

# Divine service

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider

*Unedited*



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|--------------------------------|---|
| Day / Date                     | Sunday, June 18, 2023   |
| Place / Country                | Halifax, Nova Scotia / Canada   |
| District Apostle district      | District Apostle Woll   |
| Bible text                     | 1 John 3:1... <i>Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.</i> |
| Opening hymn                   | #51 – My Heart Overflows  |
| Accompanying the Chief Apostle | District Apostle Mark Woll; District Apostle Rüdiger Krause; District Apostle Helper Frank Dzur and all the Apostles of Canada  |
| Called to serve                | District Apostle Krause<br>Apostle Sturm  |
| Ordinations                    |   |
| Official acts                  | Holy Communion for the Departed   |
| Translation                    | French via broadcast  |
| Broadcast                      | Via YouTube live streaming to congregations in Canada   |
| Attendance                     | 114 in Halifax  |

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## **OPENING PRAYER**

In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Almighty God, God of grace and God of kindness, God of love, dear heavenly Father, on this Sunday morning we gather together in this place and bow deeply before You, to adore You, to worship You, and to praise Your holy name. We thank You for Your love, we thank You for Your help, we thank You for Your grace, we thank You for Your faithfulness. Your love is just perfect, beyond anything we can imagine. We have experienced how great Your love can be and we thank You for this experience and for this knowledge. We thank You for the salvation You offer us, we thank You for the future You've prepared for each one of us and for everyone. Dear heavenly Father, we have also a special reason to express our gratitude this morning. We share in the joy of the congregation. It's the first time they can again gather in this place, in their church. We thank You for this. Dear heavenly Father, bless this place, and let also in the future the congregation experience Your presence in their midst, each time they gather together here in this place, in Your name. Let this congregation be full of Your joy and Your love. Now dear heavenly Father we pray together for all those who have to deal with difficult situations. We pray especially for those who live in countries where there is war, injustice and violence. There are so many. Dear heavenly Father, please help them, and whenever it's possible, grant peace and security. We pray for the poor ones who have just nothing. Don't forget them. Provide what they need. We pray for the sick ones, for those who are mourning. Please grant them Your help and cure them whenever it's possible. Grant them Your comfort and Your peace. Dear heavenly Father, we pray for each other. You know we want to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ and it is difficult. We are not able to do it by ourselves. We need Your grace and we need Your help. Please help us to be prepared for the return of Christ. Now dear heavenly Father allow our beloved ones from the yonder world to join us and all together bless us. Fill us with Your joy, with Your peace and with Your strength. Hear us in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER**

Dear brothers and sisters, for this Sunday we have a word out of the first epistle of John, chapter 3, verse 1... *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

## **CHOIR**

## **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER**

Dear brothers and sisters, actually it's a great joy to experience this service in your midst today. I am really glad for the congregation that we can be together here in their church. I am sure that we will experience also today the power of the Holy Spirit. As far as I'm concerned, for sure the service is a bit smaller than last Sunday. We are a few thousand less than in Zambia. But don't worry. The power of the Holy Spirit is not dependent on the number of listeners and the number of loudspeakers. The power of the Holy Spirit consists in the power of God to address each and every one and to deliver them a personal message. If they are two or twenty-thousand, the power of the Holy Spirit is the same. He will address each one in his situation of today, to tell him what God wants him

to do and to provide him the strength he needs to do so. That's the power of the Holy Spirit. I am absolutely sure that we will experience this power today.

We have a Bible word from the epistle of John. It's a special letter, actually it's a kind of warning for the believers of this time against false teachers. The Bible does not explain exactly what it is about. It appears there were some false teachers. They taught something about the nature of Jesus Christ. They didn't believe in the divine nature of Jesus Christ, and then the Apostles and their co-workers had to fight against these false teachers. We don't know exactly what it was about, because these people after a certain time just disappeared and today we don't even know exactly what their teaching consisted of. That's actually also a good lesson. Nobody knows what it really was about, but the true gospel remained.

