



# Courier June – August 2024



## **Martin Luther Church Ottawa**

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## **Theodicy question and confirmands - The Book of Job - how well do you know it?**

Dear congregation,

In April, we had a different kind of confirmation class. We met online together with some members of the congregation. Sylvester Damus, Heidi Rausch, Frank Gruska and Marianne and Steve Thornton and our confirmation students, Simon, Felix, Sebastian, Sofia, Liam, Nayla (Lukas, Isabel and Elena were unfortunately unable to attend) took part in the discussions.

It revolved around the question of why, if we believe in an almighty God, there is so much misfortune and evil in the world. Why does God allow bad things to happen? Can't or won't God stop that?

We heard that people have asked this question at all times. The philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz gave this question the name theodicy question, and he answered it for himself as follows: The world in which we live, with everything that belongs to it, is the world that God rules. It is better than all other possible worlds, although there are robbers and all kinds of other evils in it. God tolerates the wickedness of the robbers (most reluctantly) because the world would not be better without them.

The world as it is, represents the best of all possible worlds.

Of course, it should not be forgotten that people have and want to keep their free will.

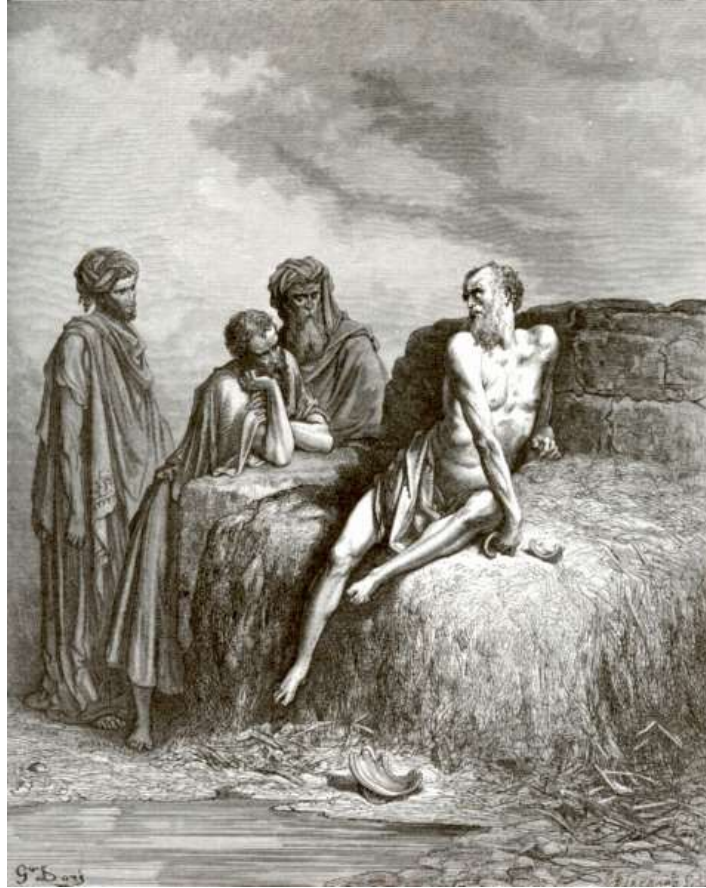
Finally, we have heard that there is a whole book in the Bible that deals with this question. It is the book of Job.

Do you remember what the Book of Job is about? I'm sure you don't know it in detail. But that's a good thing, because we had some creative tasks.

First, there was an introduction to the story of the Book of Job: Job is a rich man with a large family. He firmly believes in God and does a lot of good for his fellow human beings because he wants to obey God. One day, the devil speaks to God and says that Job only serves him because God protects him. If God no longer protected him, Job would stop serving him. God is sure that Job would also serve him otherwise, so he allows the devil to test Job.

The devil does many bad things to Job: He causes his livestock to be stolen, his servants to die, him to suffer terrible pain, and even his family to die when his house collapses.

Most of the book of Job consists of Job's conversations with friends. Together they try to find out why Job is now in such a bad way.



