

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

September 19, 2021 Kingdomtide 17

“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

Those who love God,

God will deliver.

Those who know God by name,

God will protect.

Those who call out to God,

God will answer. In thanksgiving, we worship our God.

Opening Prayer Loving God, we pray for your presence among us this day. Where there is fear, let us know your comfort. Where there is doubt, let us know your confidence. Where there is joy, let us know your pleasure. Fill this place with your Holy Spirit, and may this same Spirit fill our lives in this time of holy worship. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.”*

Read Proverbs 2.1-15

Prayer of Confession Triune God, you call us to trust you in every circumstance of our lives, yet far too often, we do not. In times of oppression and strife, we lose hope in our future. When enduring disasters, suffering, or illness, we often grow bitter and forget your love. Absorbed by our wants and desires, we are blind to those around us who need our care. Forgive us, O God. Turn our hearts to you, that we may taste fullness of life and trust your promised salvation. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts that we may know the comfort and peace of forgiveness.*

Words of Assurance God’s loving presence never abandons us, not even when we abandon God. God delivers those who seek and love the Lord, who come before God with repentant hearts. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading *“...a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”* Read James 3.13-4.3, 7-8

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 Kingdomtide Prayer (insert) **The Lord’s Prayer**

Scripture Reading *“Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”* Read Mark 9.30-37

Meditation We live in a society that likes acronyms – that is, using letters to shorten a title, such as USDA which stands for the United States Department of Agriculture or EGOT which refers to a celebrity who has won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards. The United Methodist Church (UMC!) has enough of its own: SPRC (Staff Parish Relations Committee) or GBOD (General Board of Discipleship) among them. One such acronym that has become popular as of late is GOAT: Greatest of All Time. For many in New England, that refers to long-time Patriots quarterback Tom Brady – even if he did leave us for the Tampa Bay Bucs!

Our gospel reading for this week tells the story of Jesus’ disciples having a conversation about who was their GOAT. Mark tells us that, as they were walking along the road, the disciples were talking among themselves – more like kids quarrelling in the back seat of the car, I surmise, rather than carrying on a civil conversation. In fact, Jesus actually asks them what they were arguing about. How parental of him!

However, in response to his question, the disciples were silent. Doesn't that remind you of kids?! They knew they were doing wrong so, when asked about it, they clammed up! But Jesus already knew what subject they were talking about; he was Jesus, after all! So, he sat down and called the twelve to him and addressed their concern: *"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."* And to illustrate his point, Jesus took a little child into his arms and said, *"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."*

We don't live in a society that rewards last place but we do understand being a servant, thankfully. In fact, we honor those who serve: first responders, military personnel, doctors, nurses, teachers, and the list goes on. That's one of our best traits as a society. We recognize those, as Jesus did, who put others before themselves, who do what it takes to care for someone else, and who don't count the cost of their sacrifice. For me, that makes them "first" and certainly not "last" in our hearts and lives.

It is so very easy to look at the ills of society, at all the wrong that needs undoing in the world, and become discouraged. However, what about taking a moment to think about all who serve? That almost "rights the wrongs," if you will. That reminds us that we do value not who is the greatest but, rather, who is servant of all. That brings me comfort; that helps me to know that we do have our priorities in order after all. That's not always easy to see when we're giving out those "EGOT" awards or naming the "GOAT" but, ultimately, deep down, we understand who the greatest truly are, beginning, of course, with Jesus. Thanks be to God for all who serve and make life better for others each day; may we also serve as disciples of Christ in our own ways, using the gifts that God has bestowed upon us.

Words of Benediction May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the hope of the Holy Spirit be with you today and every day. Go forth to serve God and love others today and every day.



Kingdomtide

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