

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity, YEAR C, July 3, 2016

It is appropriate this week, in Ordinary Time, that the readings focus on the transforming power of the ordinary. In a world of celebrity, of “Reality TV”, and of value given only to winners and to those who are larger than life, it can be tempting to think that the ordinary has no contribution to make, that “vanilla” people can make no difference. But, the Gospel does not despise small things. God’s Reign is a reality in which the least, the child and the marginalised all have significant value to offer.

May you celebrate the small and the ordinary in your worship this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

2 Kings 5:1-14: Elisha is visited by Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, who has a serious skin disease. He instructs him through a messenger to wash himself seven times in the Jordan, which, after some complaining, Naaman does, and he is healed.

Or **Isaiah 66:10-14**: A prophecy of restoration and comfort, like being nursed and cared for by a mother, for Jerusalem and her people.

Psalms 30: David celebrates God’s deliverance, healing and mercy, and that God has turned his mourning into dancing, as he commits to a life of praise.

OR **Psalms 66:1-9**: A psalm in praise of God who is glorious and who saves God’s people in miraculous ways.

Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-14: Paul instructs the Galatians to give themselves in bringing goodness into the world – correcting one another, working faithfully, providing for their teachers, and doing good (justice) at every opportunity.

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20: Jesus sends the seventy two disciples out to preach the Kingdom, instructing them to bless the homes where they stay and to accept the hospitality they are offered. On their return he celebrates with them, but stresses that the best thing is to have “names written in heaven”.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=2%20Kings%205.%201-14%0Acw%20Psalm%2030%0AGalatians%206:%20\[1-6\],%207-16%0ALuke%2010:%201-11,%2016-20](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=2%20Kings%205.%201-14%0Acw%20Psalm%2030%0AGalatians%206:%20[1-6],%207-16%0ALuke%2010:%201-11,%2016-20)

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O God,
who hast prepared for them that love thee
such good things as pass man’s understanding;
Pour into our hearts such love toward thee,
that we, loving thee above all things,
may obtain thy promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

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Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
Pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Called to proclaim the kingdom of God, let us offer prayers for all those in every need.

Deacon or other leader

For the holy people of God in every place.
Lord, have mercy.
For mercy, peace, and justice in the world, and for our nation on its birthday.
Lord, have mercy.
For all those on vacation.
Lord, have mercy.
For the sick and the suffering, the poor and the oppressed, prisoners and their families.
Lord, have mercy.
For the dying and the dead.
Lord, have mercy.
For ourselves, our families and companions, and all those we love.
Lord, have mercy.
Lifting our voices with all creation, with St _____ and all the saints, let us offer
ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.
To you, O Lord.

Presider

Lord of the harvest, hear the prayers we offer today and guard us as we labor in your
name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Servant Lord, grant us both the opportunity and the will to serve you day by day. May all
that we do and how we bear each other's burdens be our offerings of love and service to
the glory of your name. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Boundless, O God, is your saving power; your harvest reaches to the ends of the earth.
Set our hearts on fire for your kingdom and put on our lips the good news of peace. Grant
us perseverance as heralds of your Gospel and joy as disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ
our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever
and ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

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Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified : hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Common Worship*

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Common Worship*

Father, may everything we do begin with your inspiration and continue with your saving help. Let our work always find its origin in you and through you reach completion. Amen

God of justice and love, your way commands our obedience. We can do nothing apart from the blessings you bestow. We offer our lives and these our gifts to You. We pray that the work of Your church may be enlarged, enriched and strengthened as it seeks to do your will and to show compassion, justice, and mercy in our world of need. Accept what we bring, and multiply its effectiveness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, save us from self-centredness in our prayers and help us to remember to pray for others. May we be so lovingly absorbed with those for whom we pray that we may feel their needs as keenly as our own, and intercede for them sensitively, with understanding and imagination. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen (after John Calvin 1509-64)

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust, / Thy hands made both and I am there: / Thy power and love, my love and trust / Make one place everywhere. (George Herbert 1593-1633)

Create within us, O God, a longing to obey your commandments and a thankfulness for all your mercies. Let us honour you in the thoughts of our hearts, let us glorify you in the words we speak and let us magnify you in the things that we do; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen John Wesley (1703-1791)

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Signs of New Creation -

The season of Pentecost, with the surging of the Spirit, may focus on the “new creation” God enacts that becomes visible in public life and available in personal relationships. The God who sends and lives in the Spirit breaks old deathly patterns and makes all things new.

