

Central Lutheran Church

Narrative Lectionary Bible Study

Fall, 2020

Welcome

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; 13:1-10 (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, October 28

Welcome

Christ Care Prayers

Overview of the study and the narrative lectionary

Tonight's Lesson: I Kings 17:1-24 Elijah and the Widow

Since last week, King David has and come and gone. David's son Solomon assumed his father's throne and built the first temple in Jerusalem in roughly 960 BC. Solomon, while considered very wise, was also easily distracted and strayed from the ways of his father David and was not faithful to God

After Solomon died, the people of Israel pleaded for relief from the taxes imposed by Solomon. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, declared that he would be even harder on the people of Israel than his father. Conflict ensued, and the land of Israel split into two kingdoms – the North, which remained Israel – home to the cities of Shechem and Samaria and the South, which became Judah – home to Jerusalem and the temple. Israel was ruled by Jeroboam and Judah was ruled by Rehoboam.

Jeroboam and Rehoboam worshipped gods other than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the God who brought the people out of the land of Egypt. The people forgot their history and started worshipping other gods. The people forgot the first commandment – Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

And, so we begin tonight with the story of Elijah in which God sends him to a widow to begin recalling what God did and does and will continue to do.

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.

I Kings 17: 1-24

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe[a] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi. 7 But after a while the wadi dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you." 10 So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." 11 As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal

in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” 13 Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.” 15 She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. 16 The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 She then said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!” 19 But he said to her, “Give me your son.” He took him from her bosom, carried him up into the upper chamber where he was lodging, and laid him on his own bed. 20 He cried out to the Lord, “O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?” 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried out to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” 22 The Lord listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother; then Elijah said, “See, your son is alive.” 24 So the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

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?