At this point, we interrupted the story and the confirmands were asked to continue the story themselves. They should write down possible conversations between Job and his friends, what they could say to Job and what Job could answer.

Can you find an explanation as to why Job is doing so badly, dear congregation? Does Job keep his faith? Perhaps you would like to come up with some ideas?

The confirmands had some ideas, for example:

-The friends said to Job: Job, you must have done something bad, otherwise God wouldn't do this to you. God only does bad things to people when they deserve it. We don't know what you did to make God so angry.

-Perhaps you have disobeyed God or acted against his will!

-Maybe you didn't even realize that you had done something against God's will?

-Job could say: "No, I didn't, I don't know why God would do such a thing to me. I have always tried to live according to God's commandments." The friends could also try to persuade Job and say: "Job, if there is obviously no reason why God has done this to you, perhaps there is no God at all. How can you still believe in God when things are so bad for you?"

- Job might also say: God has always been there in my life and I believe that if I just keep praying and believing in him, everything will be alright.

-Or the friends and Job could agree that everyone experiences bad things sooner or later.

-Perhaps the friends and Job also conclude that they can't understand everything.

These ideas are quite similar to the conversations between Job and his friends in the Bible. They do not come to a satisfactory solution.

After this first creative task, we heard what happened next in the book of Job: After Job and his friends discussed a lot, they couldn't find an ultimate explanation for his suffering and so Job finally turned to God in prayer and God answered.

Here we interrupted again and the confirmands were asked to write a conversation between God and Job. Would you know what God says to Job in the Bible? Or what would you write down?

The confirmands and adults had considered the following:

-Maybe God is telling Job that it was all just a test. Job would ask, why are you testing me? Or God tells Job that it was a bet with the devil.

-Perhaps God also could apologize to Job and tell him that all this was just to show people that they also believe in God when things are really bad for them. But perhaps Job would then be so angry with God that he no longer wants to believe in God. In any case, it is no longer the same faith as before.

-Perhaps God also says to Job: "I am here and I have only given you as much misfortune as you can bear, no more."

-Perhaps God also tells Job that he must accept that God cannot be everywhere and help everyone.

-God might also tell Job: "Job, there are so many things on earth that you humans can't understand and I know that sometimes it's very hard and bad, but I ask you to trust me. I am always there, and I know everything, even when it doesn't seem like it."

-Job challenges God to give him an answer to his suffering and God says, yes, that's true, but I can't give you one.

This was obviously a difficult task, which also challenged us to reflect on our image of God.

So, what does God say in the Bible story? God answers differently than expected:

In response, God takes Job on a journey through the universe and reminds him that the world is good and beautiful, but also wild and dangerous. God keeps an eye on every little detail at all times and his world is so incredibly complex that the human perspective is not enough to even begin to comprehend it. Job humbly acknowledges God's wisdom and asks him for forgiveness.

The book of Job calls us to trust God's wisdom and character in every circumstance. Although we don't always know why we are suffering, we can honestly bring our pain and grief to God and trust that He knows what He is doing.

At the end of the book, God delivers Job from his illness, gives him double his former possessions, a new family, and blesses his future life.

**Confirmation classes in our church!**



After the summer is the ideal time to join our confirmation class. We always meet on Saturdays (once a month). The classes last 2 years (a long break in the summer). All young people between the ages of 12 and 15 are welcome to join. Please contact Pastor Judith Kierschke if you are interested!

## **President's report**

Dear Parishioner's

Summer is here and before going on holiday I would like to bring you up to date. AGM was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April in our church.

At the AGM the following members of council were elected: Ute Davis, Carole Moritz, Klaus Moritz, Christina Wendorff, Lutz Wendorff, Heidi Rausch, Frank Gruska, Carmen Gruska, Heather Ladouceur, Sheri Pendlebury, Konrad von Finckenstein and Barbara Zabel. Our efficient Treasurer Marion Fraser presented the budget and the statements for the past year. Thanks to wise investments we are breaking even and have some money for unforeseen contingencies. The budget for the coming year was approved.

