

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

July 4, 2021 Kingdomtide 6
"At Home Worship"

Call to Worship

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;

God's steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,

**Those God gathered together from the east and the west,
the north and the south, proclaim the name of God!**

Opening Prayer God of all that is and yet shall be, you are the Creator of all your children, giving us good gifts – gifts of life, love, and compassion. You continually gather us in your arms and feed us with the bread of heaven. Open our hearts and fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may worship you with honor and praise and then go forth to bring the love of Jesus to a weary world. Amen.

Scripture Reading *"And David became greater and greater, for God, the Lord of hosts was with him."* Read 1 Samuel 5.1-5, 9-10

Prayer of Confession Lord, your selfless generosity provides all that the world needs, yet we often keep your gifts for ourselves. Forgive us when we are thankless and indifferent to the needs of others. We forget how deeply you care for us, and we're blind to the abundance that surrounds us. Restore us and renew us, O God, and fill our hearts again with your love that we may be truly grateful.

Time of Silent Confession

Words of Assurance God sustains us and gives us the things that we need. The Lord is near; the indescribable peace of the Spirit is within us. All that is good, true, pure, noble, gracious,

loveable, and praiseworthy – this is what does God does for us. Thanks be to God our Creator.

Scripture Reading *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."* Read 2 Corinthians 12.2-10

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.*

A Time of Prayer God of Light, be our vision, we pray to you. Help us see the world through your eyes – eyes that see the world as it can be, even in times of deepest despair; eyes that perceive your light, even in the darkest valleys; and eyes that observe your grace and mercy, even amidst suffering and death. Help us to reflect your glory and not our own. We are grateful that you hear the joys and concerns of all those who call upon your holy name; hear us now as we pray as Christ our Savior has taught us, saying..... **The Lord's Prayer**

Scripture Reading *"...many who heard him were astounded."*
Read Mark 6.1-13

Meditation Our meditation this week begins with an English lesson: what is an oxymoron? For those of you who aren't familiar with this figure of speech, it is one or two contradictory words which appear side by side. This contradiction is also known as a paradox and, in fact, the word *oxymoron* is itself oxymoronic for "oxys" means 'sharp' and "moronos" means 'dull.'

This figure of speech lends a sense of humor, irony, or sarcasm to a sentence. For instance, consider the phrases "alone together," "awful good," "clearly misunderstood," "found missing," "impossible solution," "resident alien," or "small crowd"....to name just a few of many oxymorons. They can be a fun part of speech!

I doubt that the apostle Paul knew he was using an oxymoron when he declared to his listeners in Corinth, *“Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.”* What? How can one be weak but also strong, we might ask.

In today’s reading Paul tells the Corinthians that, so he might not boast about all his good fortune, a “thorn” was given him in the flesh; we are not sure what this malady was but some scholars believe that Paul might have experienced some kind of visual impairment. Three times, he says, he appealed to God to take this “thorn” from him. Despite that, however, Paul persevered for he heard God say to him, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.”* Another oxymoron! Power and weakness in the same sentence!

Paul understood what God was saying to him. He knew that, indeed, being weak, he was made strong for all of it, as Paul witnessed to throughout his letters, was for the sake of Christ Jesus alone. Ever since his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul shared his faith in the One whom he knew had saved him from himself. When Paul felt weak, he turned to Jesus to find his strength. When Paul felt powerless, he knew that God would use that powerlessness to help Paul strongly profess his faith and bring others to Christ.

I learned on Jeopardy (a great source for education!) one night in the last week that Helen Keller was a graduate of Radcliffe College as the first ‘deafblind’ person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. Clearly, Keller used her ‘weakness,’ if we want to label it that, to be a strong advocate for others. As we think of Paul’s example, as well as Keller’s, how do WE allow God to use our weaknesses and imperfections to be strong disciples for Christ?

The Sacrament of Holy Communion (insert)

Words of Benediction May the love of Almighty God, the peace of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the calming presence of the Holy Spirit be with you in the week ahead.



Kingdomtide

Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.