

# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

*H*is father saw him and...ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Luke 15:20



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**



*The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!*

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

*My Song is Love Unknown* ..... **R. Vaughn-Williams**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**C:** Amen

**P:** Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

*Kneel*

**P:** Compassionate One,

**C:** you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,  
but our lives do not always reflect you  
and your love for the world.

**We do not show others the tender compassion  
you have shown to us.**

**We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality  
you grant to all people.**

**We oppress others,**

**even though you have set us free again and again.**

**We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.**

**Transform our lives**

**and guide us again in the way of the cross.**

**Amen**

**P:** Beloved in Christ,  
God's arms are always stretched open wide  
to welcome the wandering ones home.

In † Christ your sins are forgiven.

You have a place in God's house forever.

**C:** Amen

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN**

***Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* .....LBW 499**



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
 2 Here I raise my Eb-en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";  
 3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.  
 and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.  
 let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan - d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end - less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,  
 Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan - d'ring from the fold of God;  
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good - ness prove.  
 he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.  
 Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.



Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt.  
 Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**G:** **And also with you.**

**KYRIE**



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **G** Christ, have mer - cy.  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P** Let us pray.

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen**

*Sit*

**WORD**

**FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12**

*By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.*

**A:** A Reading from Joshua:

<sup>9</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup> While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup> On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the

produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup> The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

**A**: The word of the Lord.

**C**: **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 32**

*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.*



Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



- 1 Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,  
and whose sin is | put away!
- 2 **Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there | is no guile! R**
- 3 While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,  
because of my groaning | all day long.
- 4 **For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.**
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave  
me the guilt | of my sin.
- 6 **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of  
trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them. R**
- 7 You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
- 8 **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;  
I will guide you | with my eye.**
- 9 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near  
you."
- 10 **Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.**
- 11 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart. **R**

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

*One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.*

**A:** A Reading from Second Corinthians:

<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup> So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**A:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

Stand

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**A** Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your  
 God, who is grac - ious and mer - ci - ful, slow to  
 an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

*Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to St Luke, the fifteenth chapter.

**C:** Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable: <sup>11b</sup> “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup> When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ <sup>20</sup> So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup> He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

**P**: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

**SERMON**.....Deacon Sandra Grier, ALW

Stand

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     *Our Father, We Have Wondered*

1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;  
 2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,  
 3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,

in fool-ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.  
 be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.  
 com-pas-sion-ate, for - giv - ing, and ev - er - car - ing Lord,

But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,  
 In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,  
 grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.

as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.  
 in glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.  
 Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.



**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*A brief silence is held after the introduction.*

**P**: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world,  
and all those in need.

*After each petition:*

**P**: God, in your mercy,

**C**: **receive our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P**: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your  
love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**C**: **Amen**

**PEACE**

**P**: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C**: **And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you.

*Sit*

**MEAL**

**OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

**ANTHEM**

**Come, Ye Sinners .....David Ashley White**

*Stand*

**OFFERTORY**

*As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir -  
 it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take  
 not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store to me the  
 joy of your sal-va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**A:** Let us pray.

**C:** Gracious Provider,  
 you set your immense treasures among us,  
 opening your heart to the world.  
 As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,  
 deepen our commitment to sharing those  
 treasures with others,  
 through our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
 Amen

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** We lift them to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and  
 might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the  
 high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**P:** Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
 who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
 who preached good news to the poor,  
 and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.  
 In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 our Lord Jesus took bread,  
 and gave thanks; broke it,

and gave it to his disciples,  
saying: Take and eat;  
this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper,  
he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink,  
saying: This cup is  
the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people  
for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection,  
and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,  
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,  
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**C:** Amen

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P:** All who are hungry, come!  
The feast of grace is spread.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**C** Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Sit

**COMMUNION**

*All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
The communicant may say: Amen**



**COMMUNION HYMN**

**Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound..... LBW 448**

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and

now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807  
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

*Stand*

**P**: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C** Amen.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**A**: Let us pray.