The Pastor reported on a successful covid free year and the many activities that she initiated in the past year. The congregation expressed its appreciation for many ideas, successful initiatives and joint activities with other churches which created a vibrant Martin Luther Congregation. She also announced that she was more than half way through her 6 year term here in Ottawa. Oberkirchenrat Garras who was here recently has undertaken to find/send us a replacement once Pastor Judith unfortunately will return to Germany.

The Congregation also decided to renovate the basement (Mount Calvary Hall) along the design worked out by Carmen Gruska. A budget up to \$35 000 was approved. Hopefully, this will make the room more amenable to future activities. The work will be done over the summer.

Finally the congregation also approved a re- alignment of our constituent documents as demanded by the new Ontario Not For Profit Corporations Act. No substantive changes were made. However, our constitution now contains the main elements of our church and all other provisions concerning the daily running are in the by-laws. At the last two council meetings, the following decisions were taken: - In line with inflation, we increased the parking on our lot during the week to \$ 50. 00

- A mold test was to be held to ensure the basement was safe. Mold Busters conducted the test and I am glad to report we got a clean bill of health and have no mold in the building.

- a de- humidifier was bought nevertheless for Mount Calvary Hall to prevent excess moisture from causing damage or mold

- a plan for maintaining the gardens was presented by the Thorntons and approved and funded by the council. Thank you Marianne and Steve for your devotion to our grounds.

- Following the AGM, a council meeting appointed myself, Heidi Rausch and Marion Fraser as President, Vice President and Treasurer respectively. Carole Moritz kindly agreed to assume the onerous role of secretary. - Carmen Gruska, Barbara Zabel and Heather Ladouceur would form the supervisory committee for the renovation project with Carmen acting as the sole interlocutor with the contractor. Wishing you all a pleasant sunny summer *Konrad von Finckenstein*

## **The Relationship between the Old and the New Testament**

By Gunther Bauer

For Christians the Bible consists of both the “New” and the “Old” Testaments.

For the Jews, our Old Testament is also their “Holy Scripture”. In both religions the Old Testament has the same content, but the parts are arranged differently. Over thousands of years, Christians have decided repeatedly, that the Old Testament is an inseparable part of the Bible. Both the Old and the New Testaments have a story to tell. The story of God and the redemption of humans starting with Abraham, when all nations on earth were blessed (Genesis 12:3). The path of the Old Testament leads to Jesus Christ. For Christians the message of the New Testament concludes in the epiphany of one God in Jesus Christ. It is a continuing task for Christians to transfer the message of both Testaments to the reality of their lives. Therefore, it is of particular importance that the Old Testament does not stop there, but continues in the New Testament.

The opinion that Lutheran Christianity is based mainly on the New Testament, cannot be based on Luther's writings nor his preaching. Martin Luther has dedicated a large portion of his sermons to the Old Testament. In the period between 1519 and 1529, he preached chapter by chapter of all five books of Moses. The Old Testament also remained for Martin Luther the Holy Scripture. He mentioned, probably not seriously, in a sermon that the New Testament is "a cry about Compassion and Mercy of God".

The Apostle Paul has already mentioned in his letter (Romans 1:2) that God has promised to send his son, as told by the Prophets in the Old Testament and this has been retold in the Gospels. Since that time, the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is the orientation of faith for Christians. The writings of Martin Luther have also been the guideline for many Theologians of the modern time, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He has many times emphasized that one will not do the Old Testament justice when one switches too fast to the New Testament. This person would not be a real Christian, he claimed.

The indication in the Old Testament of the coming of Jesus has been told in the Gospels of the New Testament after Jesus crucifixion and his resurrection, also in the stories of the "Treasurer from Ethiopia" (Acts 8:13-49) and where Jesus walked with the "Two men to Emmaus" (Lukas 24:13-49). In these stories, the first Christian congregations must have felt the Spirit of God's presence. From that time, the Old Testament remained part of the Holy Scripture, the Bible, in which the Christians have recognized the coming of Jesus Christ. God has spoken to his people in many ways through the Prophets, but also through his son Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-5) and his words were from the beginning (John 1:1-18).



