**WORSHIP SERVICE AUGUST 30, 2020 MLG**

**Welcome**

Good morning everyone and happy Sunday to you.

Outdoor Communion worship next Sunday.

**Call to Worship**

Wonderful, amazing God, we gather as those who have caught a glimpse of the glory and the goodness you intend for your creation. The vision you give us makes us ever restless in this world, as we yearn for your fuller revelation in time and history.

Free us, and our world, from all bondage to sin and futility; make us true daughters and sons, through the creative power of your Holy Spirit, at work within us. We gather now to worship you. Amen.

**Opening Music**

**Invocation, the Lord’s Prayer**

You who have created us and who sustains us: We come with thanksgiving for these moments when we can ease the pace of our lives and listen for your voice. Create a spirit within us that truly draws us toward you and toward our brothers and sisters/ a spirit deep, perceptive, gently, humble and yet bold.

Clear our mind, open our hearts, and touch us with your presence and your power. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our friend and our Savior, who taught us to pray, saying, “Our Father…..”

**Offering Prayer**

JOYS

From our Mission Committee:

Our Missions Committee voted on Saturday, Aug 22 to donate $500 to the (2nd Annual) Randolph Resiliency Public Schools Drive. This supply drive is a collaboration between Autism Sprinter and Motivation Church.

Since March 2020, we have donated more than $4,000 to organizations supporting the Randolph Community and surrounding communities. These organizations include the Randolph Resiliency Fund ($500), Randolph Food Pantry ($1,000), Dove (Domestic Violence Ended) ($500), Interfaith Social Services ($1,000), South Shore Elder Services Nutrition (Meals on Wheels) ($500), and Main Spring House ($500). In May, we delivered a pizza lunch to Care One Randolph for over 70 employees. We hope to deliver three Welcome Home Baskets next month to the Randolph Chamber of Commerce for residents moving into the new Veterans house.

GIVE AWAY BOXES

CONCERNS

Today our prayers include Jacob Blake, the young man who was shot seven times in the back in Kenosha, Wisconsin. As he attempted to enter his vehicle, one police man grabbed him by the t-shirt and proceeded to shoot him, with Jacob’s three young sons in the back seat. The incident was caught on a by-standers cell phone video and has been seen by millions of people in the United States.

We have learned that Jacob has survived this horrific incident, but is paralyzed. We pray today for him and his family. It is not wonder that people took to the streets as once again, a black man was shot by police. May God have mercy on them all; and help us to continue our work standing firmly on our commitment to racial and social justice.

PASTORAL PRAYER written by Rev. Richard Rohr, Franciscan priest who founded the Center for Action and Contemplation in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Prayer for Our Community:**
O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world. [Please add your own intentions.] . . .

Jacob Blake and his family; all those in need in our community that our church may continue to support the physical and spiritual needs of those we encounter;

Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.

**Scripture Reading**

### The Invited Guests - [Luke 14:1; 7-14](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=lu+14:7-14) Jesus at a Pharisee’s House

1 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee,([B](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14%3A1%2CLuke+14%3A7-14&version=NIV#cen-NIV-25555B)) he was being carefully watched

* When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

**Sermon**

**LET THE PARABLES SPEAK; *THE INVITED GUESTS (HUMILITY; SELF WORTH; and HEALING)***

***Personal Story***

If you are invited to a dinner party, I suppose it could be a very embarrassing situation if you are asked to move your seat so that someone *“more important”* or *“better liked”* or with a *“higher standing”* could have your seat closer to the host. In trying to remember a situation I was in, I recall taking my seat at a banquet table once, with my good friend on one side and my former professor on the other. Once the three of us were seated, the professor asked me to change seats with my friend so she could sit next to her. I must have looked at her questioning, so she said to me. “I can see you any time, but I don’t get to see her very often so I want to catch up with her.” I moved my seat, but to be perfectly honest, I was a little miffed and felt *“less than”* at that moment.

***Relates to YOU***

I’m sure we all have a story similar when we felt *less than*. Nowadays, is it customary to ask the host, as I and many others do, *“where would you like me to sit?”*. This way, we surely avoid any embarrassment that could occur. We’ve all heard stories when someone sits in someone else’s pew in church! Heaven forbid!

***Definitions***

**Our story today is about Humility,** the quality of being humble. The dictionary definitions accentuate humility as *a low self-regard* and *sense of unworthiness*. In a religious context humility can mean *a recognition of self in relation to a deity or deities, and subsequent submission to said deity as a member of that religion.* Outside of a religious context, humility is defined as being "unselved", a liberation from consciousness of self, a form of temperance that is *neither having pride nor indulging in self-deprecation.* This last part, the balance in our temperance where Humility is one of the desired qualities of Christians.

Today’s parable is set in one of the Pharisees homes, where Jesus is a dinner guest. **The Parable of the Banquet in Luke**

The parable is found in the midst of a section of “dinner table” teachings (Luke 14:1-23). At a dinner at a Pharisee’s home, Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Jesus then taught the dinner guests a number of lessons: if you are invited to a dinner, don’t take the seat of honor; take the most humble seat at the table so that our host can exalt you by asking you to move up.

