



Worth Reading Again

It's a shame that many of us lose interest in the stories from the Hebrew Bible about the time we graduate from Sunday School. For one thing, some of the best stories in the Bible are really better left to mature audiences. For another thing, until we are practiced at reading literature, we tend to miss the forest for the trees. We 'ooh' and 'aah' at the miraculous and the divine special effects but we fail to probe deeper. In fact, I think that the miraculous and other-worldly nature of the stories sometimes causes us to put them into the mental category of "interesting but irrelevant."

Since we don't usually encounter God through angels and chariots of fire, we tend to dismiss stories in which God is described as meeting humans through these awesome means. If we stuck with the stories a little longer we might have found ourselves wondering if the biblical authors didn't employ the sound and light show details as a way of saying to their first readers, "God was in this; God was real to me in a way I can't describe without resorting to miraculous imagery."

Reading Sunday School stories as grown-ups not only invites us to probe the symbolic nature of the literature, it also invites us to read it with the self-knowledge we have gained through our own lived experience.

This summer we are reading about King David in the Sunday lectionary. Those of us following the daily lectionary are getting even more of his action-packed life. Recently I read how a woman named Abigail (who later became one of David's wives) saved David from himself.

I think it's safe to say that we would regard a modern-day David as an example of toxic masculinity. He was a sexual predator. He was an adrenaline junkie. David, if he was living today, would probably be seen on YouTube pulling dangerous and aggressive stunts while his buddy held his beer.

In this story, David felt disrespected, dishonored by a man named Nabal (which is the Hebrew word for "fool"). David did not suffer fools gladly. David's honor and pride demanded that he respond to Nabal's insult. For David, this didn't just mean trash-talking or fisticuffs out behind the bar. It meant swords and mayhem and death for Nabal and his family.

If it weren't for Abigail.

Abigail talked David down. She made peace. She allowed him to keep his pride without killing Nabal.

You can read this story through the prism of a woman's power over the supposed power of a warrior king. You can read it as a story of wisdom over anger. You can read it as an invitation to leave room for God that can only come to those who truly trust in God.

But, of course, you can't get any of that out of it unless you read it again as a Sunday School graduate. (See for yourself in 1 Samuel 25.)

Prayer: God of our fathers and mothers, your word is a light for my path and sometimes a mirror that reveals more than I care to see. Amen.

-Pastor Lynn



Pastor Lynn is on vacation Monday, September 20 through Monday, October 4. In his absence, Pastor Alva Looze and Rev. Steve Hall will be preaching and leading worship. Should a pastoral need arise, Pastor Lynn can be reached on his cell phone at 866-3085.



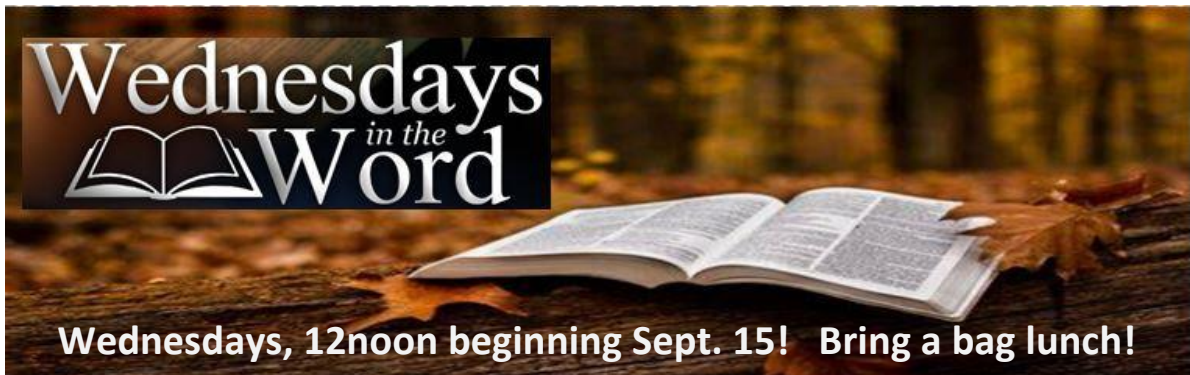
Jeff Cotton; Jane Duewiger; Pat Headlee; John & Karen Kaitanowski;
Helen & Marvin Wilson

If you have a prayer request for the bulletin, newsflash and/or a more urgent prayer to go through our prayer chain, please contact the church office (649-1532) or Pastor Lynn (866-3085) OR fill out a Prayer Request card on Sunday (located on one of the tables) and place in offering plate.



Bringing Communion to You

Now that Pastor Lynn is vaccinated, he is able to visit and bring Communion to all those who are unable to attend worship. If you (or a loved one) are interested, please speak with the pastor. He is looking forward to being with you and offering the sacrament.





Happy Birthday!! David Kaznica (9/1), Kathee Simon (9/8), Brenda Carver (9/14), Conner Wilson (9/14); Ryan Wilson (9/14), Molly Hamm (9/15), Tom Koch 9/17), Jacob Zdrojewski (9/17), Pastor Lynn (9/20), Lola Donner (9/23), Arthur Hamm (9/24)

Happy Anniversary!!

