

Sermon from Sept. 26, 2021, Mark 9: 38-51

Over the previous few weeks, I have commented on the YouTube TV show, “The Chosen”. It creates some backdrop to the lives of the disciples and of Jesus Himself. Poetic license added to Gospel truth in a way as to allow the viewer to really relate in a human, rather than “just” a Biblical way. As we look at the disciples, the misfits they seem to be at times, the fact they do and say all the wrong things repeatedly, we can see how they may have actually lived in relation to Romans, Jews, and Gentiles, and among one another (as we sometimes forget how different they were from one another, toll.) Life between them was often contentious as a result.

One such example that stands out is when Jesus invites Matthew to become a disciple. And from the show, this is a conversation which takes place:

Jesus: “Matthew, son of Alphaeus. Follow Me.”

As Matthew looks and listens to him, and Jesus continues to look at him:

Peter: “Whoa! What are you doing? Do you have any idea what this guy has done? Do you even know?”

Jesus: “Yes.”

Peter: “I don’t get it.”—AS IF HE WAS THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF NEW MEMBERS

Jesus reminds Peter: “You didn’t get it when I chose you, either.”

Peter: “But that is different. I’m not a tax collector.”

Jesus: “Get used to different.”

Get used to different. Four words not found within any of the passages of the Gospel but could be used quite well to provide an overview of the ministry of Jesus. Today’s Gospel reading is yet another that shows us the Forgiveness of Jesus at a time that the disciples continue to say and do the wrong thing over and over and over. It always seems as though they take one step forward, then one or even two steps back.

The disciples:

- Have seen Jesus feed the 5000 with just a few fish and loaves;
- Then witnessed Jesus walking on the water later that night and fear Him as a ghost.
- Peter replies correctly when asked “Who do people say that I am?”;
- Then quickly receives the rebuke of Jesus, “get behind me Satan”.
- At the Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John witness Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah, they hear God tell them to “listen to Him.”;
- Peter quickly jumps in to offer to build tents so everyone can stay right there.
- Jesus tells them He must be crucified, and rise the 3rd day;
- The disciples argue among themselves as to who was the greatest.

All too frequently, no matter how close they are to Jesus, they don’t seem to understand who Jesus is or what He is trying to do. They have their own vision of messiahship, and Jesus has His. Might makes right. The key to success is getting power and keeping it; but that’s not the mission of Jesus. All of this must have been very confusing to the disciples. None of what Jesus lays out before them seems very logical, in fact, it even seems counter-intuitive. Get used to different indeed! They often seem not to understand. And who *really* would? The scenes described within the Gospels don’t really expand quite enough for us to visualize and understand all that may be taking place—like watching actors portraying a scene would. But when we see the events unfold, we may begin to understand that the words and actions of the disciples may reflect our own. Then, and even now. Not too long before today’s reading, the disciples failed in curing a man’s son who

was possessed by demons. And one can only imagine that in discussions between themselves, they must have spoken of their want to please Jesus, to make Him proud of them, to step up and proactively do the right thing in His eyes—even before He told them what to do or had to come to their rescue yet again. Now we see John take the initiative, “Teacher, we say someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” *This was a good thing we did, right?* Here come the accolades, right? No. Here we go again.

We are not told who the person is that is driving out the demons. (speculate) We don’t know the motivation behind doing this, nor do we know the effectiveness (although we infer that he was successful otherwise the disciples wouldn’t have been so concerned).

Their reaction to seeing this was to tell him to stop. (Of course, Mark states “we *tried* to stop him” which also may indicate they may not have been successful in doing so. Otherwise, it would have been written “we stopped him”.)

But they told him to stop not because he really shouldn’t be doing it or that it was wrong to do it, but because he was “not following us.” He was not one of us. Today we would see tht as our church or our denomination. They wanted him stopped because it served to protect who they were, what they were able and given the authority to do. This person was an outsider. They seemed to disregard that Jesus still had followers outside this immediate circle of disciples, but by not being one of them, their person was no worthy, at least according to them.

We have just read in prior passages that the disciples seem to have a problem with rivalry (who is the greatest among us?) Now this is playing out in another public way. Stated another way, pride reigns within their hearts. Their actions of such are becoming apparent time and time again. This is no longer a misstep or mistake; it is a weakness within their character. Add to this their own inability to heal the boy, and we can add jealousy to their character as well. All of this contributes to their inability to understand Jesus and His true mission. They are zealous for Jesus, but they remain clueless. Zealous + clueless=bad combination.

