

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

Getting to the Fat Calf



Whatever you think of, however you feel about this story, don't fool yourself into believing that it is all about a party. Pie-in-the-sky piety skims the fat and squeezes the fruit out of the parable, reducing a teaching about what is wildly prodigal to a mere morality play.

Here's the bulk of the story: abandonment, longing, waste, famine, then hunger, humiliation, and dishonor, dying in pig dirt, shame unto pleading, resentment, sore bitterness . . . loss in every direction. Loss and falling—from comfort and certainty, respectability and character; from pleasure into pain, well-being into misery. Jesus told this agonizing, heartbreaking, undignified, lowdown, vanished-hope story for a reason. Jesus knew what life can be like. He recognized the deep ravines of loss and the gullies into which we fall. It doesn't look as if the story begins in those sad places, but it surely lands and sits there for a while, the kind of sedentary existence that is too much like an awful eternity.

A father, bereaved and insulted (Was he not the parent he hoped, thought, intended himself to be?), is left gazing into an empty distance. A child disappearing (Why such urgency to run from his birth home?) is left in disgrace. A child dutiful, hard at work, utterly dependable (How had he come to feel so cheated, denied of love?) is left mucking in thick refusal. And while it is so . . . And though it is true . . .

Suddenly, or maybe it's eventually, the story becomes larger. The story collides with gospel. The late preacher and theologian Frederick Buechner observed, "The gospel is bad news before it is good news." Jesus knew how we fail the world and how the world fails us. Jesus was a truth-teller, the whole truth: rags and robes, pigpen and dance floor, defiance and embrace, but no pie-in-the-sky piety. Instead, a festive roast in the oven! That's how grace behaves.

Presiding Minister: Rev. Randy Marburger

Worship Leader: Dr. Wendy S. Farone, Vicar

Assisting Minister: Loran Bohman

Lector: Daisy Shields

Organist: Drew Pogyor

Altar Care: Loran Bohman

The Sanctuary Light: is given to the Glory of God.

The Columbarium Light: is given by Barbara Jo Cush in memory of Grandmother Maud E. Beech.

Hymns for Sunday

Entrance Hymn **ELW 807 Come, Thou Fount of Every blessing**

Hymn of the day **ELW 608 Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling**

Communion Hymns **ELW 779 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound**

Sending Hymn **ELW 763 My Life Flows on in Endless Song**

Communion- If you need assistance or are unable to come to the communion rail, you can either stand at the step or stay in your seat and Pastor will come to you. If you are unable to receive either the consecrated bread or wine, receiving either one is acceptable.

Membership- There are many ways to be connected with our congregation. Everyone is welcome to participate in any and all congregation activities; and anyone baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is welcome to Holy Communion. We welcome your request for membership.

Lent Services on March 12, 19, 26 and April 2, 9

- Lenten Light Dinner 5:30-6:45 pm
- Lenten Service 7:00 pm

Maundy Thursday Service, April 17, 7:00 pm

Good Friday Service, April 18, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday, Service, April 20, 10:00 am

Spring Craft Show Saturday, April 5th from 9 am – 3 pm.

Spaghetti Dinner Saturday, April 26th, 4:00 – 7:00 pm

Prayer List Update for April – June Please let Apryle know of any updates for the prayer list for the next quarter. Thank you!

Bible Storytelling News

This Tuesday, April 1st our study of selected themes from the Gospel of Luke will continue. Our Scripture for the week focuses on Luke 4:14-40, Let God Be God! Intriguing! Kirstin S. offered to bring snacks. Sandy S. will facilitate, and as always everyone adds their voice to the “holy dialog.” All our welcome. It does not matter if you can only attend occasionally—we will be happy to see you. A special thank you to Diane M. for the delicious, surprise brunch she provided last week.

Upcoming Commemorations

John Donne, poet, died 1631

Monday, March 31, 2025

After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry.

He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.

Benedict the African, confessor, died 1589

Friday, April 4, 2025

Born into slavery on the island of Sicily, Benedict lived as a hermit until the pope ordered all hermits to attach themselves to a monastery, at which time Benedict joined the Franciscans. Though illiterate, he was highly respected as a confessor and later superior of his community.