Generous Host,  
you have shared your feast with us and made us new.  
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,  
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,  
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C**: Amen

*SENDING*

**BLESSING**

**P**: God our tender parent,  
God the crucified one,  
God the reconciling Spirit,  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**C**: Amen



IN CHRIST GOD WAS  
RECONCILING THE  
WORLD TO HIMSELF.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

**SENDING HYMN**

**What Wondrous Love Is This.....LBW 385**

1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What  
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when  
 3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to  
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and

won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this  
 I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when I was sink - ing down  
 God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,  
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,

that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my  
 be - neath God's righ - teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my  
 who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will  
 I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?  
 soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.  
 sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.  
 on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Text: North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.  
 Music: WONDROUS LOVE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Paul J. Christiansen, 1914-1997, alt.  
 Arr. © 1955 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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**DISMISSAL**

**A**: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

**C**: **Thanks be to God.**

**PRELUDE**

*Fugue in d Minor* ..... **J. S. Bach**

**SERVICE ASSISTANTS**

**Ushers:** Fred Harbaugh, Susan Christ, AnnMarie Hohman, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker; **Lay Assistant:** Carola Storrs; **Comm. Assistant:** Mary Schultz  
**Acolyte:** Jordan Morris; **Altar Guild:** Sue Shoemaker, Yvonne Kaiser  
**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Sherry Holtzman, Jody Fullmer  
**Cantor:** Virginia Amme; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fullmer  
**Organist:** Carol Waltz

**IN BLESSED MEMORY**

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in honor of Nathan Rundio's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, with love from Grammy and Pappy Bausinger and his Uncle Mike.

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▪ **This morning we welcome Deacon Sandra Grier**, an Authorized  
▪ Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod.  
▪ Sandra has received extensive training so as to provide worship  
▪ leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop  
▪ of the synod to preside at the Eucharist. **Sandra is celebrating her**  
▪ **25<sup>th</sup> year** as a Deacon. **Please join us after worship** this morning for  
▪ a coffee hour in recognition of this significant milestone.  
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to Messiah Church!** It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

**Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.** during Lent there will be Lenten Vespers held in the Chapel followed by a brief Bible Study.

**Did your child ever attend Messiah Preschool?** This marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year, and a celebration will take place May 18<sup>th</sup> immediately following worship. We would love to have photos, name of your child or children, year they attended Messiah preschool and the teacher at that time. If you recall any interesting stories your child experienced during their years at Messiah preschool and would like to share, drop off the information to the church office by April 30<sup>th</sup>. **Please note**, include names and years on all pictures shared so you are sure to get them back. Thank you, the Preschool Board.

**Calling all pie makers!!** If you like to bake, especially pies, please share your favorite pie with us at our **pie social**. The fellowship committee will be hosting a pie social on April 13<sup>th</sup> immediately following worship and would love to see how many pies we can get. If you would be willing to make a pie for our social, please sign-up on the sheet in the Narthex. The fellowship committee will provide the beverages and cool whip; we just need the pies.

**Lutheran World Relief School Kits** More fabric has been marked and cut. Fabric pieces as well as instruction sheets are available in the narthex or in the church office for those who wish to help by sewing at home ... either by simply sewing a hem around the edges or by sewing a complete bag.

**Questions?? Call Sally Congdon at 570-547-6193 or Kathy Wither at 570-651-2802.**

**Kids Helping Kids!** In addition to our Kids in Mission event on March 29, we are going to hold a **second springtime Kids in Mission this year on May 3**. Our service project for that event will be to decorate and assemble **Children's Care Kits for Shepherd of the Streets ... and we can use your help!** Throughout the month of April, we will be collecting items to fill the kits. The following ***children's*** items are needed: *toothbrushes and toothpaste, band aids, hair ties, combs, socks, kids' soap, kids' shampoo, crayons and coloring or activity books, and small toys or fun items* (think dollar store toys which will fit inside a large lunch bag). Please place your items in the container in the narthex on Sundays or drop them off at the church office during the week. We will accept donations through Sunday, April 27. *Thank you for your help!*

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

(570) 326-9171 | [www.messiahsouth.org](http://www.messiahsouth.org)

### 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.

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

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