What is the connection with us? That is quite easy. Today too, we have many people who want to explain to us what the gospel says and how we should understand it. It is just crazy, the number of people who believe and are convinced that they have the right understanding and the right interpretation of the Bible. OK, that's their business. We are New Apostolic Christians, and we do believe that God has sent His Apostles to preach the gospel in the right manner. That's our faith. The Holy Spirit has sent the Apostles, Jesus Christ has sent the Apostles, to preach the gospel in the proper, the right manner. That is why we follow the preaching of the Apostles - to be prepared for the return of Christ. That is the end of the discussion. It makes it easy. It was about the nature of Jesus Christ. These people did not accept all the messages of Jesus Christ, and one of the important messages of Jesus Christ was that Jesus Christ revealed God as the Father. Vice-versa we can say God revealed Himself as the Father through Jesus Christ. The Jewish people had another understanding of God and when Jesus came He told them: No, God is your heavenly Father. I know in North America when I say this, immediately I have some feedback: Does this mean that God is a male? No, God is not a male, He is not a female. He is far above the human nature. Here too – end of the discussion. He is above human nature. The psalmist says God takes care of us as a father and as a mother. God is the Father of all man because He has created mankind and He has authority on His creation and on His creatures. That is the first thought. He is the Father because He is the author of life, He has created man and has authority on them.

Jesus also explained that God is our Father because all man can talk to Him as to a father. Jesus explained, you know God knows your needs and provides for them, for all man. God is the Father of all man. Jesus said He sends the rain for the just and the unjust and He lets the sun shine on the good ones and the evil ones. He is the Father of all man. That is something very important and Jesus explained even more. He described God as the loving Father who is full of compassion for the sinful man. You know the story. Man was created to live in fellowship, in communion with God. Adam and Eve decided to leave God. They went far away from Him, and God is the loving Father, full of compassion and He waits for all man to come back to Him – **all** man. Paul says He waits for all of them – those who are afar, wide away, and those who are close. God is waiting and wants to save those who are far off and those who are close to Him. That's the Father. God is the Father of all man. But okay, those who didn't believe as it says here...

*the world does not know us, because it did not know Him*, those who didn't accept Jesus, those who misunderstand the message of Jesus have another understanding of God and they have another understanding of man. For them God is the judge, the judge who is waiting for the last judgement and will punish all these awful sinners. Strangely enough, many Christians still believe this. They see God as the punisher... "you will see, at the last judgement all of them will be punished." They've forgotten the message of Jesus Christ describing God as the loving Father who wants to save all man.

Jesus described God as the loving Father and said He loves, so many Christians up until now consider Him an idol. They think one can buy God. They think if you bring enough offerings, if you do the right things then you can buy His grace and His blessing. If you can be kind to God He will be kind to you, and if you are not kind to God then He is not kind to you. They behave like pagans with an idol. They bring their sacrifices – "oh, be good to me. I am obedient so be nice to me." That's not the image of God the loving Father. That's something different. Others, even in the circle of Christians, they see God as the big chief, He is the king, He has to rule the world and fix everything and put things in order in this world and in society. Some even think they should help God. They want to rule the world in His name and on His behalf as the king of Israel in the Old Testament. Many people, even the leaders, think they have to rule the world and society on behalf of God. He is the king. Jesus said, no, My kingdom is not of this world and what God wants is to save you, to deliver you from this world, but not to rule the world. That is not God's task. He is not interested in this. God is our loving Father. He loves all man, He wants to save all man and His salvation consists of eternal life.

Those who do not really believe in Jesus Christ or misunderstood His message think also that God is very selective in His love and He loves some more than others, depending on their origin, their behaviour, their religion, their faith - God has His preferences. He loves these ones more than others. That is not true. Definitely not true. All man are children of God and He loves them all with the same love. He wants all of them to be with Him in eternity. That does not mean that people benefit from His love. That's something else, because they have to do something to benefit from the love of God. But from the side of God there is no difference. He loves all of them – the sinners as the righteous ones. He loves them with the same love. He is the Father and mankind are His children. People think sometimes, oh yes, if you are wealthy that means that God loves you and He blesses you, and if you are sick or poor that means that you have done something wrong and then God rejects you. That's nonsense. God cannot do that. He loves His children, all of them, with the same love. Even if they do not behave in the same manner He won't punish them. If you are poor that does not mean that you are rejected by God and if you are rich it does not mean that you are blessed by God. Sometimes it's quite the contrary by the way. That's another story.

