



This Sunday at St. Luke's
March 16, 2025

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)

10:15 a.m. – Holy Communion with choir hymns and anthem

Steven Cagle, organist

The Second Sunday in Lent



Persistent Prayer

The goal of Lent, or at least one of them, is to make us more faithful and effective servants of Jesus Christ. In our baptism, we were marked as Christ's own and made members of His

family, the Church. But just as in human families, those coming in – whether they be children or pets – must learn how to live as productive members of that family. The disciplines of Lent are designed to help us to achieve that objective. Prayer is one of these disciplines. The Cananite woman in today's Gospel reminds us that we must persist in prayer, keep praying until light breaks through.

This Sunday's Epistle reminds us that not just our minds must be conformed to the mind of Christ, but our bodies. In this Epistle, Paul addresses a church made up of many former pagans. The ethic of the Hebrew tradition was not a part of their past training and experience. They, therefore, as members of this new family had to learn how to order their bodies in light of their new family membership. Going God's way requires God's help as we pray in this week's Collect. Persistent prayer is required.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL FOR LENT 2

In Matthew 15:21–28, Jesus encounters a Canaanite (Syrophenician) woman who begs Him to cure her daughter. Jesus initially refuses her request by saying, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26). Taken out of context, and especially in English, it’s easy to mistake this for an insult. In the flow of the story, however, it’s clear Jesus is creating a metaphor meant to explain the priorities of His ministry. He is also teaching an important lesson to His disciples. Jews in Jesus’ day sometimes referred to Gentiles as “dogs.” In Greek, this word is *kuon*, meaning “wild cur” (Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:21; Philippians 3:2). Non-Jews were considered so unspiritual that even being in their presence could make a person ceremonially unclean (John 18:28). Much of Jesus’ ministry, however, involved turning expectations and prejudices on their heads (Matthew 11:19; John 4:9–10). According to Matthew’s narrative, Jesus left Israel and went into Tyre and Sidon, which was Gentile territory (Matthew 15:21). When the Canaanite woman approached and repeatedly asked for healing, the disciples were annoyed and asked Jesus to send her away (Matthew 15:23).

At this point, Jesus explained His current ministry in a way that both the woman and the watching disciples could understand. At that time, His duty was to the people of Israel, not to the Gentiles (Matthew 15:24). Recklessly taking His attention from Israel, in violation of His mission, would be like a father taking food from his children in order to throw it to their pets (Matthews 15:26). The exact word Jesus used here, in Greek, was *kunarium*, meaning “small dog” or “pet dog.” This is a completely different word from the term *kuon*, used to refer to unspiritual people or to an “unclean” animal.

Jesus frequently tested people to prove their intentions, often through response questions or challenges (see John 4:16–18; and 4:50–53). His response to the Canaanite woman is similar. In testing her, Jesus declined her request and explained that she had no legitimate expectation of His help. The woman, however, lived out the principle Jesus Himself taught in the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1–8). Her response proved that she understood fully what Jesus was saying, yet had enough conviction to ask anyway (Matthew 15:27). Jesus acknowledged her faith—calling it “great”—and granted her request (Matthew 15:28).

So, according to both the context and language involved, Jesus wasn’t referring to the Canaanite woman as a “dog,” either directly or indirectly. He wasn’t using an epithet or racial slur but making a point about the priorities He’d been given by God. He was also testing the faith of the woman and teaching an important lesson to His disciples. (Metropolis of Zambia)

COLLECT FOR LENT 2

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COLLECT FOR THE SEASON

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE – 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (J.B. Phillips)

Purity, love and hard work are good rules for life

4 ¹⁻² To sum up, my brothers, we beg and pray you by the Lord Jesus, that you continue to learn more and more of the life that pleases God, the sort of life we told you about before. You will remember the instructions we gave you then in the name of the Lord Jesus.

