



Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church

15 Bates Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 3G8

Dear Congregation,

Consistory is again making preparations for the home visits. Please remember the basic purpose of a home visit. The elders have been charged with pastoring the flock, with caring for your souls. The goal of every home visit is to have an open discussion about how you are faring in your relationship with the Lord, and how that reflects in everyday life.

As theme this year we have chosen the topic, "Being built up as a spiritual house." This theme is taken from 1 Peter 2:4-5, where Peter encourages us, "As you come to him [the Lord Jesus], a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Under this theme we would like to focus on our calling:

To come to Christ, the living stone

- The image of a rock or stone is used more often in Scripture to represent God. When God's people called the LORD a rock (Deu.32:4; Psa.18:2; Psa.62:2), they confessed him to be steadfast, immovable, and dependable.
- In Isaiah 28:16 the LORD said, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be dismayed.'" Peter refers these words to Jesus Christ.
- Christ is viewed as the cornerstone, the foundation of the spiritual house (the church). He is also called a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (Isa.8:14), for all who do not believe in him or submit to his Word and will.
- Who is Jesus Christ to you? Are you heeding the call to come to him as a living stone? Do you believe the gospel promises, and are you living out of them by faith?
- Is your faith being fed? Like a newborn baby do you desire the pure milk of the Word (1Pet.2:2)? Is Christ your greatest treasure (Mat.13:44; Phil.3:8)? Do you read your Bible daily (Psa.119:105)? Participate in Bible study regularly (Jos.1:8; Psa.119:15)? Attend church faithfully (Heb.10:24-25)? Do these things help you to be a living stone?

To be built up as a spiritual house, made up of living stones

- An individual stone isn't good for much. But when a stone mason uses a large pile of stones he can build them into a house. That is what Christ does with us, if we are living stones. He molds and shapes us into useful instruments in his kingdom.

- The spiritual house that Peter talks about is the church. Christ is the foundation on which this house is built. He gathers all his children to himself, and incorporates them into the spiritual house he is building.
- We are called to be living stones. By nature we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph.2:1). But by grace alone, God made us alive together with Christ (Eph.2:4). If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2Cor.5:17). The Holy Spirit works new life in us so that more and more we turn from our sins, and walk in newness of life.
- Christ is the one who put us together in the church (1Cor.12:1-6). Our unity is not based on the fact that we have a common ancestry, or share similar likes and dislikes. Our unity is based on a common faith in Jesus Christ (Gal.3:28), and a common calling to love God and our neighbor (Mat.22:37-40).
- Do you consider all the members of the church your brothers and sisters in Christ (Phil.2:1-2)? Are there things that get in the way of living together in love and unity (Phil.2:3; Jam.4:1-2)? If so, what are you doing to address those things (Mat.18:15; Jam.5:16; Gal.6:1-2)? Do you pray for fellow members of the church? Are you seeking to be reconciled, so that we all can live together in love and unity?
- Are you a living member of the church? What spiritual gifts has Christ entrusted you with (1Cor.12:4-11)? Are you using your gifts for the benefit of others (1Cor.12:7, 24-25)? Do you pray for fellow members of the church? How do you support those who face troubles or sorrows or other needs in life?

To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God

- Unlike God's people in the old covenant, we no longer have to offer animal sacrifices to pay for our sins. Yet, out of thanksgiving to God for the riches of his grace in Christ, we are called to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. We are called to devote our hearts to God and to live our lives to his glory.
- As a living church of Jesus Christ we are to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which war against our souls (1Pet.2:11). Since we are a new creation in Christ, we are to put off the ways of sin, and live in holiness before God. Do you see yourself as a redeemed child of God, as a person renewed by the Holy Spirit? What kind of sins do you continue to struggle with in your life? Are you able to say "no" in the face of temptation (1Cor.10:13)? Are you making progress in your fight against sin and the devil? Do you see the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23) manifest in your life?
- As a living church we are also called to keep our conduct among the Gentiles honourable (1Pet.2:12). Do your neighbours and friends, classmates or workmates know that you are a Christian? If not, why not? If so, how? Do you witness of your faith by sharing the hope that lives in you (1Pet.3:15)? Is God using you as an instrument so that by your walk of life your neighbor may be won for Christ?

We look forward to visiting with you to discuss our calling to be a spiritual house.

Redeemer Consistory