We have to be aware that all man are children of God and that His will is not to punish them nor to eliminate the sinners. Because sometimes man, they decide or they believe, that they have received the mission from God to punish the sinners and to eliminate those who are not as they should be. On behalf of God they want to act to punish, to eliminate the sinners. That's not the will of God – definitely not. He is the Father of all man and He loves all of them. He wants to save them not to punish them. Just this image –

Father/children – that means a lot. But you have to understand it in the light of Jesus Christ and then it becomes clear. But those who did not integrate, didn't really understand, didn't get the message of Jesus Christ, they definitely have a wrong understanding of the whole situation.

We are children of God. The second meaning of children of God – you know it: Children of God are those in a spiritual way who are reborn out of the water and the Spirit. They became heirs of Jesus Christ. They have the possibility to inherit eternal life. That is the other understanding of children of God. Children of God are those who have received all the sacraments, who believe in the proper preaching of the gospel. I'm not sure if that's the formulation in the Catechism, but something like that. They have received all the sacraments. They believe in the proper teaching of the gospel and they align their life by the return of Christ. It's not just a question of sacraments. Now I have received all the sacraments, now I am a child of God and will inherit eternal life. No. Child of God means you have received all the sacraments, you believe in the proper teaching of the gospel, and you align your life by the return of Christ. That's a true child of God. The Bible says they bear the name of the Father and the Son and they keep His name holy through their behaviour. They practise righteousness and love for their neighbour. A true child of God trusts His Father whatever happens. It's my Father. Paul said, he praised "Abba Father", that means God, You are my Father. I trust You.

That is the true child of God, and this child of God lives in the liberty of the children of God, in the freedom of the children of God. What does this mean? The Bible says those who are led by the Holy Spirit, they are truly children of God. They are free. This liberty of the children of God – I insist on this point – they are not driven by their human nature. Their behaviour is not dictated by their needs. Their behaviour is not dictated by the situation they live in. Their behaviour, their opinion, is not dictated by the mainstream and by my "beloved" social media. People can say whatever they want. They can do whatever they want. The situation may be what it is. These things will not decide how I have to behave. The child of God is driven by the Holy Spirit, and what he does, what he thinks and what he says is dictated by his faith that becomes active in love. That's the liberty of the children of God. Their behaviour, their feelings are not dependent on other people and not dependent on the situation and not dependent on his wealth or not – only on one thing: his faith – I am a child of God. God is my Father. He loves me. He wants me to be in eternity with Him. I want to be there. That is the liberty of the children of God.

Again, you have to understand the message of Jesus Christ to have the right understanding of what it means to be a child of God. Because the evil one comes – it's always the same strategy – he comes and says, "If you are a child of God then..." Then it begins, as it did with Jesus Christ – "if you are the beloved Son of God then you shouldn't suffer. How can you pretend to be a child of God, who loves you, who is your Father, and you have to go through such a difficult situation? Look at the others. They have more money, they are healthy and you are sick, they are happy and you have a lot of problems, and blah, blah, blah, blah." You know this spirit. But the one who knows Jesus Christ, and who knows Jesus Christ was the Son of God and God loved Him. But He had to suffer. He was persecuted. So, being a beloved child of God does not mean that you are spared from all suffering. That has nothing to do with it. Being a child of God means

that you have the possibility to enter the kingdom of God and to inherit eternal life. That's the meaning. That has nothing to do with being safe from all suffering and to be blessed in all earthly matters. The one who knows, Jesus Christ knows what it means to be a child of God. He just looks at Jesus and what happened to Him – okay, that's normal that it happens to me.

A true child of God also knows that there is nothing more important in his life than this divine childhood. For sure the evil one, the one who is the enemy of Jesus Christ, he wants to destroy this. He wants us to think that our earthly life is much more important than our childhood and that our opinions and our thoughts, are so important, that our rights are so important in our earthly life. But a child of God knows, no, my childhood is more important than my earthly life. I do not want to develop my person, my ideas, my opinions, my rights. I have the right to enter the kingdom of God as a firstling, and I want to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. So, it's not about my person, my opinion, it's not about me, me, me. I want to be transformed into the image of Christ and that is the most important thing for me. Being a child of God means more and matters more for me than being me. Do you understand what I mean? My childhood is more important than my person. Jesus Christ has given us the example. For Him, being the Son of God, sent by God, meant much more than being Jesus of Nazareth. The same applies to us.

