

*Officiant:* The Churches of our Diocese stand on the traditional territories of the Algonquin Nation.

*People:* **May we dwell on these lands always with respect and peace.**

*Officiant:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

*People:* **And also with you.**

### **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty God,  
your Son Jesus Christ has taught us  
that what we do for the least of your children  
we do also for him.  
Give us the will to serve others  
as he was the servant of all,  
who gave up his life and died for us,  
but lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **The Proclamation of the Word**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** GENESIS 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; PSALM 45:11-18  
ROMANS 7:15-25a; MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30

*(You may use your own Bible, or click on this link:*

<https://lectionary.anglican.ca/nrsv/?date=2020-07-05>

### **Sermon**

John Lennon's song, "Imagine" – Many people regard it as one of the most significant popular songs of the last 60-70 years.

"Imagine all the people living for today  
Nothing to kill or die for  
Imagine all the people living life in peace  
I hope some day the world will be as one  
No need for greed or hunger  
Imagine all the people sharing all the world."

It is a song that imagines a perfect world, (at least in John Lennon's mind) in which everybody lives in peace and harmony with each other. And it is a vision that is compelling.

There is another story that tells of a perfect human society.  
We find it in scripture, in the book Genesis;

it is the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.  
It too is the story of perfect humanity (at least the first part of the story).

And these two stories demonstrate something about human beings: we can envision perfect humanity – we can imagine every human being to be perfect.

But of course no such person exists – not even ourselves.

And that's frustrating; what's the use of being able to imagine every person as a perfect person, but none of them are. All we encounter are people with shortcomings, with wounds (physical or otherwise). And of course we feel that most intensely with those who are closest to us; ourselves, first and foremost - why can't I be perfect. And our family - spouse, children, our parents; and the people we work with; our friends. Why can't these people be the perfect people I want them to be?

St Paul, in his letter to the Romans (today's second reading) understood that too:

"I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. .... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

We know what we want

we know what is right

But we don't do it

– we smother what we want, and what is right.

(NB sometimes we don't know what is right.

In the Gospel today, Jesus is dealing with some who didn't know what was right:

John the Baptist was an ascetic, practiced self-denial, and was dismissed by some as crazy;

Jesus was not an ascetic, and dismissed as unrespectable)

What do we do?

First step is to recognize the brokenness of our humanity, and how that causes us to behave sometimes.

Some years ago, I was the Rector of a Parish where the Organist was the daughter of a Free Methodist Church Minister – and that led to some interesting conversation about life in the manse.

She told the story of how her father used to write little comments in the margin of his sermon notes - usually about presentation. One of his favourites was WPSLH. But for the longest time he wouldn't tell his children what WPSLH stood for.

Finally he revealed the meaning of WPSLH – "weak point, shout like heck!"

And isn't that often the way: our strongest reactions are when we're unsure, insecure, threatened.

When our argument is weak, or when we're wrong, that's when we get really angry. And because it's highly emotional and sometimes irrational, often hurtful of others; more significantly, prevents them becoming opportunities of new life.

Brokenness, insecurity, threat, sin – they are the unavoidable elements of the human condition.

– we are less than the vision of perfect humanity.

And that's the point of the rest of the story of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve – the part about the snake and the forbidden fruit: human beings can envision perfect humanity, but we can't achieve it.

I'd be interested to know whether John Lennon thought his vision in his song could be achieved; he never says; but if he thought it could be achieved, he'd have been wrong. The question is, in the midst of all this imperfection, and our inability to be perfect, what do we do about it?

But amidst brokenness, there is a miracle waiting to happen.

The miracle is that brokenness is always an opportunity

– the opportunity to give light for the future

And we can declare that as Christians, because the story doesn't end in the Garden of Eden.

And we can say there is a miracle in the brokenness, because it was true of Jesus Christ.

Life in Christ always places us at the cross, at that brokenness,

with the perspective of light to the future – resurrection –

to embrace brokenness with Christ is to embrace the opportunity of new life, of change, of resurrection.

Not that the change is always dramatic (often ordinary)

not that we realize it at the time (often in hindsight)

– sometimes that new life comes slowly

– just like seed growing gradually.

What stage am I at?

Does my brokenness, my insecurity, my hurt make me defensive, make me lash out at others?

Or do I seize it as an opportunity to look for the light of new life?

Do I try to stand with Christ,

holding to the cross of Calvary,

looking for the light of resurrection?

At what stage of growth are we?

In what ways does being Christian makes us (a) new people?

For what is God choosing us at this moment, as a new avenue of growth?

What new life is in store for us?



## **Apostles' Creed**

*Officiant:* Let us confess the faith of our baptism as we say,

*All:* **I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again  
to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Intercessions and Thanksgivings**

Come, Lord, come to us, that we may find rest and peace in you.  
Come, Lord, come to us, that we may love you and proclaim your saving power,  
that we may live to your glory.

We give thanks to you for all who labour for the coming in of your kingdom.  
We pray for visionaries, preachers, pastors, evangelists, pastoral carers.  
We pray for the Church in all places.  
We pray for the United Church of Pakistan; The Most Revd Humphrey Peters - Bishop  
of Peshawar & Moderator of the Church of Pakistan  
We pray for our Diocese, and for Shane our Bishop.  
St. Thomas the Apostle, Ottawa; The Venerable Peter Crosby & The Reverend Tim  
Kehoe  
St. Thomas, Woodlawn, St. George's, Fitzroy Harbour, The Reverend John Stopa,  
Lord, we come to you.  
**Give us rest and refreshment.**

We pray for those who are overwhelmed by the greatness of the task facing them,  
for all wearied by their work,  
for those without human support,

for all who work in lonely and dangerous places.  
We come with our tiredness and our weariness.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment.**

We pray for all who have lost the joy and pleasure of living,  
for the bored, the cynical, and all who are jaded with life.  
We remember all who are overworked and stressed.  
We pray for all who cannot relax and enjoy themselves.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment.**

We pray for those who have invited our prayers, especially Zachariah, Marjorie, Cheryl,  
Roy, Jeanette, Emerson;  
those affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, through sickness, loneliness, loss of work,  
loss of income, loss of friendship and support.  
We pray for those who are on each of our hearts and minds this morning.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment**

Lord, make our homes places of peace and calm.  
We pray for families where there is strife,  
for relationships that are at the point of breaking.  
We pray for those whose lives have become dull.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment.**

We pray for all who are over-anxious,  
for the depressed and the despairing,  
for all who are suffering from a breakdown.  
We pray for all who are no longer coping on their own.  
We come with our own burdens and needs.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment.**

We give thanks for all who are departed and are at rest  
and have found newness of life in you.  
We pray for all whose suffering is over  
and are restored and renewed in your kingdom.  
We pray that with them we may know your almighty power.  
Lord, we come to you.

**Give us rest and refreshment.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Officiant* Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

***All:* 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,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Officiant:* The good and gracious God grant you refreshment, renewal, restoration, that in his power you may live and work to his glory. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

*Officiant:* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

***All:* Thanks be to God.**