³⁻⁸ God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God. You cannot break this rule without in some way cheating your fellow-men. And you must remember that God will punish all who do offend in this matter, and we have warned you how we have seen this work out in our experience of life. The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, and anyone who makes light of the matter is not making light of man's ruling but of God's command. It is not for nothing that the Spirit God gives us is called the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: Here St. Paul gives ethical instruction and exhortation. His specific advice is an explanation of how Christian brethren "ought to walk [live] and to please God." (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 15:21-28 (J.B. Phillips)

A gentile's faith in Jesus

²¹⁻²² Jesus left that place and retired into the Tyre and Sidon district. There a Canaanite woman from those parts came to him crying at the top of her voice, "Lord, have pity on me! My daughter is in a terrible state—a devil has got into her!"

²³ Jesus made no answer, and the disciples came up to him and said, “Do send her away—she’s still following us and calling out.”

²⁴ “I was only sent,” replied Jesus, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

²⁵ Then the woman came and knelt at his feet. “Lord, help me,” she said.

²⁶ “It is not right, you know,” Jesus replied, “to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord, I know, but even the dogs live on the scraps that fall from their master’s table!”

²⁸ “You certainly don’t lack faith,” returned Jesus, “it shall be as you wish.” And at that moment her daughter was cured.

NOTE: At one point in Jesus’ ministry He left Galilee and took His disciples forty-five miles west through the mountains to the Mediterranean sea coast. Yet, as St. Mark states, he “could not be hid” (7:24) and the mother of a sick child found him. The incident says to us that even this stranger recognized that one’s health – indeed, one’s very life – is somehow bound with faith in the Lord. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – 1 Kings 8:37-43 (RSV)

Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem prays that even the foreigner who turns to God in prayer may be heard.

³⁷ “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar; if their enemy besieges them in any of their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there is; ³⁸ whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by any man or by all thy people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house; ³⁹ then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and render to each whose heart thou knowest, according to all his ways (for thou, thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men); ⁴⁰ that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest to our fathers.

⁴¹ “Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, comes from a far country for thy name’s sake ⁴² (for they shall hear of thy great name, and thy mighty hand, and of thy outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³ hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to thee; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

NOTE: This is part of Solomon’s prayer (vv.22-53) on the occasion of the dedication of the newly built Temple in Jerusalem. He prays that even the foreigner who turns to God in prayer may be heard. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Preacher: The Rector

Options

In-church.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on YouTube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.



Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Anna Bradley for supplying and arranging greens around the Altar during Lent.



JOIN THE CHOIR!



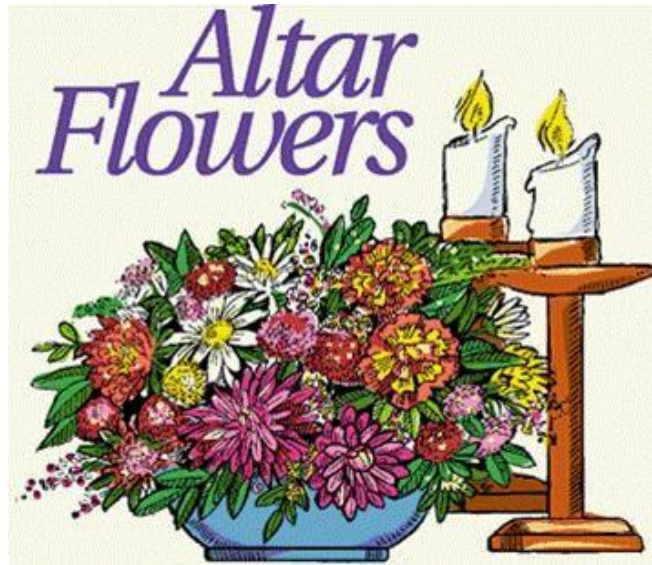
For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



The Anglican Relief
and Development Fund

OUR MISSION

St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2025.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2025

As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2025

Name

Address

Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



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