

It's exciting to be in this holy place,
which you transformed w Terri
and barely got to appreciate
before everything changed
and we all were transformed.

Isn't that always the way?
*Just when I finally get a grip,
it's time to let go.*

It is a joy to be celebrating the Feast Day of St. Luke,
by nourishing our deep, spiritual hunger
for the presence of Christ at this table,
in a new way: *Shared Home Communion*.
It's the first time in such a long time we've been able to
taste the union of human and divine
in this most ordinary, incarnate, embodied way:
Mortal and immortal are One
in a tiny crumb of unleavened bread.
It's a foretaste of our union with God,
and it's not *virtual*; it's quite real, *in the flesh*.
Incarnate.

We've been reckoning with our incarnate nature,
our human vulnerability,
in these past seven months of pandemic
not by denying it, or bending it to our will
but by becoming its students,
learning about our need for community,
AND sabbath,
and our hunger for Communion with God.

**This is a very good time for a community to have
a patron saint who is a healer.**

We have a mixture of fact and myth about Luke,
the patron saint for whom this parish is named.
Truth is somewhere in the mix.

Luke probably was a physician from Antioch, Syria.
He may or may not have been a gentile.
He wrote the third Gospel and the Book of Acts.
He's often said to have painted the first icon.
Luke's works are works of art,
 healing arts, literary arts, maybe icons
 revealing God's divine beauty.
Most of the Nativity story and all of its canticles
 come from Luke
Only in Luke do we learn about Jesus as a child:
 Anna and Simeon, and rabbis in the temple
 recognized God in him.
Only in Luke do we get the parables of the
 good Samaritan, and the prodigal son.
Only in Luke does Christ crucified speak from the cross:
 for his executioners, "Father, forgive them."
 to the being executed alongside him,
 "YOU WILL be with me in Paradise"
All of them trapped together in the same domination system,
 "Abba", Jesus said, "into your hands I commend my spirit."

The one who taught us all of these things about Jesus, is Luke.
He was a man of God on a mission
 was to spread Christ's message
 of wholeness, beauty and grace.

So, this parish aligned itself with
 a healer, an artist, from its inception.
In taking the name of St. Luke,
 your parish aligned itself with
 with God revealed in healing and beauty –
 and in the most literary of the Gospels,
which focuses more than any other on
 human love for Jesus,
 His compassion for all who
 suffer, sin, and are scorned,
 for outcasts like the poor,
 and the sick and contagious (like lepers)

and people caught in the domination system
(like tax collectors and centurions)
for exploited ag workers (like shepherds)
and for the women in Christ's ministry.

More than any other Gospel, Luke is political.
He tells a story of God's cosmic grace,
Christ's redemptive mission,
and the eternal, wisdom of the Holy Spirit –
setting up camp and dwelling
bringing healing and beauty
into the vulnerable mess of human life.

**Since the day it took St. Luke's name, like it or not,
all of that has been imprinted on this parish.**
It's in your DNA.

That's not ALL that you are, or will be –
there is no limit to what you might create –
but you will always be, at your core,
a congregation gathered in
the healing beauty of
love for Christ, and Christ's compassion.

I hear it in the stories you tell about your experiences of
healing and acceptance at St. Luke's,
in the mystical experiences you have here
and in your enthusiasm and integrity
in being a community that sticks together.

I wonder about your hopes:
the hopes you already know about,
and the hopes God is still revealing in and through you.

Today's scripture is the part of Luke's gospel
in which Jesus returns
after a mystical experience in the wilderness.

Filled with the power of the spirit,
He reveals himself, proclaiming
release to captives
recovery of sight to the blind,
liberation of the oppressed,
and the Lord's favor:
fulfilled. In that moment.

On this day, when we finally return to this table,
I wonder what mystical experiences you had
in this wilderness time.
I wonder what wildest dreams you will proclaim,
for St. Luke's continuing journey of beauty and healing,
and speaking God's message of love compassion.

Imagine what might be fulfilled and transformed
through you, good people of St. Luke's,
filled with the power of spirit.

Let's bring back into the fold and care for
any who got stuck in the wilderness –
and invite all the strays we meet
to share with us

The work of St. Luke's
a healing community where God's divine beauty
is being revealed.

Sometimes in a process of letting go.

Sometimes in a process of getting a grip.

Sometimes in putting the pieces back together.

Sometimes in recognizing the beauty
God's wild scattering pieces.

They're all works of Christ's transformational love
alive in Luke's little
namesake parish in Woodland.

Welcoming. Collaborating. Celebrating. Growing.

The wisdom of Sirach says:
*God's works will never be finished;
and from God health spreads over all the earth.*