**Sunday, October 25, 2015, the thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord, in your house, we celebrate you today. We thank you for Jesus your Son who lights up our hearts. We thank you for your Spirit which moves us to receive your mysteries, which awe us and challenge us. Let our words and our actions be always about you, not just about us. So that we rightly proclaim your good news throughout the whole wide earth. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

 People of God, hear the good news: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

 **Thanks be to God.**

 Christ is our peace. The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

**PSALM 34:1-8 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

O Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

We praise you for the everlasting goodness by which you created all things,

and we call on your unchanging grace.

O Lord, we pray for those who are swept up in the changes of life,

that you would give comfort and confidence to all who face loss.

Everlasting God,

**send forth your compassion.**

We seek your mercy on those who feel far from your presence

on account of their own sin or the threats of religious people.

We seek your mercy on ourselves, acknowledging our own sin.

Everlasting God,

**send forth your compassion.**

We seek your wisdom as we give ourselves to your service,

that you would fill us with a sense of urgency in the face of injustice

and a sense of patience in the face of difficulty.

Everlasting God,

**send forth your compassion.**

We seek your gracious healing presence with those who are sick,

and with all who are in need of your restoring grace,

that your love might satisfy all your people

and we might rejoice and be glad all our days.

Everlasting God,

**send forth your compassion.**

Let your work be made real to us and through us,

O Lord our God,

for we pray in the timeless words of Jesus Christ,

saying together:

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**TIME OUT FOR TEACHING: Bible Genres – Stories of the Ancestors**

 We have a wealth of stories about our ancestors in the faith. Last Sunday the Bible Study group looked at Paul’s last words in his letter to the Romans in which he sends greetings to at least a dozen brothers and sisters in the faith. His greetings seem to go on and on, a little bit like the Genealogy sections of the gospel. It’s a litany of names and more names…

But these names are important. They tell us the names of just a few of our ancestors in faith.

There a few names we are able to pronounce, but most of their names are pretty hard. But how many times have you glossed over the names, wanting to get to the story? The names are not of strangers, but of members of the larger family in faith. It is significant that the author should choose to tell us those stories, rather than the stories of some other believer. Their stories are journeys which we can somehow relate to, even if they are from 2000 years ago or more.

So, let me point you to Matthew 1:1, which will be a feature of this Sunday's Sunday School. I'll read it out loud.

"This is the genealogy[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23146a)] of Jesus the Messiah[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23146b)] the son of David, the son of Abraham:

**2** Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

**3** Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

**4** Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

**5** Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

**6** and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife,**...**

**16** and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah."

You may have heard that there were 5 women mentioned, and all the rest were males. A theory was that the first four were specifically named as sort of the supporting cast to Mary, mother of Jesus. There were later accusations about 200 years after Jesus' birth, that Mary had had a relationship with a Roman officer, which resulted in pregnancy, not an immaculate conception. So Matthew includes these other women: Tamar who prostituted herself in order to become pregnant to have an heir, Rahab, a prostitute, Uriah's wife, whose name is not mentioned, but remember she was father to King Solomon, but became David's wife through Uriah's murder, and then Ruth, a Gentile, a Moabite, not even of Hebrew lineage. God works through even Gentiles, even prostitutes, even those gotten through illegal means.

We are in the largest family in the universe – at least that we know of. A family made possible by the brotherhood of Jesus Christ. For this reason we are able to find meaning in the stories of our ancestors in faith, many adventures and misadventures of people like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, stories of Sarah, Rachel, Leah. So the people who wrote down Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are not just scribbling unpronouncible names to bore us to death. They are sending us a message about the family of which you and I belong.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Teach us, O God, by your Word and Spirit. Help us to hear, know, and live the gospel, so that we might proclaim in word and deed the good news that you offer us this day— a message of peace to the whole community, and love with faith through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**JOB 42:1-6, 10-17**

1Then Job answered the LORD: 2"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me.' 5I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

10And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. 12The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. 13He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. 17And Job died, old and full of days.

**MARK 10:46-52**

46They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

**Sermon: “**Un-dragoned”

"There was a boy named Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he almost deserved it." So begins the CS Lewis book, "Voyage of the Dawn Treader." Eustace is a boy characterized as self-centered, spoiled brat. No one could stand to be around him. While the Dawn Treader is ashore Dragon Island, he sneaks off to avoid doing any work, and he finds a cave where there is an old, dying dragon. He falls asleep in a pile of gold and gems, dreaming of grandeur and riches. He awakes, he has turned into a...Dragon!

Eustace at first thinks, "this is the life!" But then he learns that it's lonely being a dragon. He has to be saved, turned back into a human. But he cannot save himself.

Fortunately, Eustace meets Aslan the Lion. In his loneliness, he follows the lion to a well. Aslan tells him to undress. But Eustace doesn't understand, since he's a dragon and he's not wearing any clothes. After three tries and three times failing, Aslan says, "Let me help you." With a lion's claws, Aslan tears at his dragon skin and reveals the real Eustace underneath. Eustace is transformed into the real boy, but not without the painful rending of dragon skin from his body. He was "undragoned."

The "undragoning" of Eustace might be an allegory for what God does to us when we find that life is turning us into dragons. Be they dragons of greed, or maybe dragons of anger, of selfishness or other not so wonderful things. It has happened to the best of us. Job was beginning to turn into a dragon, even though he started out so righteous and trusting believer in the Lord. But at the end of that book, Job had turned into someone who challenged God, claimed to have not a bone of unrighteousness in him. Presumptuous a little?

Now let's not minimize just what happened to Job either, which turned him into this angry and grieving dragon. That kind of pain and loss changes a person. On the sociological \_\_\_ scale of stress, internationally recognized by the counseling and psychiatry community, losing your mate is the #1 stressor. Losing close family and losing your home are the next two highest. Having a major, debilitative illness, also part of the top 10. Having all that and more happening to Job, no wonder he was a dragon, needing undragoning.

It happens to even the best of us. But the good news is, God offers to undragon us. The help is always there, if we will accept it. Whenever we find the world has sucked us back into a state of sin and brokenness, God's offer, with the grace of Jesus Christ, stands. And like Eustace, we cannot become clean without God's help. It's a searingly painful experience for Eustace, and for Job, it's only possible if we trust the process to God. Job repents. He prays for those friends who tried to comfort him, although they were preachy and insensitive. And it's then that he sees a bounty of God's goodness, his relationship to God restored.

Whenever we find we have become dragons, remember what Aslan said to Eustace, "Let me help you." And accept the help God is offering you. Repentance, friends, is not something we do alone. We do it with God's help. God is ready and willing to help us in our repentance, as searingly painful as it may be, it is still worth the pain. God is ready and willing to help us, if we are. Jesus shows us that when Bar Timaeus is leaping about in public, crying for Jesus to help him see again. Just those simple words, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks the Son of Timaeus what he wants, "How can I help you?" In Jesus Christ, I thank God for second chances, for the restoration of our selves back to him, and for the open door we have to God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Blessing and Charge Eph. 6:15 At the doors of the church:

The grace of God be with you;

the love of Christ be with you;

the Spirit’s peace be with you —

here and everywhere, now and forever.

Alleluia!

Go now into all the world,

proclaiming the gospel of peace. Amen.