## **Review and Preview**

### **Holden Evening Prayers during the Passiontide.**

Together with Pastor Joel and Pastor Martin, we have been holding a musical evening prayer service, the so-called HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER, in our Lutheran churches on alternate Tuesday evenings during the Passiontide. We would like to continue this together during Advent and Passiontide.



In March and April we had Bible study again together with St. Aidans and Pastor Rosemary. Here, for example, we talked about a biblical story in McDonald's over coffee and it worked well. Something different!





And then it was Easter again and we painted stones. These have a link to our homepage on the back and the confirmands distributed them in the neighborhood of our church. A little Easter surprise and at the same time an advertisement for our church. Many thanks to everyone who helped and painted them!



As every year, we had our AGM, our annual general meeting, in April 2024.

Klaus and Carole Moritz and Lutz Wendorf were newly elected to the Church Council.

We are pleased to have the following Council:

Ute Davis, Konrad von Finckenstein, Carmen and Frank Gruska, Heather Ladouceur, Carole and Klaus Moritz, Sheri Pendlebury, Christina and Lutz Wendorff, Barbara Zabel (more details on the AGM can be found in the President's Report).



## SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN OUR CHURCH

Now summer is coming and the next few months will be a little quieter in our church. During summer we will have two weeks of renovation work down at Mount Calvary. The renovation was decided at the AGM. We are already looking forward to the result!

And Pastor Kierschke is on the road. On the one hand, she is in Germany for a conference from the EKD that she has to attend (end of July for 2 weeks) and in August she is taking 2 weeks vacation.

Here are some special dates to make a note of for the summer:

- **On Sunday, June 9 at 10 a.m.** a joint service with Faith Ottawa Church, it will be outside in the church garden – 43 Meadowlands Drive W (starting at 10 a.m.) with a barbecue and potluck afterwards.

Please bring your own chairs, dishes and food to share (don't forget sunscreen). If it rains, we will celebrate the service together in the church.

- **On FRIDAY, June 14 at 6 pm** (in German)

Discussion evening with Dr. Buss on the topic: Ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility

- **Saturday, June 29 starting at 1 pm**

Ecumenical summer barbecue with the German Catholic St. Albertus Parish. Feel free to bring salads or something similar for a potluck. We will meet at Gabi Kaindl's house (9 Wild Acre Lane in K2W02K Kanata).

- **On July 7, we will have a Joint Service** of our congregation at our church garden at 10 am and there will be ice cream afterwards. Again, please bring your own chairs and sun protection!

- **On Friday, July 12**, Pastor Kierschke invites you again to a BBQ in the parish garden 2035 Beaverhill Drive (starting at 5 pm). If it rains please read emails or call Pastor Kierschke and ask if it will take place!

- **On FRIDAY, August 9th** we will meet at 6 pm for an evening walk, again in Mer Bleue, but this time a different route and a different meeting point. The walk takes about 25 minutes, is easy to walk and in the forest. Birds can be fed well - but be sure to take mosquito spray or similar with you!!! MEETING POINT: P 20 (Parking Lot 20) 2617 Anderson Rd, Orléans, ON K1A 0E7

