



The Spirit of St. Paul's

www.stpaulslutheran.ca

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

Pastor's Corner

"I am the vine, you are the branches"

I discovered this Spring that the heavy snowstorm that we got last November was hard on our trees and plants. The weight of the snow led to several branches being snapped off. Once the snow melted, I gathered up the dry and dead branches, and as I did this I was reminded of when Jesus said that He is the true vine, and we are the branches (John 15:5). It's a great picture of how God abundantly provides all that we need to be His healthy branches that bear much fruit. Being connected to the true vine means that we have a never-ending source of God's blessings and life and we flourish.

Along with Jesus' comforting words of the life of the true vine and its fruit producing branches are words of warning. He said that if we are not connected to him, if we don't abide in him, we are like a branch that withers, is gathered, and thrown into a fire (John 15:6). Jesus does not tiptoe around the fact that separated from the vine the branch cannot live or bear fruit by itself. It dies. This is important because we see that we do not become branches by bearing good fruit, but we bear fruit because we are branches that are connected to the true vine.

Stay attached to the true vine. Abide in Christ, and He abides in you. He made you His branch, He

connected you to Himself through your baptism. The true vine nourishes through His Word when you hear and read it, meditate on it, and spend time in prayer. He feeds you His true body and blood to forgive and strengthen you, to give you the nutrients you need to be His fruit-producing branch.

Being connected to the true vine doesn't mean that everything will be easy in this life. In fact, Jesus

said that He prunes His branches so they may bear more fruit. This often involves hardships. But it's especially in these times that we come to realize how important it is to cling to Christ and receive His promises. As we abide in Him, and He in us, we bear the fruit that glorifies our heavenly Father and so prove to be Christ's disciples.

*God's blessings,
Pastor Keith*



Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.
- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.
- LWMLC mites and offerings will eventually be collected the first Sunday of each month when we all return to worship in our church building. For now you may include your mites with your congregational offering but as a separate cheque clearly marked as LWMLC mites.

Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.



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Next deadline: May 26, 2021
 Publication: May 31, 2021

Whispering Hope

In my high school years I belonged to a school choir often referred to as the Glee Club. One of my favourite songs to sing was “Whispering Hope.” I loved the lyrics, the harmony and the hope that resounded in the words.

In the interest of nostalgia and today’s technology I decided to check into “Whispering Hope” and see what I could learn about its origin.

Words and music were written by Septimus Winner, a self-taught musician, in 1868. He lived and died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 11, 1827-November 22, 1902. Many of his songs were published under the pseudonym Alice Hawthorne (an arrangement of his mother’s maiden name).

It was not meant to be a religious song, according to his friends, but it did prove to be his most successful. This is the work Winner will be most remembered for—the last popular song written before his death. It gained instant success in churches and has been published in some hymnals.

Based on Hebrews 6:19 (I have added verse 18 for more clarity) **18:** “For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. **19:** This hope, we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the presence behind the veil,” the text of the song refers to the anchor that keeps the soul unwavering—the *Whispering Hope* for all Christians. (This excerpt was taken from an article, Story Behind the Song: from folk tunes to jail to Whispering Hope, written for the Walton Sun by

Pam Griffin in 2019).

One interesting fact I learned in my research, there is a third verse which I do not recall having sung at school or heard in popular renditions by famous singers such as Anne Murray or Jim Reeves. It is this verse that ties into the anchor we have in Christ.

I am sure there are many others besides myself that can relate to “**Whispering Hope,**” so let’s sing.

*Soft as the voice of an angel,
 breathing a lesson unheard,
 Hope with a gentle persuasion,
 Whispers her comforting word:
 Wait till the darkness is over;
 wait till the tempest is done,
 Hope for the sunshine tomorrow,
 after the shower is gone.*

Refrain

Whispering hope,
 oh how welcome thy voice,
 making my heart
 in its sorrow rejoice.

*If, in the dusk of the twilight,
 dim be the region afar,
 Will not the deepening darkness,
 brighten the glimmering star?
 Then when the night is upon us,
 why should the heart sink away?
 When the dark midnight is over,
 watch for the breaking of day.*

Refrain

*Hope, as an anchor so steadfast,
 rends the dark veil for the soul,
 Whither the Master has entered,
 robbing the grave of its goal.
 Come then, O come, glad fruition,
 come to my sad weary heart;
 Come, O Thou blest hope of glory,
 never, O never depart.*

Refrain

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Stewardship

St. Paul teaches us: “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches” (Gal. 6:6). And again, he says: “Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:13–14). In other words, ministers of the Gospel are supported by the offerings of those who are served by them.

And this is how the church lives even now. It is standard practice. But this deserves closer examination. For it instructs us not just that we are to give but also what we are to give. And it does so with four little words: “In the same way ...”

St. Paul is building his case for supporting the preachers of the Gospel with the sacrificial giving of

Whispering Hope, continued

During this time of the pandemic as we begin to become more hopeful with the start of the vaccinations in our community but are still aware of the dangers of new variants, we still need to be encouraged to have hope. Our greatest hope comes from the Word of God and I encourage you to take time to check a Bible concordance for the word hope and look up some of these passages.