God wants to gather His children together to lead them into His kingdom. He wants His children to be one and to overcome their differences. The place where they can overcome their differences is the Church. That is the will of God, the will of Jesus Christ. Yes sure, all of you are absolutely different, but I want you to become one, and the place where you can overcome your differences is the Church. Here we have a problem in today's society, because in today's society people tend to insist on their differences. That strikes me. It's incredible. More and more I am aware of this. Everyone wants to insist: I am different from the others. I am different. I belong to this group, to these people, I am made this way, I do it this way. I am different and you have to respect my difference. You have to accept me because I am different. Because I am different I have this right, and... Okay, okay – I just wonder, people, how do you want to build a society on division? Don't you recognize that the only goal of this spirit is to divide more and more. No wonder that it's just impossible to have unity in this society. No wonder that this society becomes more and more divided and selfish. Everything is made for society to become this way. More and more selfish, more and more divided. Shouldn't the people insist a little bit more on what they have in common instead of on their differences? It's not my business. As Chief Apostle I am not in charge, thank God, of society. But brothers and sisters, let's just think about it. What is the spirit behind all these things? The spirit of division. The more groups there are – they are so important, they are different – the more society will become divided and the more the world will become selfish.

Let's come back to the Church. What's important for us is not our differences, is not our ideas. God wants us to be one and Paul says, in Christ there is no Greeks and no Jews. We have no idea what it meant for this society. For us it's just two words "Greeks" and "Jews". That meant a lot. If you look a little deeper into this topic then you realize there were really two worlds, extremely different, and Paul says, in Christ there is no difference.

In Christ there is no male and no female – I don't want to insist on this one. In Christ there is no slave, no free. That meant a lot in this society too. You cannot imagine what is behind these words. For us it's just a saying, but please look at it a little deeper into the history and the context of this society, what it meant in this time, to be a Greek or a Jew, to be a free man or a slave. And Paul says, but in the Church, in Christ there is no more difference. What we have in common is much more important than what divides us. All of us, we want to renounce our opinions and to be transformed into the image of Christ. Our calling is more important than our rights. Our duty is more important than all other advantages we can have, and so on. It's easy to continue. My dear brothers and sisters, we are children of God. God wants His family, His children to be one. The place where they can overcome their differences is the Church, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can overcome all these differences and be really one in Jesus Christ, and that's our goal.

The message is quite clear. God is our loving Father, He cares for us. Don't worry, He knows exactly your needs and He will provide for them. Please accept that your neighbour is also a child of God and that He loves him as He loves you, and He makes absolutely no difference. Nobody can rule the world in the name of God. Nobody can fight the sinners and eliminate them on behalf of God. God is the loving Father of all man. We are children of God because we have received all the sacraments. We do believe in the proper proclamation of the gospel. We do want to align our life by the return of Jesus Christ. Yes, we bear the name of the Father and the Son and do everything possible to keep it holy, practising righteousness and love. We are children of God and we want to be one in Christ. With His help we can overcome all differences. Amen.

So, District Apostle Krause from Germany is here. He serves in plenty of countries, also in Russia and northern countries. Everywhere it is cold he is present. Maybe that's why he's here today. Let's sing together out of hymn #34, verse 3.

## **CONGREGATIONAL HYMN**

### **DISTRICT APOSTLE KRAUSE**

My very dear brothers and sisters, dear all, I am really happy to be here together with you in this congregation and I would like to express my congratulations. You are here together for the first time and it's the best start you can imagine – a service with our Chief Apostle. Better is not possible. I can imagine you will report to your grandchildren about this Sunday. You came back into a renovated church, renovated rooms, and our Chief Apostle served for the first time. It is really a great experience being here in your midst. I had a good seat and looked to the altar and saw the two golden rings. Two rings I think express something that belongs together. We heard that the love of our heavenly Father is spread out to all of us. The triune God is one side of the ring and the congregation the other side. But I would like to repeat, God is above the nature of man. We heard a lot of things about what our heavenly Father will do, what He did in our lives. He will redeem us, He loves everybody, He makes no borders. We do that as man often enough in our daily life, I can imagine. He is open to everybody and He will redeem everybody. It's expressed in this Bible word too. Decisive is, I think, that man can recognize Him in His depth, in all facets of His nature. Apostle John expressed they don't know us because they don't know Him. Jesus was travelling with His disciples and He asked the disciples,