**We share joys and sorrows in our community.**

**DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!**

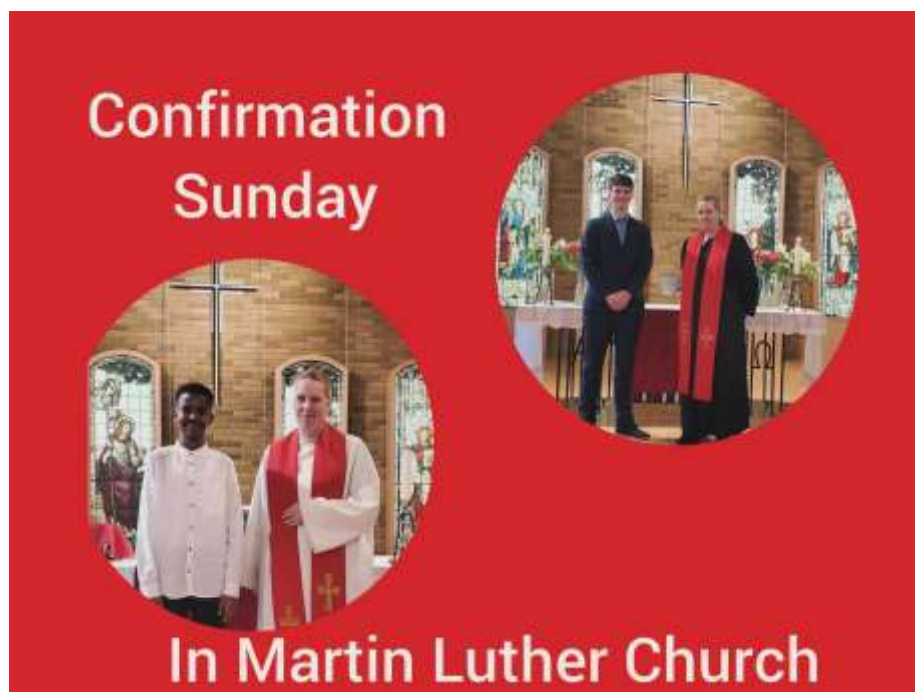
We rejoice with Mr. and Mrs. Bauer, who celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in March 2024! We were able to celebrate a diamond wedding anniversary with Mr. and Mrs. Bauer. It was a lovely afternoon at the restaurant in Plantagenet.

60 years together, a long time in which Hans and Christina Bauer have experienced a lot together.



**CONFIRMATION**

On May 12, Simon Araya and Felix Merfert were confirmed in our church.



The following have gone home to God from our congregation:

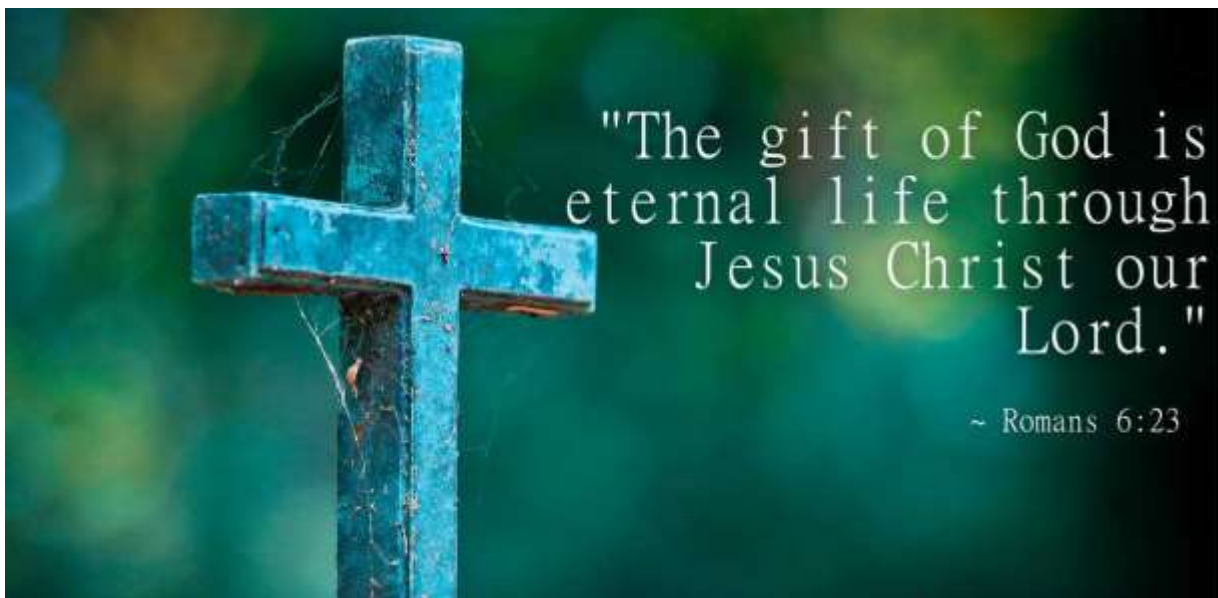
**Edward (Ted) Francis Pendlebury (07.07.1947 – 22.02.2024)**

