

GRACEVIEWS

**September/October
2024**

Our mission is to worship God, to spread His word, and to serve communities near and far.



**Graceview Presbyterian Church
588 Renforth Drive, Etobicoke ON M9C 2N5**

Minister's Message...

Dear Graceview family,



As we reflect on the many ways our faith guides us, I want to touch on a topic that, while not always at the forefront of our minds, is deeply significant: the relationship between our Christian faith and the Jewish people. This connection is one that we often take for granted, but it's essential to remember the deep roots of our spiritual heritage.

Earlier, we heard from Jorge Sedaca of Chosen People Ministries, whose message offered us valuable insights into God's ongoing plan for Israel and its people. As Christians, we are blessed to share in the rich heritage of the Jewish tradition. The Scriptures, the history of the Israelites, and the life of Jesus, who was Himself Jewish, form the bedrock of our faith.

This shared history invites us to consider our responsibility in standing against anti-Semitism, a prejudice that has, regrettably, persisted throughout history. Our spiritual connection with the Jewish people makes it imperative for us to challenge and resist any form of discrimination against them. The rise of anti-Semitism today is a reminder for us all to stand firm in our commitment to justice and love.

I found it intriguing to learn that Jorge's surname, "Sedaca," originates from the Hebrew word "צְדָקָה [Tsedakah]," which means righteousness. This term is a key concept that frequently appears in the Bible. It serves as a subtle reminder that pursuing righteousness and justice is central to

our Christian walk, particularly when it comes to addressing prejudice.

As we ponder the message from earlier, I encourage us to deepen our engagement with the Old Testament, the Jewish Bible. It can be challenging at times to reconcile the image of God as presented in the Old Testament with the all-loving nature of God in the New Testament. There may even be moments when we're tempted to set the Old Testament aside. But both Testaments are integral to our understanding of God's character—His justice, His mercy, and His unwavering love. Together, they provide a complete picture of God's plan for humanity, a plan that culminates in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Let us, therefore, commit to greater understanding and respect for the Jewish people, recognizing that we all share in God's divine family. May we be guided by the Holy Spirit to love our neighbours, seek justice, and live in the righteousness to which we are called.

In Christ's love and service,
Rev. Eric Lee

"To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." -Proverbs 21:3 NRSV

Guest Preacher – Rev. Jorge Sedaca



On Sunday, August 18, we were blessed with a visit from Rev. Jorge Sedaca, of Chosen People Ministries, while Rev. Eric was participating in a triathlon. I did some research on this organization which confirmed my understanding that it is made up of Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah. This is their mission

statement: *Chosen People Ministries Canada exists to pray*

for, disciple, evangelize, and serve Jewish people and to help fellow believers do the same.

I found Jorge to be an interesting and engaging speaker. The main theme of his presentation had to do with land, specifically the land that since 1948 the world has called Israel. All wars, he says, are about land – who owns it and who is trying to take it away. The territorial imperative of the human race. But Rev. Jorge's emphasis that Sunday morning was his insistence that the land that is now Israel rightfully belongs to the Jews by virtue of the promise (covenant) made by God to Abram in Genesis 15:18-21-*"To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi (river) of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates..."* He expanded upon his thesis in many ways, invoking a number of passages from the collection of ancient documents we call the Bible, especially the prophecy of Ezekiel 37:12-14: *"My people...I will bring you back to the land of Israel...I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land."*

The Chosen People Ministries maintains that the missing essential element in the people of Israel returning to the land is the Holy Spirit, which will "only happen when Israel receives the Breath of Life by recognizing Jesus as her Messiah."

That's it in a nutshell, as far as I understand. Not everyone agrees with this absolute right of the Jews to the land of Israel – in fact, some adamantly disagree, as I learned from talking to our own congregants. This issue has been controversial for centuries and has become even more controversial in light of the present-day war now going on in that part of the world. This is definitely not the place to get into the politics of it all, who is right and who is wrong. I will leave that to your own judgement. But I did find it interesting to listen to Rev. Jorge and hear what he had to say, and to learn a bit more about the Biblical passages that fuel it.

Hymn Stories: He Leadeth Me

Adapted from 101 Hymn Stories – Kenneth W. Osbeck

Author: Joseph H. Gilmore

Composer: William B. Bradbury

*He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
What -e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.*

This beloved hymn was written on March 26, 1862, by Joseph H. Gilmore. Although Rev. Gilmore was highly respected in religious and educational circles, he is best remembered for this hurriedly written text when he was just twenty-eight years of age and a visiting supply preacher in Philadelphia. Here is his account of how it came to be written:

I had been speaking at the Wednesday evening service of the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia about the 23d Psalm and had been especially impressed with the blessedness of being led by God. At the close of the service, we adjourned to Deacon Watson's pleasant home where we were being entertained. During our conversation the blessedness of God's leading so grew on me that I took out my pencil, wrote the hymn just as it stands today, handed it to my wife, and thought no more of it. She sent it without my knowledge to the Watchman and Reflector magazine, and there it first appeared in print.