When you give a banquet, don’t invite those who can pay you back in accordance with society’s rules of reciprocity. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame – those who can’t reciprocate – and God will repay you at the resurrection of the righteous. The parable of the banquet repeats the same “poor, crippled, blind and lame” motif found in Luke 14:13.

*(This relates to YOU via the First Monday dinners and now the Take Out Tuesdays. It relates to the CVS and SHAWS card you make sure I have to give to folks in need. It also relates to the pastor’s discretionary fund the deacons allot to your pastor to give money to those in need. It relates to the money we as a church allocate to for missions.*

*These are situations where we are not looking to be reciprocated for our generosity, but rather we are grateful to be in a position to help out who, Jesus, in today’s passage, calls the poor, crippled, the blind and lame. We only want to be that which is written in our Vision Statement,*

*“We are the cornerstone of Crawford Square, the embodiment of Jesus Christ’s healing ministry, serving multiple dimensions of spiritual dimensions of spiritual and physical needs in our community and beyond.”)*

The parable itself is a response to the acclamation, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” Luke’s emphasis, then, is on the dinner table as an image of the kingdom. God is inviting his people to the eschatological banquet – anticipated even now in the ministry of Jesus – in which the sick will be healed, the poor will be fed and the last will be first. Those who refuse the invitation won’t stop the banquet hall from being full; all they will accomplish is their own deprivation as they miss the kingdom feast.

Luke’s version of the parable is gracious; Matthew’s has much sharper edge. Employing the same material, Matthew can’t help but echo some of Luke’s theme. In Matthew, however, the parable becomes more about judgment than inclusion.

***THOUGHT TO PONDER***

One fall, around Thanksgiving, a psychology professor asked her students, “Hypothetically, if you could have any five people join you at your Thanksgiving table this year, who would they be. They can be living or dead; and you may or may not even have ever met them. Who would your guests be? It was quite a surprise…or maybe not, but over half of the class said they would like to have Jesus at their table. Who would your guests be? Where would each one sit?

Let’s close with a prayer that sums this up. Saint Francis is known as

**(Francis of Assisi** (born **Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone**; [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language): *Francesco d'Assisi*; [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Franciscus Assisiensis*; 1181 or 1182 – 3 October 1226), venerated as **Saint Francis of Assisi**, also known in his ministry as **Francesco**, was an Italian [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) [friar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friar), [deacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deacon), [philosopher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher), [mystic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism), and [preacher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preacher).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-3) He founded the men's [Order of Friars Minor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Friars_Minor), the women's [Order of Saint Clare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Clare), the [Third Order of Saint Francis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Order_of_Saint_Francis) and the [Custody of the Holy Land](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Custody_of_the_Holy_Land). Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in Christianity.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-EBO_Francis-1)

[Pope Gregory IX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_IX) canonized Francis on 16 July 1228. Along with [Saint Catherine of Siena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Catherine_of_Siena), he was designated [Patron saint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_saint) of [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy). He later became associated with patronage of animals and the [natural environment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_environment), and it became customary for churches to hold ceremonies blessing animals on or near his [feast day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feast_day) of 4 October. In 1219, he went to Egypt in an attempt to convert [the Sultan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Kamil) to put an end to the conflict of the [Crusades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-4) By this point, the [Franciscan Order](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscans) had grown to such an extent that its primitive organizational structure was no longer sufficient. He returned to Italy to organize the Order.

Once his community was authorized by the Pope, he withdrew increasingly from external affairs. Francis is also known for his love of the [Eucharist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-5) In 1223, Francis arranged for the first [Christmas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas) live [nativity scene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_scene).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-cefa-8) According to Christian tradition, in 1224 he received the [stigmata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stigmata) during the [apparition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vision_%28spirituality%29) of [Seraphic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraph) angels in a [religious ecstasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_ecstasy),[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-ODCC_Francis-9) which would make him the second person in Christian tradition after St. Paul (Galatians 6:17) to bear the wounds of [Christ's Passion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passion_%28Christianity%29).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi#cite_note-10) He died during the evening hours of 3 October 1226, while listening to a reading he had requested of [Psalm 142](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_142) (141).)

**Prayer of St Francis**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

**CLOSING MUSIC**

BENEDICTION

God, we thank you for the gift of music, for the rich inspiration of past ages, and for the loveliness that gives our life meaning. Send us forth, humming great melodies that have become the hymns of faith. Send us forth inspired, that in all we do we might show Christ, the light in all the stars above.

Continue your journey walking in love. Care for one another, care for the earth.

Seek justice and make peace. God goes before you, so celebrate and sing! God gives life and renews life. Celebrate the life within you and let it overflow to enliven the world. May the peace of God dwell withing this week and forevermore.

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Amen.