**Anne Elisabeth McMahon (07.09.1938 – 28.03.2024)**

**Elisabeth Schröder (09.04.1940 - 25.04.2024)**

**Pastor Dr. Hilmar Lorenz died 23. April in Bielefeld -- Germany**

**William Robert McNeilly (06.04.1933-12.05.2024)**



Summer DatesJune – August

Please note: Pastor Kierschke will be at a conference of German Pastors in Germany for 2 weeks in July (July 17 - August 2). In August Pastor Kierschke will be on vacation for 2 weeks (August 12 - August 26). During this time there will only be one service on Sundays (alternating between English and German). Please pay close attention to the schedule. In urgent cases (deaths) Pastor Kierschke can also be reached on her cell phone during this time.

02.06.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
09.06. Starting at 10 am	Joint Service with Faith Ottawa in the garden of Faith Lutheran Church 43 Meadowlands Drive W	Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst draußen in der Faith Ottawa Church 43 Meadowlands Drive W
Tuesday, 11.06	7pm online Bible study	7 pm online Bibelgespräch
Freitag 14.06		6pm Gesprächsabend bei Dr Buss, (see above)
16.06	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
Tuesday 18.06	12pm Soup and Talk	12 Suppe und Gespräch
23.06.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
29.06		Sommerfest mit St. Albertus at 1 pm
30.06	9.30 English Service	Deutscher Gottesdienst mit Abendmahl
07.07. With Children Service!!!	10 am Joint Service outdoor in our Church Garden (ice cream afterwards)	10 am Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst draussen in unserem Kirchengarten
Friday 12.07	5 pm BBQ in Pastors Garden	5 pm Grillen in Pastors Garten
14.07	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
21.07	9.30 English Service	<b>Kein Deutscher Gottesdienst</b>
28.07	<b>No English service</b>	11 Deutscher Lektoren Gottesdienst
04.08.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
06.08	12 pm Soup and Talk	12 pm Suppe und Gespräch
09.08 (6 pm)	Sommer Evening Walk Mer Bleue P 20	Abendspaziergang im Sommer Mer Bleue P 20
11.08.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
18.08.	9.30 English Service	<b>Kein Deutscher Gottesdienst</b>
25.08.	<b>No English service</b>	11 Lektoren Gottesdienst
01.09.	10 Joint Service Coffee and Cake	10 am Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst (Kirchenkaffee)



**We are here for you:**

**Address of the church:** 933 Smyth Road, Ottawa ON K1G1P5

Phone: (613) 733 5804

[www.glco.org](http://www.glco.org)

Facebook: Martin Luther Gemeinde Ottawa



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**Pastor:** Judith Kierschke, (613 ) 552 9587

[pastorkierschke\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:pastorkierschke(at)gmail.com)

Please call or write an email if you wish to talk with Pastor Judith.

**Musician:** MaryAnn Foley 613-225-2522 / macfoley(AT)rogers.com

**President of Church Council:** Konrad von Finckenstein, (613) 744-5856 /  
finckenstein(AT)gmail.com

**Co- President:** Heidi Rausch, (613) 247-9102 / hrausch(AT)hotmail.ca

**Treasurer:** Marion Fraser / (613)2384648 / mdfraser(AT)bell.net

**Council members:**

Ute Davis, Carmen und Frank Gruska, Heather Ladouceur, Carol und Klaus Moritz  
Sheri Pendlebury, Christina und Lutz Wendorff, Barbara Zabel,

**Church Secretary and Financial Secretary:** Heather Bent, (613) 248-0600 /  
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