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” (Romans 12:12)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

*Clara Zirk for the
Board of Evangelism*

individual members on the example of the Old Testament people who supported the Levites with their offerings and sacrifices. We’re to support the Gospel ministry “in the same way.” But how did the Old Testament people support the Levites?

Moses records this: “You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always” (Deut. 14:22–23). The Levites were supported by the tithe, 10 percent of all the yearly yield of that which was harvested.

Does that seem like a lot? Does it surprise you that St. Paul instructs us that we are to support the New Testament Gospel ministry “in the same way?” If it does, ask yourself: Is the church’s job in the New Testament bigger or smaller than the Levites’ job in the Old Testament? Back then, there was one Temple, and the ministry was almost exclusively located in one nation among the descendants of Abraham. In Matthew 28, Jesus calls us to teach and baptize all nations, and there are churches and ministries all around the world! How could we support this new Gospel ministry with anything less than the Israelites supported the Old Testament ministry?

Of course, we are free to give more, for we have received more than those in the Old Testament. We have received the fullness of God’s revelation, the fullness of His salvation, and the fulfillment

of everything that God promised to do. For we have received Christ, God’s own Son, in the flesh, who took upon himself our sins and in exchange gave us his righteousness. The Father claimed us as his own in Holy Baptism. He gathers us together in the place where his name dwells to feast on the first fruits of the resurrection, the risen and living body and blood of His Son – our Lord Jesus. He reminds us that we are His, that all things are ours because we belong to Him. He blesses us here in time with physical and spiritual gifts.

In the same way – and in response to His fatherly divine goodness and mercy – we gladly give to those who proclaim to us “the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.” For once we were not a people, but now we are God’s people; once we had not received mercy, but now we have indeed (1 Peter 2:9–10).

Last month, we reported that we ended 2020 with a surplus of \$6,404 which was a very pleasant surprise, given the challenges we were faced with from COVID-19’s restrictions on public gatherings and worship attendance. Thank you for your faithfulness and ensuring the work and mission of the congregation is maintained. We also reported that, to the end of February 2021, we recorded a deficit of \$10,060 compared to a deficit to the end of February 2020 of \$3,800. At the time of writing this report, we do not have financial results to the end of March, so we are unable to give you an update. We do know however that the subsidy support

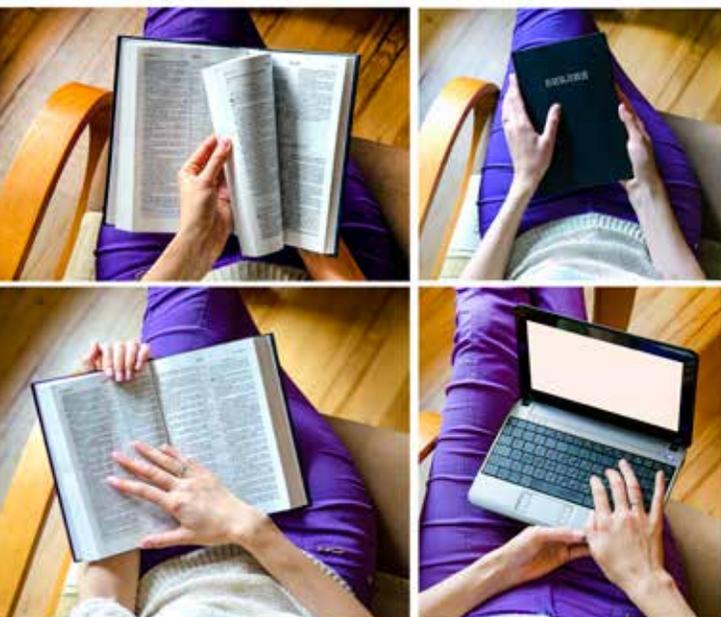
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Stewardship, continued

from the federal government will continue through summer and early fall which will help our financial situation as we are applying for all subsidy programs for which we are eligible. We expect, however, the level of that support in 2021 will be lower than last year as the economy recovers and restrictions are gradually relaxed.

There is no question that while we have been supported by federal subsidy programs, the bulk of our revenue continues to come from our members through their offerings. Members have been very faithful in supporting our programs and expenses and for that we are very thankful. We pray that your support will continue “in the same way” that our Old Testament and New Testament forefathers demonstrated.

*In His Service
Board of Stewardship*



A PARTING PRAYER

Dear Lord, my body's aging
As all our bodies will.
The life which You have blessed me
Will soon be gone, and still...

The blessed years You've given
I'm so grateful for.
I know that some I've squandered
When I could have done much more.

You died for each of us, dear Lord,
Your love's beyond compare,
But still in our sinful nature
We sometimes forget to share.

We fail to pass your Word along
To those we meet each day
And that You've promised to return
To take us home to stay.

Forgive me Lord, forgive us all
When we selfishly go our way.
We neglect to teach our children
Of Your love and how to pray.

Heaven one day will be our home,
Our place You will prepare.
Your joy and love will then prevail
For all believers to share.

until that time, be with us, Lord,
When in our doubt we stray.
Keep us ever in the faith;
We long with You to stay.

*Ruth Stromberg Viddal, Atikokan, Ont.
reprinted from Tapestry, Fall 2020*