

Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

4 November 2018
All Saints' Day

“Your Will Be Done”

THY
WILL BE
DONE

Hebrew Scripture: Ecclesiastics 3:1-8
Christian Scripture: II Corinthians 9:6-15



Last week I told you that I love St. Peter jokes. Here is another one for you on this, the third week of our stewardship campaign: There was a rich man who was quite distressed over the prospect of not being able to take his riches with him when he died. When he expressed his concerns to his minister, they prayed about the problem and were given the solution. Before he died, the wealthy man went to his bank and loaded a suitcase with gold bars from the

vault. When he appeared at the pearly gates, he had the suitcase in hand. St Peter asked, “What do you have in your suitcase?” Very proudly, the man opened his case to display his booty. St. Peter said, “You brought pavement?”

Friends, it is clear to me that the man in our story did not leave a legacy on earth, nor did he leave one in heaven.



The book of Ecclesiastes states that there is a season for every activity under heaven (3:1). I believe that now is the season for Centre Congregational Church to leave a legacy. We have ‘now’ to do it. I am not sure that the season to leave a legacy will last much longer. Now is the time.

ⓀAIROS.

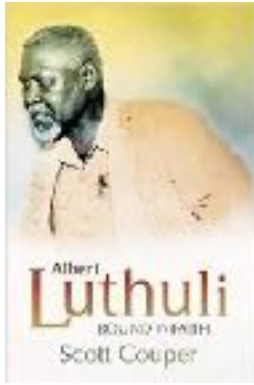
In Greek, there is a unique word that means ‘a God-given window of opportunity’: *kairos*. *Kairos* is a time, a season, that must be taken

advantage of, there is an imperative. *Carpe diem*, ‘Seize the Day’ is the mantra in Latin. Both signify that there is a unique time to act - a unique season in which to ensure our lives matter.

I believe we are at a *kairos* moment, a season, a season to be born anew, a season to plant, a season to heal, a season to build, a season to dance, to gather, to embrace, and a season to mend. I pray you all will join with me this afternoon at 1:30pm to declare that for our church it is a season *to speak*, a season *to love* and a season *to pray* for peace with our Jewish brothers and sisters who are mourning the anti-Semitic attack on their temple in Pittsburgh.



Who here has a goal to leave a legacy? Anyone? All of us to some degree want to leave a legacy, something inspired by God that last far longer than our physical bodies. I believe I have left at least four small legacies. One, the restoration, renovation and expansion of a church founded in 1848 in South Africa: the Groutville Congregational Church. I pray this church will be there in one-hundred years in part due to my efforts with many others.



Two, I wrote the first substantive biography on Albert Luthuli. Luthuli is my faith hero and this book, if it is read by even one person one hundred years from now, will keep this man's memory alive and will serve as an inspiration.



But perhaps my greatest legacies will be my children, who I am so proud of I could burst. I and my former wife have done everything in our power to heavily invest in our children so that they may live to their fullest God-given potential. Our goal is to give them opportunities that we never had. Our investment in them will benefit my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren and my great-great-grandchildren, whether I know them or not. These are my four small legacies. The thing about legacies is, one, they must be

created intentionally and, two, they don't come cheap - legacies are built on investments.

So, here we are in the middle of our stewardship campaign, and I ask, what legacy are you and I going to leave for our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren at this church? Will our church still be a church in one-hundred years? Will it be relevant to the needs of this community? Will the gospel of Jesus Christ still be proclaimed from this pulpit and by the ministries this church offers on a daily basis? What will our legacy be?



This Sunday, I would like us to consider giving beyond your tithe. A tithe in many ways enables on-going work, the work of God to be accomplished. Yet, I am not sure a tithe builds a legacy, something that speaks to and invests in the values that we proclaim beyond our death. In other words, are we able to give beyond our own self-interest and give selflessly to future generations?

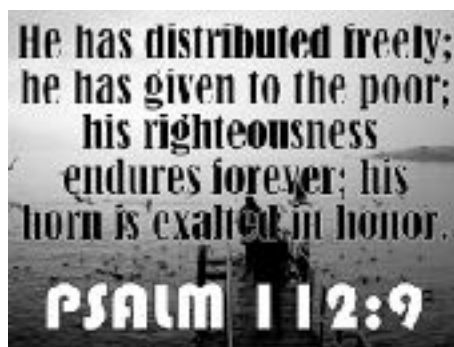


This week, I would like us to consider leaving a legacy for this church, something that will last for decades and will have impact, either direct or indirect, for a century. I would like each of us to put the church in our will. I am doing this this month with my lawyer, Mr. Costello here on Main Street. I am going to put Centre Congregational Church in my Last Will and Testament. I would like each one of us to consider writing to our Certified Financial Planner, if we have one, and ask that a percentage of our investment portfolio be withdrawn and invested in a specific donation that will substantively enhance the effectiveness of this ministry. One person can equip and decorate the library thus making it an inspiring place for our leadership to plan the work of this church. One person can equip and decorate the Riverside Room, thus making it an inspiring place for the men and women who attend AA. One person can equip and decorate the Sunday School room thus making it an inspiring place for our children and youth. I would like this church to invest thousands in Heavenlight

and Daniel and Logan and Olivier's s new children, now before they can walk or speak, so that they and their families will feel that this faith community is welcoming and nurturing. I feel that my messages would be more effective if I could broadcast images, music and scripture through a mounted projector onto a retractable screen. I would like to enable the chapel to revert to being a chapel and also serve as a theatre by which to show documentaries concerning issues about justice, Christian history, the environment, and faith to our own members and to the broader community on a regular basis. With one person and an investment, we could fulfil our promise to pay for our steeple refurbishment. With one person and an investment, we could buy a tent under which we could host outdoor events like the vigil this afternoon. With one person, we can improve all the signage in our church and design portable banners for events in our community. I believe that each one of us, and all of us, can leave a legacy for this church that will enable us to continue to minister to our descendants.



On the front of our service bulletin, it states that our church was founded in 1816. I am a beneficiary of that legacy planted in 1816 because this is where I am inspired. This is where I find hope in the world. This is where I keep cynicism at bay. This is where Republican and Democrat are not ripping each other apart. This is the place where those who are most marginalized are asked to come, to be welcomed, to be accepted, to be protected and to be loved.



Our reading from II Corinthians quotes Psalm 112:9: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness lives forever”. The planting of seeds for a legacy is the means by which righteousness can live forever. Paul thanks the congregation in Corinth for their generosity, their generosity for supporting the Macedonians, who together with other faith communities around the outskirts of the Roman empire spread the gospel, within two centuries, to the ends of the then known world, leaving a legacy that lasted two thousand years and counting. That is a legacy!



And we can trace that legacy farther back, to that of Jesus Christ, whose ultimate legacy we celebrate at this table. If we are the inheritors of such a legacy, how can we not promise today to ensure that, while we are living or after we die, we contribute to Christ's work and will in the world?

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So, as we pray the Lord's Prayer this morning, let us ensure that 'your will be done', so that God's will can be done 'on earth just as it is in heaven'.

This was the word of God, preached to the people of God, and the people of God responded, 'Amen'!