what do the men think who I am? The disciples answered: Some say You are John the Baptist, some say You are a prophet Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet. Okay. He said nothing. Then He asked the disciples, who do you think I am? Apostle Peter answered, we know You are Christ, the Son of the living God. He expressed for all of us. He recognized Him as the Son of the living God. That says to me the gospel and the commandments are not only a lifestyle model in our time. To live aligned to the commandments, aligned to the gospel, okay, we find it in a different manner. It is not only a lifestyle. It is really the goal that our heavenly Father will redeem us so that we come together. Dear all, we had the opportunity to get to know our heavenly Father a little bit more this morning – more and more – and it is really good that He knows all of us very personally – all of us. Our Chief Apostle expressed that He knows our needs, our wishes, and everything. He knows that. It is good when we lay our whole life into the hands of our heavenly Father. He cares for us. He will align us to the day of the Lord. He will do that out of His love. Let us hold His hand. Let us follow Him. Let us believe, so that we can reach this great goal of our faith. Amen.

### **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER**

Knowing God through Jesus Christ – There are some people who have a good idea. God is the loving God, He will save everybody, so it actually does not matter what you do anyway. In the end God will give you His grace and you will be saved. That's not the teaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also said that God is the righteous one and He has given one way, and **only** one way, to be saved, and this way is Jesus Christ. So, to be saved you have to believe in Jesus Christ, to believe in the proper preaching of His gospel and to align your life on the gospel and the teaching of Jesus Christ. If you do not do so you cannot be saved. Nobody can come to God except through Me. That will remain true. It was true at the beginning of Christianity. It's true today, it remains true in the kingdom of peace up until the last judgement. So, to be saved it's not – just wait for the grace of God and everything will be okay. No, we really have to believe in Jesus Christ and to follow Him. That's what we have decided to do.

We have Apostle Sturm. He comes from the other side of Canada. You know the other ocean. There seems to be another one on the other side. It's a nice opportunity for him to preach here, on this side of Canada.

### **FLUTE & CELLO**

### **APOSTLE STURM**

It is a privilege and honour to be with you my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, on this special day with our Chief Apostle. We don't get this all the time and so we are just trying to enjoy every moment. A wonderful message came from our heavenly Father today, to remember that you are one in His Son. I don't know if you noticed the flowers up here. There are some reds, some white ones and when I was looking at them I thought okay they are so pretty, especially the big, beautiful bold ones. But then there are some little tiny green ones tucked away in here. You can't notice right away – will that one be red or pink or white, how big will it be, will it open fully or will it stay closed? We just don't know, but it's part of this beautiful bouquet that we appreciate and say it's beautiful. Every unique part is part of one presentation. Our heavenly Father looks at all of us the same



way. Have you ever thought about our future? When we're with Christ in the thousand year kingdom of peace – what we're going to be doing? Every one of us have unique personalities, have different connections with people from our lives and it's during that millennium that the Lord cannot wonder if we will be doing the right job or not. What's our job? To love every soul that ever existed. An opportunity for every soul to come under the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nobody will be left out. Everybody will have an opportunity. But there's a lot of work to do. As the future overcomers, the future bride of Christ, everyone will have a chance to reach out to another soul and say: Come on. Here is our Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in Him. Maybe to one it will be just one word, to another it might be an act of love. For some it might be on day one of the millennium, for others on day nine hundred and ninety-nine. I don't know, but there is going to be a lot to do. That is why already today it is so wonderful to be reminded what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. Our heavenly Father believes in you, that you have the ability to love without condition. That means to love everyone, even those that don't love us. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves of that true power of our heavenly Father's love, that nobody loves as much as He loves. It was a privilege yesterday to hear from one of our local Priests who said he had left the Church for twenty years, but because of one, maybe more than one, soul who reached out and said, just thinking about you, he felt that love. That was enough to say, I know where I am truly loved and where I belong. Today he stands as an active Priest and we're so thankful and rejoice over that testimony. We never know when just a little word, just a little act can save a soul for all eternity. Amen.