Three years later I went to Rochester, New York, to preach as a candidate for the Second Baptist Church. Upon entering the chapel I took up a hymnbook, thinking, "I wonder what they sing." The book opened up at "He Leadeth Me", and that was the first time I knew that my hymn had found a place among the songs of the church.

The hymn's composer, William B. Bradbury, saw this text in the *Watchman and Reflector* in 1863 and wrote the fitting melody to match the words. He also added two additional lines to the chorus, "His faithful follower I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me."

Wash Day Blues



Tired of the usual wash day routine, where you throw a load of clothes into the washer, enjoy a glass of wine or cup of coffee while the machine does its thing, remove the clothes to the dryer, relax for an hour, fold them, and cajole your family into putting theirs away? Don't complain – be thankful.

Doing the Wash: Grandmother's 'Receet'

Here are laundering instructions from a time when the only "appliance" was a scrub board.

- 1. Bild fire in back yard to heet kettle of rain water.*
- 2. Set tubs so smoke won't blow in eyes if wind is pert.*
- 3. Shave one hole cake lie soap in billin water.*
- 4. Sort things, make three piles. 1 pile white. 1 pile cullord. 1 pile work brites and rags.*
- 5. Stur flour in cold water to smooth then thin down with billin water.*
- 6. Rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, then bile. Rub cullord but don't bile—just rench and starch.*
- 7. Take white things out of kettle with broom stick handle then rench, blew and starch.*
- 8. Spred tee towels on grass.*
- 9. Hang old rags on fence.*
- 10. Pore rench water in flower bed.*
- 11. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.*
- 12. Turn tubs upside down.*
- 13. Go put on cleen dress, smooth hair with side combs, brew cup of tee—set and rest a spell and count your blessins.*

Reformation Day is celebrated yearly on October 31, in commemoration of the posting, on October 31, 1517, of Martin Luther's 95 Theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, commonly known as the Wittenberg Castle Church.

Here is a revised version of an article that appeared in Graceviews in 2009. I reprint it now to remind us all of our reformed church heritage.

Martin's Apple Tree Revisited

Kathy Twynam



“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” -Martin Luther

Well, Martin Luther's world, and the entire theological world of the sixteenth century, did go to pieces, and Luther did plant his apple tree amid the debacle.

In light of the 507th anniversary of Martin's revolutionary ideas being made public to the citizens of Wittenberg, it seems fitting that we reflect on the beginnings of the Reformed Church movement. Many of you, having grown up in one of the reformed Christian churches, may take all of this for granted, knowing vaguely that Martin Luther started it all by hammering something to a church door several hundred years ago and later writing “Away in a Manger” and “A Mighty Fortress...” I, on the other hand, grew up in the church that he took issue with, and was taught to consider him a heretic. Now, when I think about Martin Luther, I am astounded by his bravery.

Europe in 1517 was ripe for a religious revolution. The dust was settling after the Hundred Years War. Kings everywhere were trying to wrest power from the clergy hierarchy, which

was an increasingly irritating thorn in their side. There was the Henry VIII dispute with the Pope about divorce, which contributed to the success of the English Reformation. His disagreement with Pope Clement VII about an annulment to his marriage to Catherine of Aragon led Henry to initiate the English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority.. He appointed himself Supreme Head of the Church of England and dissolved convents and monasteries, for which he was excommunicated by the pope. Today, King Charles III is the official head of the Church of England.

Another major factor contributing to the Reformation was the earlier development of the printing press, which, with its moveable type, enabled many identical volumes of the same text to be printed easily and quickly, instead of being painstakingly copied by hand. Suddenly The Bible was available to more and more people in their own language, and a general increase in literacy enabled them to read it for themselves. The church was not pleased.

And then along came Martin Luther, monk, priest, and Doctor of Theology...

He never intended to start a new church. He merely wanted to get rid of some of the objectionable practices of the old one. Remember, before the Reformation there was only one Christian church in Europe, the Roman Catholic Church. A Christian was a Christian, and Luther had the audacity to question some of the accepted practices of the Christian church. In 1516, a papal commissioner was sent to Germany to sell indulgences and raise money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther objected to the "indulgence salesmen", those who claimed that one could purchase one's release from Purgatory or Hell with money. In 1517, he posted his (celebrated or notorious, depending on your point of view) 95 theses against indulgences, and launched his career as a reformer.

Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds; rather, they are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ, who is the sole redeemer from sin. Luther's theology challenged the authority and office of the pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge.

I looked up Luther's 95 theses on the very handy internet and read them all. Believe me, they make for very tedious reading. But elsewhere Google was kind enough to provide a summary, which gives the gist of what he had to say. There were three main points:

- 1. Selling indulgences to finance the building of St. Peter's is wrong.*
- 2. The pope has no power over Purgatory.*
- 3. Buying indulgences gives people a false sense of security and endangers their salvation.*

Imagine his courage! Taught since childhood that he would go to hell if he didn't get along with the hierarchy of clergy, all the way up to the Pope, that ruled his life, he took on the most powerful institution in the world to try to right a wrong. He was well aware of potential consequences - and sure enough, his refusal to retract all his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520, and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1521, resulted in his excommunication by the Pope. Emperor Charles, not to be outdone, declared him an outlaw and a heretic, whereby his literature was banned, his arrest was required, it became an offence for anyone to provide him with food or shelter, and anyone was permitted to kill him without legal consequence. This didn't happen, however - he was protected at Wartburg Castle by Frederick III of Saxony until the furor died down and he was able to return to

Wittenberg and reinvent himself as a conservative force behind the Reformation.

I sense that my efforts to rekindle our appreciation for this brilliant, devout, truly brave man are, like his theses, getting tedious, so I will bring this to a merciful close by mentioning some of the legacies of Martin Luther which have directly affected our lives as Presbyterians in the 21st century:

- His marriage in 1525 to Katharina von Bora set the seal of approval on clerical marriage.
- By 1526, he found himself busily organizing a new church, laying down a new order of service based on the Catholic service but omitting everything that referred to sacrifice, optionally retaining the use of such trappings as vestments, altars, and candles, and including congregational singing of hymns and psalms.
- He wrote two Catechisms, the Large Catechism, a manual for pastors and teachers, and the Small Catechism, to be memorized by the people themselves.
- He translated the Bible into German (slanted toward his own beliefs), which played a major role in the spreading of his doctrine throughout Germany and which greatly influenced other vernacular translations, including the King James Bible.
- He was a prolific hymn-writer of both lyrics and music, and by using congregational singing in his order of service, opened the way for the bringing together of all classes, clergy and laity, men, women, and children. He believed in music as “...one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.”

He wasn't perfect, however – he had some nasty things to say about the followers of the other two monotheistic religions, Islam and Judaism, but in the sixteenth century political correctness hadn't yet been invented. His statements against the Jews were repudiated by the Lutherans in the 1980`s.

I ran across this remark of Martin Luther's, and I can't resist closing with it: *"I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great Pope, Self."*

Fall Dates to remember

Fall Bible Study – The Chosen, Season 4 - Tuesdays at 11:00 AM starting on September 24, for 8 weeks.

Remembering Tree Service – Sunday, November 3

Remembrance Day Sunday – November 10

Deck The Halls – Friday, November 29

Advent Lunches – Mondays, 12:30 PM starting December 2 (depending on degree of interest)

Centennial Park Place

A shout out to **Al and Lynne Bishop, Pat and Harry Learoyd, Rev. Eric**, and several others not in our congregation, for bringing the word of God every Thursday afternoon to the residents of Centennial Park Place. This important ministry has been taking place weekly for many years and is well appreciated and enjoyed by the folks who live there, most of whom are not able to get out without assistance. What our faithful people bring to them is essentially a church service, including a Call to Worship, prayers, hymns, scripture, and a short meaningful message delivered by Eric or a lay person. They also bring comfort and company to the residents, some of whom receive very few visitors. Our prayers and blessings are with you.

This was printed in the bulletin of San Marco Church, Marco Island, Florida, back in July. It was given to me by my sister Lynne, who attends that church every Sunday while she is in Florida. I really liked it, and I share it with you.

Hidden Treasure

Deacon John, San Marco Church

Have you ever experienced losing something treasured? You never notice it's missing until the moment comes to use it, wear it, display it, or pass it on to someone else. Then comes the frustration of: Did I put it somewhere for safekeeping? Did I loan it to someone? Did I carelessly discard it? Was it perhaps taken from me?

When we were children we played "Hide and Seek", deliberately hiding ourselves from others and waiting for them to find us in our secret hiding places. As adults we may still be playing "Hide and Seek", only now we play it with the values and treasures of our lives.