The disciples were concerned not for this person healing in the name of Jesus but because of themselves, their own identity, upon which this person seemed to encroach. This is nearly identical to the reading from Numbers when Joshua asked Moses to stop Eldad and Medad to stop prophesying in the camp because they had not gone out to the tent with the others. Moses’ reply to Joshua was “Are you jealous for my sake?” The inference is “or yours?” It is the same with the disciples in our Gospel this morning.

“Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in My name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. Whoever is not against us is for us.” THERE IS NO NEUTRALITY WITH JESUS. This man is doing the right thing with the right motive. He is doing the work of the Lord.

The disciples being protective is understandable, but being restrictive is unacceptable.

The same goes for the barriers we have created between denominations today. Differences in worship (style and music); differences in liturgy; communion each week or once per month; traditional vs. “modern” worship; and now with COVID, even in-person or online, and the list goes on. It is ok to

not agree with everything *WE* have created within the good news of the Gospel being the core of each. Because it is “In His name” we should be most and solely concerned.

As Christians, the question to ask isn’t “is he one of us?” but “is his allegiance to Jesus?” Scottish theologian Sinclair Ferguson said “it is more important that the servants of God are devoted to Christ than that they are one of us.” Because we must not forget that even within the group of disciples there stood Judas!

We have all chosen at some point in time and possibly for a number of different reasons to be part of the ELCA. Hopefully it is in large part because of the core of our beliefs. We hold our beliefs in the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and we trust that the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. God give sinners grace reconciliation and new life through our faith in Christ. We are not reconciled by good works or following rules. God moves to us, not us to Him, and He enables us to decide.

As the ELCA, I believe we are a church body that works to tear down barriers. We are a church getting used to being different. We are a church that welcomes all—even by the standards of some other denominations to be quite flawed in doing so. As a denomination, we are not without controversy. We are deemed to “liberal” by many. Too quick to speak in areas that may be deemed political, and unpopular, regardless that the viewpoints seem to echo those of the Gospel. Women frequently serve in the pulpit, even in the offices of our bishops, both nationally and within geographic regions. In August we installed the first “pastor of public witness” in the person of a female tattooed pastor prone to profanity as much as preaching the Gospel, but a person who lives her faith in Jesus first. This past month, we installed the first openly transgender bishop within our denominations history, Rev. Megan Rohrer. The church was not always so supportive of Megan’s ministry, and to no surprise, this is not well received by all to say the least.

Speaking of different, I wouldn’t be here if the ELCA had no SM program. Where else could you hear a sermon spoken by a banker? A voice that carries messages that are hopefully and prayerfully In His name, not my lowly and unimportant viewpoints.

We are a church which worships, works and lives in the name of Jesus Christ. That is the “us” we should be most concerned with. Not the ELCA, not even Zion, but the collective body of Christ worshipping and living by faith in His name. Even if so little as a cup of water is given in His name, they receive their reward. The vision of Jesus is far broader than we can imagine, and the boundaries are far more permeable than rigid to which denominations (even the ELCA itself) may prescribe.

How we live in relation to others reflects on the beliefs we hold true and the faith we maintain. There is no us and them. No outsider, no inner circle. No worthy or unworthy. Only children of God, all created in His image. All getting used to different more and more each day. All encouraging, not stopping one another from reaching out in the name of Jesus. All giving thanks to God. All going out—reaching out with Christ’s love.

Amen.

WEEKLY SUNDAY PREVIEW

October 10, 2021

The rich man who comes to ask Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life is a good man, sincere in his asking. Mark's Gospel is alone in saying that Jesus looked on him and loved him. Out of love, not as judgment, Jesus offers him an open door to life: sell all you own and give it to the poor. Our culture bombards us with the message that we will find life by consuming. Our assemblies counter this message with the invitation to find life by divesting for the sake of the other.

This Week's Lessons

This is an opportunity to read the verses before the passage that we will share on Sunday. Sometimes the lessons are taken out of context and lead to questions that the lesson we read on Sunday do not quite answer.

THE LESSONS

FIRST READING: Amos 5: 6-15

Please be seated.

- ⁶Seek the LORD and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.
- ⁷Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground!
- ¹⁰They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
- ¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.
- ¹²For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins —
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate.
- ¹³Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time.
- ¹⁴Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD,
the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said.
- ¹⁵Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

PSALM: Psalm 90: 12-17*Read responsively.*¹²So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.¹³**Return, O LORD; how long will you tarry? Be gracious to your servants.**¹⁴Satisfy us by your steadfast love in the morning; so shall we rejoice and be glad all our days.¹⁵**Make us glad as many days as you afflicted us and as many years as we suffered adversity.**¹⁶Show your servants your works, and your splendor to their children.¹⁷**May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.****SECOND READING: Hebrews 4: 12-16**

¹²Indeed, the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

GOSPEL: Mark 10: 17-31

¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; then come, follow me." ²²When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

²⁸Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions — and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the Church, the World, and all in need.