## **CHOIR**

### **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER – *Preparation for the forgiveness of sins and Holy Communion***

This image of the father and the child describes also our relationship with our heavenly Father. We have to behave with our Father as a child who trusts his father, who is humble enough to just accept what the father provides for him. For human understanding it's just impossible that God can bless and redeem every man, each one, with the same message and with the same spiritual food. From the human point of view, it's impossible, and we know this. Everyone has this thought: I would need something different. I would need something more. I would need something else. We come and attend the service and all of us hear exactly the same message. Sometimes we, the brothers, are told that you should adapt the message to this situation and to this situation, to this place and to this place. I tell you as the Chief Apostle, it's just impossible. The world is so different. Worldwide in the different countries, in the countries the different parts of the population, different ages, different situations. It would be absolutely impossible for a human being to adapt the message to each and every situation. It's not possible. I am so thankful that the Spirit says, "No, it's the same message for all of them." But we have to accept, to humble ourselves to believe it. It's against our nature, it's against our human understanding. We have to believe and accept that with the same word, with the same message God can help save, transform, everybody. Let us be humble enough and accept what the Father gives us.

In the same Holy Communion, He provides us the strength we need to do everything He wants us to do. We need a lot of faith to believe this. The sick one has to believe it, the poor one has to believe it, the rich one has to believe it. In this country, in this part of the world, they have to believe it. They have to believe it in Ukraine under the bombs, they have to believe it in some African regions where the rebels are acting, they have to believe it in New York, in Paris, they have to believe it everywhere. When they receive the Holy Communion they say, that's exactly what I need. With this strength I can do what God expects me to do. I have to believe it too because from a human point of view it's just impossible to fulfil this mission and my only solution – sorry for being personal – is to say “God, thanks, that's it, that's exactly what I need.” This morning God will provide you exactly what you need while receiving Holy Communion and He will do exactly the same for our beloved ones in the yonder world. Because we have one bread, we are one body. This bread allows us to overcome all differences and to be transformed all together into the image of Christ.

To prepare ourselves for the celebration of Holy Communion let us sing Hymn #88 – I Surrender All.

### ***HYMN OF REPENTANCE***

### ***LORD'S PRAYER***

### ***ABSOLUTION***

### **PRAYER**

God of grace and God of mercy, dear heavenly Father, we thank You. We thank You for Your grace, for Your kindness. We thank You for the salvation You offer us. We thank our beloved Lord Jesus Christ for His sacrifice, for His calling, for His promise to come back and take us with Him. We thank God, the Holy Spirit for His guidance, for His comfort and for His help. Dear heavenly Father You know our longing. We do want to become like Christ. Help us to do so. We do want to be one in Christ. Help us to become one and to strengthen this unity. We do want our neighbour to be saved. We do not want to enter Your kingdom alone. We want to enter it together and with also many other people. Help us to find those You want to add to Your people. Help us to motivate those who have become weak to come back. We want them to enter the kingdom with us. Now we long to celebrate Holy Communion. Let Your Holy Spirit be active in His power so that we can receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ and experience His presence in our midst. Hear us in Jesus name. Amen.

### ***CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS***

### ***CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION***

### **DISTRICT APOSTLE WOLL – *Preparation for Holy Communion for the Departed***

My dear brothers and sisters, we know that today, as on every Sunday, we have Holy Communion for the departed. But today we get to witness it because our Chief Apostle is here. Maybe some would say, it is a fitting time because it's Father's Day and we

remember our forefathers. But “forefathers” doesn’t only mean our fathers, it also means our mothers, all the pioneers and children that went before us and it’s a wonderful Bible word “the love of the Father”. But the Chief Apostle didn’t prepare it for Father’s Day. In Germany it’s not Father’s Day today because God goes by a different calendar. In eternity our calendar does not have any meaning for them anymore – their birthday and so on. We do. We remember them on their birthday, we remember them every divine service and that’s the important part and that’s what they feel. What they see, what they hear, what they understand, we don’t know, but we know they feel our love as we can feel their love, especially now when it comes to Holy Communion. Because it’s a special time of fellowship with Christ and with one another.