It is so easy to lose what we value. We may deeply believe in the necessity for solitude and reflection but gradually there's not enough space left in our day. We become so used to not having any space for solitude that finally we no longer notice that it is missing. Or we may truly believe in the need to forgive and be reconciled, to start anew in relationships that have sharp edges or dull pain, but we allow little, hard spots in our hearts to build up into a wall that forgiveness cannot penetrate. Eventually we end up losing all sense of direction and are at a loss.

If we look closely into our hearts, we will find that we have all lost something we value. We may have lost our patience or our integrity; we may have lost our tempers or our respect for self and for others; we may have lost hope or our capacity to understand or accept. Maybe we have even lost the desire to pray.

Sometimes we are not even sure what we have lost, but something deep down tells us we must look. Something unknown gnaws at our insides and begs us to hunt, to pursue it. It may be a giant restlessness, or a feeling of not being at home with ourselves, or an inner ache that won't go away.

(The Bible) is filled with images of lost treasures being found. There is the lost son who returns home to the arms of a father long waiting for him. There is the shepherd who searches for and gathers into his arms the lost lamb. And there is the woman who is overjoyed at finding a precious treasure hidden in a field.

The lost things of the gospel are treasures worth seeking. We can discipline ourselves to pray and bring those lost treasures back into our hearts. But it takes persistence. It takes a yearning for the God light to give direction. It takes our openness and our love of the truth.

* * * * *



Time for some “Thanks”

Earl Nixon – for all he has done and continues to do for our church. What happens when he takes a Sunday off? Well, a few weeks ago, at Offertory time, Rev. Eric called for the offering and with Earl and Dave both away that day, no one brought it forward. Fortunately Harry, bless him, realized this, leaped up, retrieved the offering plate, and carried it up the aisle.

Susan Chopp – for her faithful production of the Weekly News – which was initiated as a temporary measure during the pandemic but proved so valuable and loved that she has continued it.

Lynne Bishop, for keeping our sanctuary and narthex appropriately decorated for the seasons. She tells me she changes the décor about seven times a year. Does anyone notice, or do we take this for granted?

Al Bishop, for his work on the Finance Committee and for counting the offering every week and delivering it to the bank.

Halyna Parypa, for doing such a fabulous job on the Power Point every week.

The AV Team - Godfrey, Norma, Iris, Halyna, Jackie, Bob - for their faithful production of the live stream every week.

The Church Directory team – Kathy, Bob, Norma, Carol – for their work on the 2024 directory, which should be available very soon.

The Search Team – Susan, Kathy, Norma, Lynne, Janet – for their work on finding a new Music Director. The search should be wrapped up soon.

The prayer people, readers, and announcement people, who are willing participants in the church service.

There are others who should also be recognized for their faithful service to our church and our congregation. You know who you are. Please be assured that we appreciate and thank you for all that you do.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Maya Angelou

Getting the Words Out, Part 2...The Debt I Owe You

Kathy Twynam

A few weeks ago, it was my turn to read the scripture passages in our worship service. As I was standing at the lectern, reading with almost perfect fluency and no anxiety, I was thinking about how, only a few years earlier, I could not, and would not, have even considered doing such a thing. For all my years of involvement in church affairs, the one thing that I would never agree to do was to read aloud. I remember being asked by Rev. Jan, early in his tenure with us, if I would read the following Sunday, and telling him that he could ask me to do anything else but “please don’t ask me to read.”

So what changed?

In October 2020, I wrote an article for Graceviews, titled **“Getting the Words Out”**, which described my life-long struggle with stuttering, explaining with great verbosity what stuttering is, and how it had affected my life and the lives of other chronic stutterers. The article was prompted by watching the Democratic National Convention in August of that year, as current United States President Joe Biden accepted the nomination for his party in a lengthy, dynamic, flawless and perfectly fluent speech. I knew Joe Biden to be a life-long stutterer, and I thought it remarkable that he had ascended to the most influential and powerful job in the world, despite his challenges. He describes these challenges as one of the hardest things he has ever had to overcome. As a child in Catholic school, he remembers being mocked by classmates, and, shockingly, a teacher. For a man who

couldn't utter a fluent sentence as a boy, it is absolutely astounding what he had achieved in his lifetime of public service. He is an inspiration to me, even more so now that he has put country ahead of self, done the right thing, and stepped out of the 2024 race to the presidency.

I believe my 2020 article to be the turning point for me, somehow resulting in a profound change in attitude that I consider somewhat of a miracle. I haven't quite figured that out yet, beyond a feeling of, well, it's out there now, the congregation knows that reading aloud for me is challenging, and if they don't like it, I can live with that. My stutter is part of me, always has been, and since there is no cure, only management, always will be.

