

The Divine Ordinary

As we make our way through Matthew's gospel, we often hear Jesus say, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." He uses everyday items and experiences to give us a glimpse of God's realm. Today as you stand for the reading of the gospel, God will use the voice of someone you know (your pastor, perhaps) to proclaim some comparisons Jesus made to the kingdom of heaven: a mustard seed, yeast, a merchant in search of fine pearls.

Our Lord says the kingdom of heaven is like things we already know and understand. It's like someone giving a wedding banquet (Matt. 22:2), a fishing net (Matt. 13:47), a gardener sowing seeds (Matt. 13:3). Instead of saying the kingdom is divine and far beyond our understanding, Jesus offers stories of ordinary things, pointing to how God's will is revealed in them.

Look around your worship space before the service. Whom or what has God brought you today that is like the kingdom of heaven? Is a retired man teaching a middle-schooler how to carry the top-heavy cross down the aisle? Are there people who use walkers alongside young ones who skip everywhere they go? Perhaps a newly widowed woman has new seatmates who don't want her sitting alone. Did someone bring a gluten-free dish to the potluck even though he is not gluten-sensitive?

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to ordinary things because we live most often in ordinary moments and spaces. Again and again, he invites us to find the divine in the day-to-day, to glimpse the eternal in the temporal, and to recognize God's image in a stranger's face.

As worship begins, let yourself notice the altogether ordinary things God is using to reveal the kingdom in this place: human voices, handshakes and hugs, music, musicians, books, water, wine, bread. In the coming week, what might God use to reveal the kingdom in your home, your workplace, your school, or other spaces you inhabit?

Impossible Purity

Maybe you have bought or been offered bottled water recently. Did it say "purified" on it? Did you assume that meant the water was totally pure? What if you learned that bottled water, even purified, always has some contaminants in it? Would you still drink it? You probably did.

Jesus' parable of the weeds among the wheat reminds us of our desire for purity. It is tempting on first reading the parable to immediately ask ourselves, *So, who is a weed and who is wheat?* We might wonder if the people we don't like much are weeds. We might also be anxious to know whether *we* are wheat, children of the kingdom. Sorting it all out now and purifying the field would make things simpler.

Except everything in the parable says we don't get to sort things out! Surprisingly, Jesus lowers our sense of urgency to sort out good from bad in life. Jesus says it is better to live with ambiguity, better to accept impurity, than to try so hard to clean everything up now. Why? Because we risk great harm to others in trying to obtain a level of purity we can never have in this life.

The desire for purity, especially among religious persons, can be strong. For some, this means getting rid of people who fail to live up to certain moral standards. For others, it means judging people based on who we label them to be. But total purity never exists in nature, nor in humanity as a whole, nor in any single person.

Rather than worrying about whom to get rid of, with Jesus' help we trust that we are children of the kingdom by God's grace. We are included. When we know we are included and loved, we don't need to worry about another's status. That's for God to worry about. We are free to love others and ourselves, and to let God sort out the rest.

Work That Restores

What kind of rest is Jesus promising when he says, “Come to me, all you that are weary” (Matt. 11:28)? It isn’t about a day off, though given Jesus’ faithfulness to the Jewish Torah, sabbath rest is surely part of his vision for human life. But Jesus says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me” (Matt. 11:29). These are words that mean work: a yoke is what you put on oxen so they can pull a plow. These words don’t sound like rest! But they invite us to do the work that really matters, instead of the work that only wearies our bodies and souls.

Jesus invites us to take on his teaching and his way of working for the kingdom. He is gracious to those who follow him in this labor. He does not put impossible tasks on people or reject people because they are not perfect. This is how he brings rest for weary souls. This is what makes his burden light.

Jesus also invites his followers to join him in doing the work that matters, the labor that satisfies: loving our neighbor, caring for the needy, seeking justice for those excluded, feeding the hungry, forgiving those who do harm, seeking liberation for people who are oppressed, teaching others that God is love for all. This is work that might make your body weary but will give life to your soul. This work might make you tired by the end of the day, but it is the kind of tired that feels satisfying and leads to good, restful sleep.

To follow Jesus is to find ourselves working for the things that matter to our hearts and to God. What a gift to follow such a gracious, gentle, and humble Lord.

Ladies of Grace Activities :

NO ACTIITIES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!!!!



Notes from the Office: Office will be closed Friday July 3rd.

Enjoy your July 4th holiday!!!

Our 'Noisy Offering' will be on July 12th.

The sign up sheets for worship servers is in the narthex please take time to sign up for any service you can help serve. Thanks!!!

Newsletter updates due July 27th.

Treasure the present

Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest ... to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Let's be patient and trust that the treasure we look for is hidden in the ground on which we stand.

—Henri Nouwen



Demetria Poulos	1
Shanna Longoria	2
Bev Nelson	4
Carolyn Sauerbrei	5
Jim Dallman	17
Erica Gray	19
Linda Nicholas	19
Virginia Anderson	21
Tina Krause	22
Ashley Lute	24
Randy & Linda Nicholas	27
Jody Bothwell	31
Judy Werth	31

If we missed anyone PLEASE contact the office.

AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY ARE:

Congregation members: **Sherry Brooks, Edna Gross, Gary Albertson, Jeana Lute, Wally Krueger, Shanna Longoria, Savvas Poulos, Chuck and Jody Bothwell.**

Family members: **Connie Dawe, Mason Lomelino, Karen Carmichael, Darwin Gunderson, Shane Gray, Diane Frei, Lydia Gutierrez, Helen Gray, Barb Lute, Barb Fitzpatrick, Brandie Sherry, Larry Gutierrez, Penny Cook, Joann Fuller, Cleo Lute, Frank Fuller, Gaston Meza, Abel Longoria, Jim Downes, Joann Thompson.**

Congregation friends: **Jason McGinnis, Mason Spradling, Cheryl Dear, Luanne Ruffle, Judy Schorman, Sandi Jaeger, Emilio Zuniga, Ro MacMillan, Al Lundy, Tom Sands, Marsha Guerrero Brown.**

Those who serve: **Dustin Dunbar, Adam Troy Gutierrez, Lance Corporal Anthony Zepeda, Ben McCormick.**



PRAYER CHAIN 2020

Phyllis McKee	425-5776	Elaine Krueger	428-2895
Carol Heesch	564-1031	Betty Longoria	970-2053
Barbara Lomelino	357-1490	Sherry Brooks	797-2615
Jeana Lute	402-720-9431		



Jerusalem Cross

This complex cross, also called the Crusader's Cross or Fivefold Cross, has several interpretations.

The main cross is composed of four tau (T) crosses representing the Old Testament law. The four small Greek crosses symbolize the fulfillment of the law in the gospel. The five crosses together represent the church's mission: to spread the gospel to the four corners of the earth. They're also said to symbolize Christ's five wounds (hands, feet and side).

Sunday School—On hold for now.

Confirmation Class-



PANTRY NEEDS

- Cereal
- Ramen Noodles
- Dry Beans
- Rice
- Raviolis, Spag o's
- Snacks
- Spag. Sauce
- Baked Beans
- Jelly/ P. Butter
- Laundry and Dish Soap



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LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA**

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Deadline for the August Newsletter is Monday July 27th. Please get all information to the church office, secretary@gelelca.org, or the office mailbox.

THANKS

The August Newsletter will be ready by email Friday July 31st and in the Narthex Sunday August 2nd.

2020 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Schlossnagle, Ann	Pastor	503-707-7406
Demro, Jan	President	956-497-6950
Morton, Ron	Vice-President	956-873-1312
Ramsey, Pam	Secretary	956-454-1036
Morton, Bonnie	Treasurer	956-226-7301
Longoria, Mia		956-970-2017
Lomelino, Barb		956-357-1490
Longoria, Betty		956-970-2053
Kester, Debi		956-202-5958



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

We're on the Web
<http://www.gelelca.org>
We are also on face book!!



SERVICE SCHEDULE

MISSION STATEMENT

God's purpose for Grace Lutheran Church is:
Welcome to Grace,
Welcome the Message.

Principle Values:
Jesus is Lord
Everyone is welcome.
All serve in different ways.
Seek and share the message.
God's love is life changing.

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Ushers				
Lector				
Acolyte	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth
Altar Guild	Phyllis McKee	Phyllis McKee	Phyllis McKee	Phyllis McKee

The “wow!” factor

After the final notes concluded at a recent symphony performance in Boston, the conductor hadn't yet lowered his baton when a child exclaimed, “Wow!” The break in protocol, magnified by excellent acoustics, didn't upset the participants or audience, however. Instead, several later said it brought them great joy. One even called the moment life-changing.

The incident was especially meaningful because the child, a 9-year-old named Ronan, has autism and is generally nonverbal. Music, his family says, tends to attract his interest and make him happy. When symphony officials learned Ronan's identity, they arranged a private performance so he could meet some musicians.

How often do you shout “Wow!” — in a good way — at what you see and hear? You may tend to do so on vacation or while observing God's natural wonders, but what about during your day-to-day life? Think about the people you encounter and their talents — and your own. When have these sparked a “Wow!” of thanks to God?

Every blessing, large or small, is a wow-moment — a gift from God that warrants our praise.

—adapted from HomeTouch Ministry

God's constant creativity

In Isaiah 43:19, God proclaims, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (NIV). God's process of creating is active and ongoing, meaning there's always something new for us to notice, grasp and learn.

“God's will is not an abstraction,” writes Thomas Merton in *No Man Is an Island*. “It is a living concrete reality in the lives of [people], and our souls are created to burn as flames within his flame. The will of the Lord is not a static center drawing our souls blindly toward itself. It is a creative power, working everywhere, giving life and being and direction to all things, and above all forming and creating, in the midst of an old creation, a whole new world which is called the Kingdom of God.”



Religion in the republic

Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is much more necessary in the republic which they set forth in glowing colors than in the monarchy which they attack; it is more needed in democratic republics than in any others.

How is it possible that society should escape destruction if the moral tie is not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed? And what can be done with a people who are their own masters if they are not submissive to the Deity?

—Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859)



PUZZLE PAGE

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 252

Matt.10:10-20

W	O	R	R	Y	P	A	G	F	W	O	R	T	H	Y
G	G	I	V	E	N	S	T	O	E	N	E	W	O	D
E	W	I	A	Y	E	S	I	O	E	E	H	O	U	L
N	S	C	O	A	N	N	E	T	W	D	T	R	S	N
T	E	N	R	I	N	S	S	R	W	N	A	D	E	O
I	E	C	A	O	L	I	L	E	O	S	F	S	S	S
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R	L	E	A	V	E	K	A	H	S	K	I	N	G	S

Disciples sent out Preaching

ACCOUNT	DOVES
AGAINST	DUST
ANYONE	ENTER
ARREST	FEET
BEFORE	FLOG
COUNCILS	GIVEN
FATHER	GUARD
GENTILES	HAND
INNOCENT	HOME
LISTEN	HOUSE
PERSON	KINGS
RETURN	LEAVE
SEARCH	LOCAL
SENDING	PEACE
SHREWD	SHAKE
SNAKES	SHEEP
SODOM	SPIRIT
VILLAGE	TOWN
WELCOME	TRUTH
WOLVES	WORDS
WORTHY	WORRY

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT: <http://biblewordgames.com> COPYRIGHT 2016 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Each day remember this: "I am a child of God.
That is how God sees me in Christ."