

# **Central Lutheran Church**

## **Narrative Lectionary Bible Study**

### **Fall, 2020**

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

The Central Lutheran faith community has followed the revised common lectionary for decades. As a quick reminder, lectionary is the fancy “church word” for the assigned readings for weekend worship. It is a common lectionary because it is used by Lutherans, Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and many other traditions. The revised (updated) common lectionary is a blessing, uniting people of faith around the world in a shared reading of Hebrew and Christian scriptures. You may also remember that the revised common lectionary followed a three-year rotation, moving through Matthew, then Mark and Luke, with John used for the big festivals of the year.

Several years ago, a narrative lectionary was developed with the goal of hearing lessons that we do not often encounter in the common lectionary. A secondary goal was to move through these lessons chronologically, beginning in Genesis and moving through to Revelation. In this second goal a congregation would “travel” through the history of God’s love for the world. Some would add a third goal, as a culture that is not deeply immersed in the Bible, it invites a congregation into the arc of the love of God from the first pages of the Bible to the final word.

We will return to the revised common lectionary, for all the reasons I noted above. For this year, and perhaps next, in the midst of this life changing pandemic, your rostered leaders felt a tug to use the narrative lectionary as a way to ground us in the shared story of God’s love from the beginning to the close of the Bible.

#### **Attend Each Week, or When it Works**

As always, these Bible studies are more holy conversations. No previous knowledge is expected, in fact it helps to seek to enter the study as if for the first time. You are invited to attend the Zoom study each week, but the invitation is always open for when it works in your schedule. Remember, always join the conversation, no matter if you had a chance to read the lesson for the week. For this study, your Bible will be helpful to have in front of you. The lesson will be

printed here, but often there are sections that are jumped over for the sake of space.

Christ Care Prayers begin each lesson, it is a time when we pray for one another and the needs of the world. If you have a prayer concern that you do not want to share in front of the group, you can send a private chat to the pastor who is leading the study.

For the class time on Zoom, we will break out into conversation groups. We learned over the summer that they can go well, or not so well. For this study, one of the pastors will be in each of the groups to help facilitate the conversation. We may randomly assign groups, or over time we may find it helpful to have set groups for a couple of weeks at a time. We share this to encourage you to be a part of the study and not let the thought of break out groups scare you away!

Thank you for joining this Bible study, these holy conversations.

## **Schedule**

September 9 - Genesis 2: 4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 (Creation and "fall")

September 16 - Genesis 15: 1-6 (God's promise to Abraham/ Sarah)

September 23 - Genesis 37: 3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21 (Joseph's dreams)

September 30 - Exodus 12:1-3; 13:1-8 (Passover)

October 7 - Exodus 32: 1-14 (Golden Calf)

October 14 - 1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10 (Hannah and Samuel)

October 21 - 2 Samuel 7: 1-17 (David)

October 28 - 1 Kings 17: 1-24 (Elijah and the widow)

November 4 - Jonah 1:1-17; 3: 1-10; 4:1-11 (Jonah)

November 11 - Isaiah 6: 1-8 (Holy, Holy, Holy)

November 18 - Jeremiah 36: 1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31: 31-34 (New Covenant)

November 25 - NO Zoom Study, Thanksgiving Weekend

December 2 - Joel 2:12-13, 28-29 (Merciful God, promise of Spirit)

December 9 - Isaiah 61: 1-11 (Spirit of the Lord)

December 16 - Luke 1:26-45, 46-56 (Annunciation and Magnificat)

December 23 - NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

December 30 - NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

January 6 - Zoom Study Resumes

# Narrative Study for Wednesday, September 9

Welcome

Christ Care Prayers

Overview of the study and the narrative lectionary

**Tonight's Lesson: Genesis 2: 4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 (Creation and "fall")**

We begin, well, at the beginning. Genesis literally means "the beginning." In Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2 you will find two creation stories. In Genesis 1 it is orderly, logical and each day builds on the previous. God prepares a place for humanity. On the seventh day God rests, as does all the creation.

With the turn of the page we arrive at the second creation story in Genesis 2. This story is older than the first story in Genesis 1. We can hear the shift and a careful reading reveals different names for the Creator from one story to the next. Take a look at Genesis 1:1 and you will see "God created." Turn to Genesis 2:4 (the second half of the verse) and you will see "the LORD GOD made the earth and the heavens." God and LORD GOD are the ways that translators have helped us pay attention to the way the Creator is named at different times and faith moments in Israel's history.

*Lectio Divina*

One of the oldest ways to enter into the holy conversation at a Bible study is to spend time reading the lesson slowly, and at least three times. This fall you will be invited to this way of reading called "lectio divina," or divine reading. You can read the lesson silently, or even out loud if you are in a quiet place. There are many ways to engage in *lectio divina*, here is one way to consider:

1. The first time simply read the lesson for the information, the story that is being shared. At the end of the reading, what did you notice? What was interesting, or confusing? What was familiar or unfamiliar?
2. The second time, slow down and perhaps circle words that stay with you or even underline a sentence that jumps out at you. Here you begin to read with your heart, along with your mind. What emotions do you notice as you read and respond or react to the lesson?

3. The third and final time, really slow down. Perhaps you pause or stop at a verse, linger there. Here you begin to read with your soul. What is God or the LORD GOD saying in, with and under this story? What is God or the LORD GOD not saying, in other words, is God speaking or does it seem more like human interpretation at this point. What is liberating or what is troubling? How are you open to God as you pause for this third reading?
4. Be sure to write down what you may have learned and the questions you may have at this point. Note what emotions were stirred up and what you may want to ponder. Note how the lesson draws you to God, how are you opened or where are you restless.

### **Genesis 2: 4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 (Creation and “fall”)**

In the day that the Lord GOD made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord GOD had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; <sup>6</sup>but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground — <sup>7</sup>then the Lord GOD formed the human from the dust of the ground, and breathed into the creature’s nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living being.

The Lord GOD took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the Lord GOD commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; <sup>5</sup>for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. <sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the Lord GOD walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of

the Lord GOD among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the Lord GOD called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

## **Conversation and Questions**

1. What did you notice? What was interesting, or confusing? What was familiar or unfamiliar?
2. What emotions did you notice as you read and responded or reacted to the lesson?
3. What is God or the LORD GOD saying in, with and under this story? What is God or the LORD GOD not saying, in other words, is God speaking or does it seem more like human interpretation at this point. What is liberating or what is troubling? How are you open to God as you pause for this third reading?
4. What questions do you bring tonight for us to discuss?