Silence for reflection.

- A** Uniting God, you call forth different gifts in those who follow you. Encourage us to welcome the diverse benefits and blessings of the whole Church in teaching, preaching, prophecy, healing, and more. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- A** Nurturing God, you bring forth crops from the soil and bounty from the trees. Increase the produce of the land and bless all who toil in fields and orchards. Provide for good working conditions and keep them safe. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- A** Empowering God, you offer compassion for those who are overlooked or forgotten. Open the hearts of local, national, and World leaders to show such compassion and love for their neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- A** Sheltering God, in Jesus you travelled among us without a place to lay your head. Provide safe places to sleep and rest for those who have no place to live. Sustain ministries that offer food, clothing, and peace of mind especially Bread for the World, LWR, Faith Mission, and Good Samaritan and other local Food Pantries. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- A** Renewing God, you bring life out of death. Help us part with those things that are no longer beneficial to us and open our hearts to see where new life is budding in this congregation. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- A** Eternal God, we thank you for the lives of those who have died especially Baby Ruth; Paul Faust; Theodor Flidner, who with his wife, were founders of the Kaiserswerther Diakonie which Florence Nigtengale graduated; and all of our loved ones who have preceded us. Make us confident in your promise of salvation and support us in our own journey of faith. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Suggestions

World Hunger and/or World Health
Child Welfare in the United States as well as Underdeveloped Countries
Nikki and Ruth (and Ruth's Family)
Preservation of Environment
U. S. Economy
Deaths of law officers
All active military and veterans who serve or have served to make us free
Complete end of COVID-19

- P** Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

If you have an idea for a petition for the prayer, make a note or write it out before church if you tend to stumble as I do. Sometimes I make notes and sometimes I just go off my head. You can probably tell the difference.



CONTACT THE PASTOR

Communications requesting pastoral care should be made directly to Pastor Larry Baker, (614) 257-8560.

A NOTE FROM MARGARET AND MARK/SPOILER ALERT, THERE IS A WEDDING!

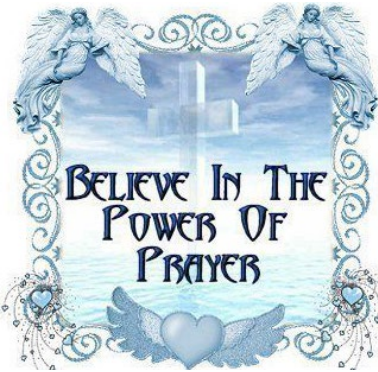
“I know I have not been there in person much this summer – Mark has had some flare-ups with his seizures. I have been taking him to the Catholic Church a lot, and then we have been traveling too.” They traveled back to Dayton last weekend to Margaret’s former church, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Moraine Ohio, for their wedding last Saturday. Please keep them in your prayers. “I hope to see everyone soon – I miss my church family!”

Margaret Bussard

Did you notice, we had a wedding. Margaret and Mark will be a married couple by the time they come back to Zion. Keep them in your prayers and wish them the best.

PRAYERS

Please keep these people in your prayers: Michael Koch; Wesley and JoAnn Porter; Nicole Biler Robinette who is still in the hospital and she and her family need to be remembered in our prayers; Derek Taylor as he enters the Marine Basic Training, and also remember his family that misses him; the family of Baby Ruth Doran; and all of those who are still suffering from COVID-19 and their families. Please remember all of our shut-ins and sick, Arlene Castor and Nancy Hoenie. We have not heard from the Toys for quite a while.



Dick Stelz recently had back surgery; he is doing well, but limited mobility. The storms damaged their barn roof and they are looking for someone to fix it.

Nikki has undergone a voluntary, but risky surgery to improve her condition.

Please keep Nikki and her family in your prayers.

(Also, pray for the families and caretakers of those on the prayer list.)

The address for Michael and the Koch family is 224 West Romany Loop, Beverly Hills, FL 34465. You can get updates from Linda at www.caringbridge.org/visit/michaelkoch2?fbclid. Keep all of the Koch’s in your prayers.

If you hear or know of anyone who should be on our Prayer List, please let me know, my number is 614 398-6302 or lejohn7310@icloud.com

COMING ATTRACTIONS HERE AT ZION

WORLD FOOD DAY



We will be celebrating World Food Day on October 17th, during our worship service. If you wish to make a special donation to [ELCA World Hunger](#) and do not participate in the webinar, mark an envelope and put it in the offering plate.