David & Pamela Kaznica (9/13/1975) Lynn & Sandy Morgan (9/20/1997)
Jacob & Lauren Zdrojewski (9/22/2007) Chris & Dawn Goetz (9/24/1994)

Prayers in Print

I grew up believing that “real” prayers were extemporaneous.

We had some liturgy in our worship; there were responsive readings and calls to worship. We had the occasional litany. We all knew that, “It is right to give Him thanks and praise;” but we also knew that a real, honest-to-goodness prayer had to come from the heart, with all the hesitations, repetitions and ungrammatical parts left in so God would know we really meant it.

When I was a college student our pastor made a practice of reading his prayers in the Sunday service. At first, this was troubling to me. I knew, thank goodness, that he could pray ‘for real,’ because I had heard him pray spontaneously on other occasions. But I wondered why he didn’t pray ‘for real’ in church. So I asked him. And he changed my life.

He explained that a pastoral prayer in church was not just his private prayer that we were overhearing; it was a prayer designed for everyone to enter into in their own way and so he wrote it carefully to be the common prayer of all God’s people. He helped me see that his prayer was no less “real” because it was first conceived in his study and first uttered through the staccato of his Underwood typewriter.

He urged me to write prayers myself, even for no other intended audience but God. And he invited me to read prayers that other people had written – most of them hundreds of years previously. He unlocked for me the treasure trove of the Book of Common Prayer (first published in 1549) and invited me to plunder the prayer books of the Anglicans and Lutherans and Orthodox.

I want to share with you some of what he taught me. The great prayers of the church, written by saints and ordinary sinners like you and me, can help us pray using their words. Their words and images can invite us to new avenues for confession and thanksgiving. They can challenge us to focus on areas of concern that our spontaneous praying might overlook (or unconsciously avoid). And perhaps best of all, when we just can’t pray or can’t find words, these prayers can lead us to prayer. Through them sometimes the “Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26)

I am not only helped to pray by reading prayers written by others. Sometimes those prayers confer a fresh awareness of how Christ’s life can be at work in my life. The prayer concluding these thoughts today is just such a prayer. I didn’t write it. It is found in Common Worship – a newer prayer book of the Church of England (published in 2000). I hope it blesses you as it has me.

Prayer:

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Senior Wishes strives to grant wishes that will make a significant impact on a senior's quality of life and bring them great joy. Wishes might be to reconnect with a loved one, visit a favorite place, celebrate a passion. Wishes also fulfill a lifelong dream, like riding in a hot air balloon, going to a ball game or learning a new skill. You can nominate yourself, a family member, friend, or maybe a neighbor that meets the recipient guidelines.

Copies of the guidelines and a wish application are in the church office (or go online to Seniorwishes.org to apply).

If you have any questions, please call or text me. Help make a wish come true for someone special.

Thanks, LaDonna Painter (715-7310)

FeedMore WNY



We wish to thank the following people for their time in delivering meals to our homebound seniors: Devon Asboth, Linda & Bob Ferraro, Anne Kanaley, Michelle Kemp, Tammy Kruszka, Marilyn Rich, Gail Vara, Bob Velazquez, and David and Pamela Kaznica.

I know the seniors on Route 850 (and all the routes) appreciate this assistance. Thank you for your service!

God Bless, Pamela Kaznica

P.S. If Linda Velazquez and Barbara Middaugh helped also, I thank them as well. See you in April!



One way you can help those in need locally and beyond is to give the following items you no longer need or want: useable and clean clothing, linens, blankets and drapes; shoes, sneakers, belts, purses & stuffed animals. Deposit them in the shed (back of our parking lot).

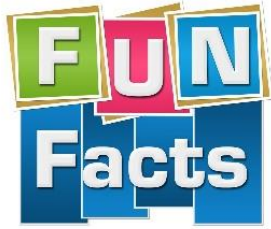
The goal of St. Pauly Textile is to "get useable clothing to people who can use it, here in the U.S. and in developing countries, while having a meaningful impact in our local communities." As host of the shed, St. Pauly pays St. Matthew's for the contents. (It's important not to put in anything but what's on the list of accepted donations.)



Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?

These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come.

-Henri Nouwen



Paraskavedekatriaphobia is the fear of Friday the 13th. A few famous people have this phobia, such as Franklin Roosevelt and surprisingly enough, Stephen King.

Since ducks have no nerves or blood vessels in their feet, they can't feel hot or cold. This is what allows them to swim in icy cold water or waddle across the hot roads (taking their good ole sweet time) and hold up traffic.



There are no muscles in your fingers. Their functions are from the muscles in your palms and arms.

Niagara Falls is home to the original Flight of the Five Locks, a device for lifting and lowering boats, which was built in 1815. It is still functioning on Erie Canal in Lockport providing the highest lift in the shortest distance on all U.S. built canals.



Thank you for your continued generous support of the day-to-day operations and ministries of St. Matthew's.

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

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