

ALKI UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

June 13, 2021

Stewardship Sunday



**We are a church where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary,
and where together, we grow a just and peaceful world.**

Gathering Music	Betsy Stelzer, Accompanist
Welcome	Rev. Louis Mitchell
Call to Worship	Charlie H, Liturgist
Sung Response	<i>Sanctuary</i> John W. Thompson and Randy Scruggs Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true; With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.
Contemporary Voice	"You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think." — A. A. Milne in the voice of Christopher Robin
Opening Song	<i>Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)</i> Chris Tomlin
Scripture Readings	Samuel 15:34-16:13 (The Message)

Samuel left immediately for Ramah and Saul went home to Gibeah. Samuel had nothing to do with Saul from then on, though he grieved long and deeply over him. But God was sorry he had ever made Saul king in the first place.

God Looks into the Heart

God addressed Samuel: "So, how long are you going to mope over Saul? You know I've rejected him as king over Israel. Fill your flask with anointing oil and get going. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I've spotted the very king I want among his sons."

"I can't do that," said Samuel. "Saul will hear about it and kill me."

God said, “Take a heifer with you and announce, ‘I’ve come to lead you in worship of God, with this heifer as a sacrifice.’ Make sure Jesse gets invited. I’ll let you know what to do next. I’ll point out the one you are to anoint.”

Samuel did what God told him. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the town fathers greeted him, but apprehensively. “Is there something wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong. I’ve come to sacrifice this heifer and lead you in the worship of God. Prepare yourselves, be consecrated, and join me in worship.” He made sure Jesse and his sons were also consecrated and called to worship.

When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, “Here he is! God’s anointed!”

But God told Samuel, “Looks aren’t everything. Don’t be impressed with his looks and stature. I’ve already eliminated him. God judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; God looks into the heart.”

Jesse then called up Abinadab and presented him to Samuel. Samuel said, “This man isn’t God’s choice either.”

Next Jesse presented Shammah. Samuel said, “No, this man isn’t either.”

Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel. Samuel was blunt with Jesse, “God hasn’t chosen any of these.”

Then he asked Jesse, “Is this it? Are there no more sons?”

“Well, yes, there’s the runt. But he’s out tending the sheep.”

Samuel ordered Jesse, “Go get him. We’re not moving from this spot until he’s here.”

Jesse sent for him. He was brought in, the very picture of health—bright-eyed, good-looking.

God said, “Up on your feet! Anoint him! This is the one.”

Samuel took his flask of oil and anointed him, with his brothers standing around watching. The Spirit of God entered David like a rush of wind, God vitally empowering him for the rest of his life. Samuel left and went home to Ramah.

Mark 4:30-32 (adapted from *The Message*)

“How can we picture God’s kin-dom? What kind of story can we use? It’s like an acorn. When it lands on the ground it is quite small as seeds go, yet once it is planted it grows into a huge oak tree with thick branches. Eagles nest in it.”

Sermon “Who Me?!” Rev. Louis Mitchell

Prayers of the People

(We invite you to stay muted or unmute as you desire. Please be respectful of the privacy of those names you lift in prayer — this is the internet and by its nature not completely private.)

Loving God, we lift our voices in prayer. We come to share our gratitude, our fears, our deepest hopes, and our unanswerable questions. We open our hearts to let you in to our most tender places and to share all that we hold most dear. We trust that we will be held, that we will be loved. In times of trial, help us hold on to that trust.

God, hear our prayers!

God of abundant grace, you have blessed us with unconditional love. We offer ourselves in all of our brokenness, knowing that in you, all things are whole. When we stray from your ways of justice and compassion, call us back. Have mercy on us, and help us to begin again in love.

We are imperfect, and yet, we are beloved. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Holy One, there are many among us who suffer today, whether in mind, body or spirit. We lift up the names of our loved ones, and we pray for the healing of all who suffer.

(Please say the names, aloud or in your heart, of anyone who is in need of healing.)

We pray, too, for those who have financial needs, who are in need of employment, and who are in need of economic justice. We lift up the names of our loved ones, and we pray for a world in which no one's needs will go unmet.

(Please say the names, aloud or in your heart, of anyone who is experiencing such need.)

Gathered together in love, we gather also in remembrance. We remember those who have come before us, whose love and whose sacrifices have touched our lives, making it possible for us to be as we are. As we speak the names of our departed loved ones, we offer a prayer of thanks for these precious memories and we pray that you will comfort all who mourn.

(Please speak the names of anyone you wish to remember today.)

As our world is filled with suffering, need and grief, it is also filled with blessing and abundance. Mindful of the abundance in our own lives, we offer thanks!

(Please name aloud those blessings for which you are thankful.)

In our hearts, we carry many individual prayers. Knowing that we are all connected, one in the body of Christ, we lift up these prayers together. The prayer of one among us is the prayer of all.

(Please take a moment to offer your prayer silently)

God, in your mercy, hear our prayers!

Creator God, you have called us into being and given us purposes to fulfill. Each of us has unique gifts, and all our gifts are needed in your world.

Help us to hear and to heed our callings.

This church, too, has a calling. We come together to discern our purpose and to live into it together. Fill our hearts with love for you and your world. Strengthen us for the service ahead. Give us the courage to let go of all that holds us back from fulfilling your desires. Give us the wisdom and the creativity to discover new ways of being. God, you have called us here.

What are you calling us to do? Speak, for your servants are listening

(Let us remain in silent prayer as we listen for God.)

Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by the Rev. Jamez Terry