Dear friend in Christ,

You're invited to join me and [Rick Steves](#), guidebook author and travel TV host, as we celebrate World Food Day!

This online benefit for [ELCA World Hunger](#) will feature interviews hosted by my friend, Rick, with people on the ground who are doing the dynamic work of fighting hunger around the world. Special guests include the Rev. David Beckmann, who is being honored for his lifelong service to end hunger; the Rev. Rebel Hurd; Willie and Anne Langdji; and the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla. There will also be special performances by Rachel Kurtz, Peter Mayer and the St. Olaf Choir. As a vital supporter of the church, we would love for you to join us as we hear compelling stories, listen to wonderful music and gather in fellowship to invest in this life-giving work.

Elysiann A. Eaton

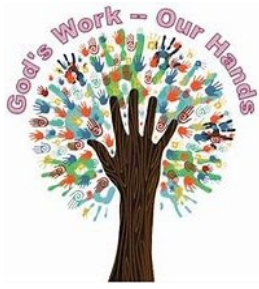
FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

As you know, we will be serving breakfast at First English again. There will be NO Reformation worship here at Zion that Sunday. This will be the last one this year. The next time we go there it will be 2022.



ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

The 7th of November will be All Saints' Sunday. We will be remembering and honoring (As the name says.) all of our Saints. The color for that Sunday is White. When you think about the rest of the Church year, there will only be two more Sundays until Advent.



LIRS

80 Years of Welcome

How To Help Afghan Refugees

Afghan refugees and allies need our help. For two decades, the U.S. Government worked with hundreds of thousands of Afghan allies to serve the U.S. mission as interpreters, translators, cultural advisors, drivers, NGO employees, human rights activists, and more. Because of their service to the U.S. mission, our allies and their families soon became the targets of anti-American violence.

Through Operation Allies Refuge, the U.S. has evacuated more than 100,000 of our Afghan allies—but tens of thousands remain in harm's way. We must continue to protect and advocate for those at risk, including translators, human rights activists, journalists, LGBTQIA+ people, and religious and minority groups.

As a resettlement agency, LIRS and our partners stand ready to welcome our Afghan neighbors and their family members and to continue advocating for those left behind.

URGENT: Protect Afghans Who Have Been Left Behind

Join us in calling upon the Biden administration to create new pathways of protection and provide a robust humanitarian response for the Afghan people who have been left behind.

ADVOCATE for Afghan Refugees

As vulnerable Afghans begin to arrive and settle into their new communities across the country, we must ensure our newest neighbors are provided the assistance necessary to rebuild their new lives, commensurate with our nation's moral and humanitarian obligations.

On September 3, Representatives Seth Moulton (D-MA) and Don Bacon (R-NE) introduced the **Welcoming Evacuees Coming from Overseas to Mitigate Effects of Displacement Act of 2021**, also known as the WELCOMED Act, to ensure that Afghans do not suffer as a result of the rushed evacuation. If passed by Congress and signed into law by the president, the bill will provide evacuated Afghans with the same basic services and resources other refugees and Special Immigrant Visa recipients have traditionally received and that Congress has mandated for them.

[SEND A MESSAGE](#) to your Representative today and urge them to cosponsor the WELCOMED Act!

To learn more about our Advocacy, visit our [SIV Advocacy page](http://www.lirs.org/emergency-evacuation-afghan-allies-action-alert). www.lirs.org/emergency-evacuation-afghan-allies-action-alert

Pray for Afghan Refugees

A Prayer of Christian Faith

Lord Jesus,

We know that you bless people with the gifts of life, family, and relationship. Afghan allies that stood with the American military and their families are in danger. As America withdraws its troops from Afghanistan, the commitment we made to protect these allies and their families is being tested.

Lord, strengthen our country to be a faithful friend to the Afghan families that are in need of protection. Lord Jesus, these allies placed their lives and the lives of their families in danger because they believed in the American mission.

May we honor our commitment and aid their safe passage. May we seek peace as the mission for our families and communities. May we live as faithful friends in the world.

AMEN

An Interfaith Prayer

All human hearts seek lasting peace.

As we live in this broken world, we uplift the sacrifice and risk to human life present in the current military withdrawal and the threat to Afghan allies and families.

May the United States honor its commitment to the many Afghan allies who put their lives at grave risk to support US troops.

Honor speaks to the interrelationship of all humans.

We affirm this prayer and pray for peace, protection of human lives, and harmony in the World.