Such a surging possibility requires a receptive, appropriate response. That response, on the one hand, is a singular readiness to receive only from this source and from no other, knowing that the “good parent” is adequate. On the other hand, a faithful response reaches out into the neighborhood with acts of mercy and policies of justice. Passionate love for God and intentional love for neighbor always go together when the Spirit comes.

This season's texts testify to an intensity and an intentionality that bind the faithful to God. That binding is between incommensurate partners—the one who gives and gives and gives generously and reliably, the other who asks in honesty and who gives thanks in lyrical self-abandoning freedom. This ongoing transaction of generosity and gratitude is

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deeply unlike the world in which we live, for that world does not believe that gifts are generously given; it instead believes that self-congratulation is more appropriate than thanks. On all counts, the people of these texts know better and live differently, always asking, always receiving, always thanking, and always answering in glad obedience.

Paul makes an argument against preoccupation with one's self ("flesh," in Galatians 6:13). In his time that preoccupation was expressed as circumcision—taken by some as a qualification of merit to make the (male) self more acceptable, more pious, or more obedient. Paul famously dismisses such "merit" and contrasts it to a new creation that "is everything" (6:15).

The focus on "new creation" gives entry to the gospel reading. Jesus sent his disciples out, admonishing them to travel light ("no purse, no bag, no sandals," says Luke 10:4), but to focus on their assignment of healing the sick, as a sign that the new rule of God is very near. They report on their journey that they did indeed have power over demons to enact new creation among those who had been disabled and immobilized.

It is not different in the narrative of Naaman, the Syrian general, and Elisha. Elisha is infused with God's power for life and is able to bring amazing newness, even to a Gentile (see Luke 4:27). It is no wonder that the song of thanksgiving in Psalm 66 attends to God's "awesome deeds." Israel praises the God who has "kept us alive." The texts converge on "new creation" that in Israel is the Exodus (see Psalm 66:6); for Naaman, it's newness of "baby flesh" (2 Kings 5:14); and it's enacted as healing by the disciples (Luke 10:17).

Paul has named the debilitating pathology of our society: the preoccupation with self (flesh). Those who are preoccupied with self—self-fulfillment and self-securing—have no power for new creation. The gospel summons us away from that societal preoccupation to a focus on the suffering love of the cross (Galatians 6:14)—for lepers, for the demon-possessed, for all those denied fullness of life—that imbues with transformative power, that makes all things new. No wonder the disciples returned from their mission "with joy" (Luke 10:17).

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LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The central message this week is simple but significant – do not despise the saving power of small things. God's commitment to justice, restoration and healing is proclaimed strongly through the Psalms and Isaiah's song, but the way God's saving work comes into being is often through small, ordinary people and actions. Naaman complains because Elisha speaks to him through a servant and asks him to wash in an ordinary river in Israel – yet he can only be healed by changing his attitude, and embracing this ordinary way to healing. The picture of God's care and comfort in Isaiah is that of an ordinary, familiar domestic scene – a child being nursed by its mother. Galatians speaks about the work of following Christ in the every day terms of our relationships with one another (correcting each other and sharing burdens), taking responsibility and doing good for all. And Jesus sends his disciples out to share the message of God's reign, while accepting hospitality along the way – a very ordinary practice for travelers. Even when they celebrate overcoming demons, Jesus downplays it. Psalm 30 recounts an ordinary journey from joy

