feel overwhelmed – give them time to rest and regain perspective and to get help if needed. For those in emotional and relational distress – assure them of your presence and your peace. For those who have walked away from the faith they once knew, the faith of their fathers – draw them back to yourself Lord Jesus and restore and renew them in relationship with You. We pray for fathers as they influence and guide – may they be loving and wise and faithful in their families. We pray for the life and ministry of our church in these days – we pray for safety and well-being as we return to worship in our sanctuary next week. We pray for our open doors to the community as we seek to provide opportunities for fun and fellowship. We pray for our witness that as people of God we communicate His love and care in all that we do.

Be pleased O God to bless us and use us in living out Your Kingdom here and now.
Hear now our private prayers for each need that concerns us so that we might trust
You to hear and answer – according to Your will.

(time of silence)

We pray all these things in faith, believing even as Jesus 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: *'How deep the Father's love for us'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzQj7XvKFmA>

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

GOD SENDS US . . .

As you go from here, remember this:
Because of the work of the Holy Spirit within us,
we are sons and daughters of God.
We have been adopted into his family; God is truly our Father.
And if we are God's children, we are His heirs, and fellow heirs with Christ.
So go in peace and confidence...

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: 'O How He loves you and me'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjDh4yuil9w>

Oh, how He loves you and me,
Oh, how He loves you and me,
He gave his life, what more could He give?
Oh, how He loves you, Oh, how he loves me;
Oh, how he loves you and me.

Jesus to Calvary did go,
His love for sinners to show.
What He did there brought hope from despair.
Oh, how He loves you; Oh how he loves me;
Oh, how he loves you and me.