I had an opportunity this week. At my grandson’s school they wanted to celebrate Father’s Day, so they had “Popsicle with Pop”. All the fathers were invited. We showed up at 9:30 and they were already there at 8:30. The fathers were waiting outside in the playground and when the doors opened and the children came out, you could see that when they saw their father they just lit up, they glowed, and ran to their father and hugged their father and embraced him. Then they went and played their games. Every now and then they left the game to find their father and to hug them. One father was text-messaging on his phone and the daughter came over and said, “You’re not watching me! Watch!” Then he put the cell phone away. You can be sure that our heavenly Father watches us – not in a scary way. He doesn’t watch that we’re sinning. He doesn’t watch that we’re failing. He’s watching how He can love us, how He can save us. That is the treasure – the love of the Father. I could see it in the children, that that was their treasure. That’s why we come for service, that’s why we come for Holy Communion – because we’ve found the treasure in the love of the Father – both the living and the departed. I know it’s nice to have “bouncy castles” and ice cream after service. That’s all wonderful, but what good would that be for the departed? An ice cream cone will not help them, not even a cold beer will give them any satisfaction. They come solely for the fellowship, for the love of God that was poured into the Communion through the body and blood of Christ. That’s the love of God. We get to experience that now with Christ in person through our beloved Chief Apostle and through two proxies, who are the District Elder for the district, District Elder Sokolowsky and our Rector, Evangelist McLearn.

## **CONGREGATIONAL HYMN**

### **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER – Holy Communion for the Departed**

The congregation may stand up. When the District Apostle told this story about the children I just thought quickly, what if one of these children had no father? Sure, there is a father, but he is not really a father, or he is not present. What happens in the heart of such a child? This problem does not exist with our heavenly Father. Every soul in the yonder world has a Father in heaven. All of them are loved. If we could see now into the yonder world, if we could hear them? What could we see, what could we hear? We could see and hear them praising the Lord. They wouldn’t talk about their deeds, their past, they just praise the love and the power of God’s love. That is why they are not anxious for us, because they see how great the love is and they know, my Father loves the living ones as He loves me. I trust Him. He will care for them. That is why those who are dead in Christ can live in joy and in peace and in safety. Now the Lord invites them. Come to

the Lord and receive what I lay into the hands and hearts of these servants of God. The body and blood of Jesus is given for you, for your perfect peace in Jesus Christ, for your perfect joy in Jesus Christ and for eternal life, eternal fellowship with God and His own in His kingdom.

### ***PIANO DUET***

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Almighty God, we thank You from the bottom of our hearts for Your word, for Your grace, for the peace of the Risen One, the peace of those who know that Jesus Christ is the strongest one. Thank You for the fellowship we could enjoy while we celebrated Holy Communion with one another and with our beloved ones from the yonder world. Now, dear heavenly Father, we pray once more for all those who have to bear a heavy burden. Please grant them Your help, and as soon as possible deliver them from their burden. We pray for this country, we pray for all the working area of the District Apostle. Please bless Your people, bless Your Church, and let them experience how great You are in every circumstance. Dear heavenly Father, You have seen the offerings, the works and the deeds and service of Your people. Please bless them and grant them what they need for their daily life. Now, oh Lord, we want to be with You in eternity. Please shorten the time and send Your beloved Son. Hear us in Jesus name. Amen.

### ***BENEDICTION***

### ***CHOIR***

### **CHIEF APOSTLE SCHNEIDER**

Thank you. Some of you travelled a lot to come here. It was really nice to be together. May I ask? Can I do this? Next Sunday, the coming Sunday, who will attend the service here? Just raise your hand. Just to know. Oh, a good number. Thanks. What you could not see – you couldn't see it, I couldn't see it – there is one more who lifted His hand. That's Jesus Christ. He will be here, and many others from the yonder world. Never forget, we can only see the visible congregation. The invisible one is always here too. I wish you great services and great experiences of faith in your congregation. God bless you. Thank you.