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to pain and back again, relying on God's mercy and grace – a common human experience. The one reading that appears to be out of place is the alternative Psalm (66) – but here the focus is on the Exodus, which, although proclaimed through retelling the miraculous story, is about the very ordinary human longing for liberation and salvation – which is, of course, the essence of the message that Jesus' disciples would have preached.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: It is important that the work of celebrities and high profile leaders in the struggle for justice is recognised and celebrated, but justice is not really achieved by these few. Justice is the result of millions of small acts by millions of ordinary people. The power of Jesus' message was not in his riveting preaching or his miraculous acts, it was in the ordinary lives that were changed. So, too, the impact of the disciples' ministry would have been felt through the changed lives of the people they left behind when they had moved on. The power of the church to bring wholeness to society is in the grace, kindness and mutual encouragement that comes from living as the letter to the Galatians instructs. And, in every individual, the willingness to receive God's grace and healing through ordinary means (like Naaman) frees us to become channels of the "ordinary" work of God in the lives of those around us. In practical terms, this move toward "ordinary justice" has very significant implications. If we are to reverse the impact of climate change, it will take small but significant shifts in the habits of many ordinary people. If our world is to become more peaceful, it will mean ordinary people must learn to understand and respect one another, recognising our common humanity. If wealth is to be equitably distributed, it will mean changing the values by which ordinary individuals live from consumerism to simplicity and from accumulating to giving. If these shifts were just taken seriously by Christ-followers alone, the impact would be nothing short of miraculous. As Christians around the world join together in peace-making, hospitality, taking responsibility for the change we can bring and doing small acts of goodness, the Gospel message is preached clearly and powerfully, with very few words necessary.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is often tempting as we seek to share Christ's message in the Church and into our communities to think about making big changes and attempting big, attention grabbing projects. However, our impact is often less about how we structure our services or what kind of music we use or how "prominent" we are in our community. Often it is in the quiet work of nurturing care and service within our community, and in doing the slow, transformative work of growing into caring, serving Christ-followers in our homes, workplaces and sports clubs (as Galatians calls us) that ultimately determines how effective our ministry is. When, instead of pointing fingers at "the world" we are willing to accept its "hospitality" speaking blessing, and offering grace and mercy and justice in every situation and with every person (as the disciples were called to do), then people begin coming to us to learn more about our faith and the One we follow. But, if we fail to do this, then no amount of words or programs will be enough to compensate for our lack of grace and goodness. It's significant that, even when the disciples were told to "shake the dust off their feet" when they were not received in a village, they were, nevertheless instructed to tell the people that God's Reign had come to them. It was not that they were "judging" the people, so much as using a graphic and powerful image to challenge them about what they had rejected. God's love and grace remained available to the people. In the same way, we can confront the small injustices in our communities, while still offering grace. And, in the end, what is important is not the dramatic confrontations, but the people whose names are "written in heaven" – who have discovered life in the dream of God.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

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"Those called and sent are the baptized, not just the ordained," the Very Rev. Anthony F.M. Clavier, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/06/13/7-pentecost-proper-9-c-2013/>

["The Nearness of the Kingdom,"](http://day1.org/1050-the-nearness-of-the-kingdom) Christopher Henry, *Day 1*,
<http://day1.org/1050-the-nearness-of-the-kingdom>

Changing Plans, the Rev. JC. Austin, *Day 1*
<http://day1.org/4898-changing-plans>

Naaman's no-nonsense cure - Short article - Good background for exegetical sermon on Naaman
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2134>

Doing the right thing - sermon on the Family of Faith
<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=634>

CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children, Proper 9, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/year-c-proper-9-14th-sunday-in-ordinary.html>

"Sermon of the Week," / "Mensajes para ninos," Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. [Sermons4Kids.com](http://www.sermons4kids.com).
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

Children's Sermon, Faith Formation Journeys
<http://faithformationjourneys.org/?p=982>

"Dropping the Ball," On the Chancel Steps, children's resources by Frances Woodruff,
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/06/24/ball/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Come Let Us Sing Of A Wonderful Love
Dear Jesus In Whose Life I See
Praise To The Lord, The Almighty
O Jesus I Have Promised
Lord, Reign In Me (YouTube video)
When It's All Been Said And Done (YouTube video)
What Can I Do (YouTube video)