Since early in 2020, at the request of Rev. Rebekah I have been responsible for preparing a roster of lay scripture readers. One day, when the pandemic was mostly behind us and we were finally able to worship in person again, I took the bull by the horns and put myself on the list of readers, as an experiment to see how I would handle it. I must admit, the first time I got up to read in church I was extremely nervous and had to curb my desire to flee, but to my surprise I found I could do it reasonably competently, with few hesitations. Somehow, I had found a way to mitigate my disfluencies, to read the words in measured tones, taking a breath when I needed to and focussing not on myself and my butterflies but on the word of God that I was speaking. I was mystified, having spent a lifetime trying to avoid speaking, or reading, in public. But then out of nowhere the thought popped into my mind that God was right there beside me holding my hand, just as He was with Moses, whose initial and immediate response when God told him to persuade Pharaoh to "let his people go" was, "No way, Lord!" But he did it anyway.

So I put myself on readers' the list again, a few weeks later, to see if the first time was just an anomaly. It seemed it wasn't. As the months went by and I continued to do the readings periodically, I found myself becoming progressively more comfortable, and came to want to do it, considering it a privilege to participate in the service in this way.

And, my dear friends, I have you to thank for my new-found liberation. Today when I am reading the scripture or doing the Prayers of the People, I look out over our wonderful faithful, kind congregation and see, not a group of strangers sitting in judgement, but a gathering of friends who, I know, will forgive me if I stumble. Thank you, thank you, thank you everyone, for this tremendous gift you have given me, the gift of freedom from fear.

“According to most studies, people’s number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you’re better off in the casket than delivering the eulogy.”
-Jerry Seinfeld

Saying goodbye to Music Director Kento Stratford



Sunday, August 25, was Kento's last day as our Music Director. The choir grouped around him as we said our sad goodbyes and

wished him well in the future. To see him off in true Graceview fashion we had - you guessed it - cake!

One potato, two potato...



As we were driving through the beautiful province of Prince Edward Island this July, we were passing fields and fields of green plants with pretty purple or white flowers. I had no idea what they were, until I remembered that this was PEI, and these

growing crops that I had never seen before were very likely potatoes. I looked them up, and sure enough, that's what they were. I suspect that those of you who grew up on farms will wonder why on earth I would be so fascinated by the source of our French fries, which our society eats a lot of, but I had no idea how potatoes grew or what they looked like in the field. I thought, "Maybe I'm not the only one who hasn't a clue how potatoes grow", and I decided to find out a bit more about them.

Potatoes are cousins to eggplants, peppers, tomatoes – and deadly nightshade (belladonna). The part of the potato plant we eat grows beneath the surface—it's the tuber, that we dig up at the end of this plant's life cycle.

Potato tubers are not the roots, but a type of enlarged structure derived from stems that the plants use as storage organs for nutrients. I was intrigued to learn that the parts of the plant above the soil are not edible. Potato leaves, flowers, and berries are, in fact, poisonous. They won't kill you instantly, but they will make you sick for a while. And I think that's all we need to know about potatoes.



Penne and Italian Sausage

Here is an easy skillet recipe that I adapted from a recipe I cut out of the Milk Calendar many years ago. I have made it often.

Ingredients

5 or 6 hot Italian sausages, depending on how big they are.
(If you don't like spiciness, use mild Italian sausage.)
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 green or red pepper, roughly chopped
1 tsp Italian seasoning, or more, to taste
A few shakes of crushed red pepper, to taste
2 tbsp cornstarch
1 can diced tomatoes
2 cups milk
250 gm uncooked penne pasta
1 cup grated mozzarella cheese

Method

- Cut sausage into 1 inch pieces. (I remove the casings first).
- In a large skillet, cook sausage on medium high heat until browned on all sides.
- Add onion, garlic, green or red pepper and cook until onion is tender. Stir in cornstarch.
- Add milk and stir until the mixture comes to a boil and thickens.
- Add tomatoes and penne. Return to a boil, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes until pasta is cooked.
- Stir in mozzarella cheese and serve.

It's delicious, and flexible. If desired, you could add other vegetables such as zucchini, mushrooms, celery.

Serves 4 to 6

Dear Graceview Family,

Welcome back! I hope your summer was restful and rejuvenating, as we gear up for another eventful year full of service to God, our church, and our community.

I hope you have enjoyed the September/October issue of Graceviews. The next issue will be available early in November. **The deadline will be Sunday, October 27.**

If you have anything you wish to share with your church family, please make your editor very happy by writing it up and sending it to me by email. If it interests you it is bound to interest someone else. And don't forget my plea for recipes! I need your help, as my supply of recipes is dwindling.

Church Directory

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