

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: <https://youtu.be/MsS1CgNH05c>

- **Fall Farmers Market – Sunday, September 26 – 9:00 AM to 12 Noon – Church Parking Lot** – Pumpkins and onions and gourds and squash and more from The Healing Farm grown by our friends in the Winnipeg Yazidi Refugee community.
- **HeBrews e-Café** will be “off-line” this week. We will look to resume on a Sunday soon.
- For news and events please have a look at **Life & Work**: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Mark 9:30-37](#)
- **Offering Information at:** www.charleswoodunited.org/donate Thank you for your generous support.

*A mistake in this week's Financial Update. The numbers given were for the **end of August, not the end of September** as printed - Apologies*

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, September 19, 2021.

As I drove home from the church on Sunday, August 29 I couldn't help but think to myself that while I have opposed private baptisms for more than 32 years maybe, just maybe, I've been wrong.

The occasion was that I had just conducted a baptism for a family of the church who had had the baptism of their infant daughter delayed several times. It had been scheduled in the spring when Public Health Orders said up to 50 could gather for a worship service. But then it was delayed when that number came down to 10, and then 5, during the third wave. Now that the number was higher again I agreed to schedule the service at their convenience. They had been so patient and understanding. And after all, they wanted to have their child baptised which is something that delights me.

We agreed that we would only have one family at a time and that they could invite a limited number of people who would have to mask, wash hands, and keep socially distant in the church. Nonetheless I put on my gown and stole, we stood at the front of the church, followed the usual liturgy, poured the water, said the words, laid on hands. It was very moving and a reminder that no matter how well we have been at adapting there are some things that just feel 'better' in person.

Ours is not a tradition that has ever given much credence to 'private' baptisms. Exceptions are obviously made in life threatening situations but those tend to be the only exceptions. We believe that baptism is a public act of worship and with good reason. At its heart, baptism is a ritual of initiation. It is an experience of welcoming a newcomer into the household of God which is difficult to do if the household of God is not present. In the service we commonly use the congregation pledges to nurture the child in faith and to support and uphold the parents in their vows. Or as I like to say, all of us are the Godparents.

But exceptional times call for exceptional measures. Or so the saying goes. And these are exceptional times. So while there was only one extended family present on August 29 (as has been the case at subsequent baptisms) it was still a public act of worship and I was elated to be part of it on your behalf.

The whole experience reminds me that there are many things about the life of the church that cannot be translated for virtual purposes. The sacraments may be the most important. While I may invite you to share in a communion online the truth is that there is something sacrificed for the sake of convenience (and safety). There is something significant about taking the bread and wine together, in seeing one another share in the meal. Meaning is added by making communion communal.

The same is true of baptism. It is vitally important to continue to offer families access to the sacrament. But for the moment those families cannot witness their congregation supporting them with your presence, your smiles, and your prayers.

Rest assured that when we gather again there will be newcomers among us. The household of God will have been expanded. Thanks be to God.

Grace and peace
Michael

P.S. This September we invite you contribute to two worthy appeals from our community partners. The dry goods listed will be given to Yazidi Refugee families supported by Operation Ezra. Our Mission and Social Action Committee will distribute donated supplies to students in need at Westgrove School. The church is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 – 4:00 for drop-off.

[Yazidi Refugee Dry Goods Food Drive](#)

All Purpose Flour
Sugar
Red split lentils
Chickpeas
Tetley Orange pekoe tea
Nescafe - Double filter
Fine salt
Canola Oil
Chicken Maggi cubes
Rooster Brand jasmine Rice
Cereal
Coffee mate

[Westgrove School Supply Collection](#)

Water Bottles
Glue Sticks
Playing Cards
White Board (erasable) Markers
Pencil Erasers
Pencil Sharpeners
Hilroy Scribblers
Pencil Crayons