The emotional toll of this time is high. We are grappling with the fall of the Afghan government and resurgence of the Taliban while watching chaotic scenes from at the airport in Kabul being broadcasted on nearly every news channel. As people of faith, we want to offer our prayers while taking action to help.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Gather: Afghanistan

Our inaugural **Gather** program equips families, congregations, and community groups with tools to learn about the history of conflict in Afghanistan, explore the culture through worship, food, and music, and learn more about LIRS' work through the story of the Abdullah family.

How LIRS HelpS Afghan Allies in America

When Afghan wartime allies are approved by the government for resettlement in the U.S., our experts provide vital welcome services to ensure they receive a warm welcome and a firm footing as they build a new life in a new country. **For example, LIRS and its volunteers will provide modest furniture, a stocked pantry of culturally familiar foods, and all of the basic amenities of an American home.**

Over the course of the next few months, case managers support the individual or family in learning to navigate their new community. Adults are enrolled in English language classes, children are enrolled in school, and case managers guide families in using public transportation and accessing community resources. Case managers support our new neighbors in learning financial literacy and help them find a job or vocational calling. They are also introduced to new neighbors and church and community groups that will play an important role in providing each refugee family with support and companionship for years to come.

More than 9,500 Afghan Allies supported by LIRS since 2009.

Stay up to date with everything going on at LIRS.

FUNDS FOR ZION

We are all probably doing more shopping on line during this pandemic. Did you know that when you shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7201301, AmazonSmile donates to Zion Lutheran Church?

Also, if you have a Kroger card, you can designate Zion to receive a percentage of your grocery expenses. Go to the service desk to inquire.

REMEMBER SPECIAL FAMILY DAYS/SIGN-UPS

We are asking those who would normally remember special family celebrations by signing the calendar for flower donations too, instead, donate money in lieu of flowers. The money will go to the food pantry.

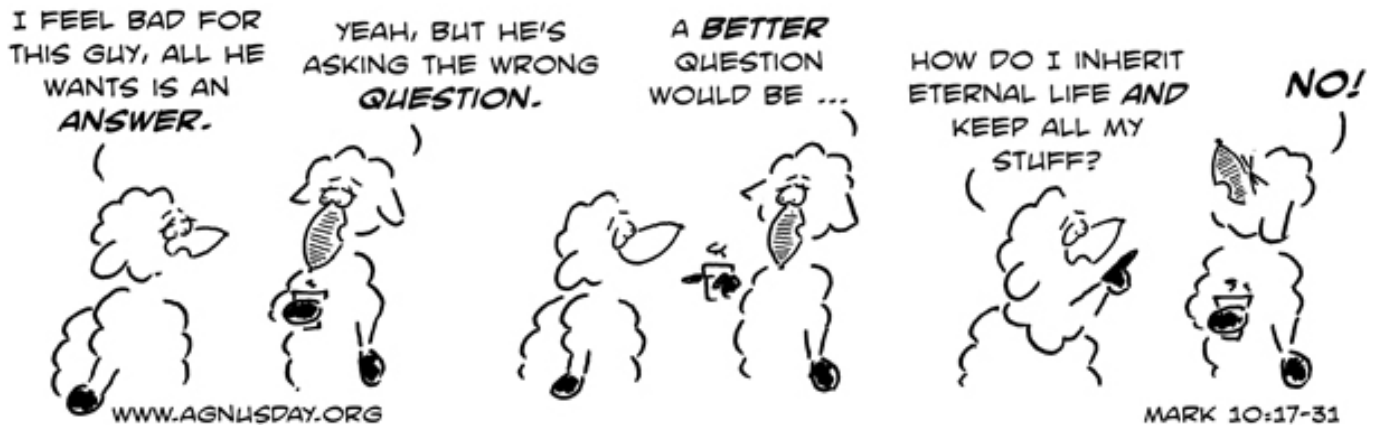
Please check the bulletin board behind the door to the office for all of the sign-up sheets for this year. Lectors and Worship Assistants are also welcome. Thank you so much!

If you need a new Directory, contact me in one of the usual ways and I will add it to the mailing that week.

I would love to have more hymn picks to choose from week-to-week. Please let me know which hymns you would like to have us sing. We are looking at Gathering and Sending. It isn't too late. Let me know.

(If you wish to sign up for food on the Altar or service assistant for a particular Sunday and are not going to be here to do so, let me know via email, text, or messenger, and I will sign you up for that Sunday.)

*Hope to see you soon.
God bless you all this week.*



*Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy;
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
Jesus lives again earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around loaves abound!
Jesus lives again earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around loaves abound!*