

# “Father Figures”



The Rev. Ryan Wiksell

June 16, 2024 | 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Father's Day*

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Independence, MO

May I speak with the Breath of God, from the Word of God, in the Name of God.

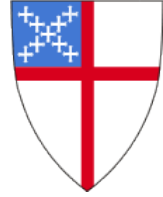
- Happy Father's Day
- Dad Bod vs. "Father Figures"
  - One of those fatherhood clichés – the lawn
  - I once again have a lawn. Also my own father's name is Lon
  - But that's not the point.
  - I haven't had a lawn for 6 year, and now I have it again.
  - I'm pretty lucky – it wasn't in terrible shape when we bought the house. Just lumpy, with a lot of bare patches
  - So I got some grass seed, and sprinkled it, and watered it.
  - Still no luck. I'll have to try again.
- Mustard Seed illustration
  - A seed *wants* to grow
  - You don't have to tell it. Or teach it.
  - I'm not much of a gardener, but I know this much.
  - If a seed is not taking root, or a plant is not growing, a gardener will not tell you how to make it grow
  - They will talk to you about what is preventing it

- We see that in Jesus' other parables about seeds
  - The parable of the sower paints a picture of seeds that are scattered, and want to grow
  - But all these different things are preventing them. Thorns, or rocks, or a path.
  - At no point is the farmer advised to *fix* the seeds. The seeds are fine. And he's not advised to try and pull them and force them to grow.
  - He's also not instructed as to the science of growth. It's not terribly important that he understand what it is that makes seeds grow in general.
  - The farmer just needs to know how to remove the obstacles.
- That's how I talk about St. Michael's a lot.
  - Knock on wood, but it's impossible to notice that St. Michael's is, in fact, growing.
  - The lazy thing to do is to try and give ME some kind of credit for this.
  - Hey look, this guy Ryan shows up, and we goes from dying to growing. Way to go, Ryan! What's your secret?

- Well here it is... I don't have one.
- I'm a lot like that farmer, that really has no idea what's making it grow. It feels a little like magic.
- All I know is that when I showed up, I could just tell that this was a church that *wanted* to grow. It was ready.
- So I just pulled out a few rocks and weeds, loosened up the soil and made sure it had the right amount of water. The same thing any gardener would do.
- And then the church did what the church wanted to do. It started growing. Credit science, credit photosynthesis, credit the Holy Spirit.
- But no matter what I say, some people will pin this growth on "Father Ryan". And then, when and if something goes wrong, they'll pin that on "Father Ryan" too.
  - Maybe that's part of fatherhood. Part of bearing that title, whether you're a biological father, and adoptive father, a step-father, or simply a father figure. You get the credit but you also get the blame. Even when you don't deserve either of those things.

- And in my mind that brings us back to Stewardship
  - I know, I know. I promise I'm not trying to reprise the Stewardship series.
  - But you might recall that point from weeks ago – about accepting accountability over a thing: a family, an institution, or whatever, without expecting to gain control, or status, or wealth.
- In other words, no matter your gender, no matter your age, or your role in society, being a father figure means being a steward.  
Accepting responsibility with no expectation of reward.
  - It means gardening those little seeds. Taking care to see that they grow, while knowing inwardly that you don't really understand what makes them grow
  - and that no matter how much credit or blame people try to give you, we know who the Source really is.
- Whether you call that Source, source, creator, Lord, God, Mother... or Father.
- So again... happy Father's Day. Amen.

The Lessons Appointed for Use on the  
**Sunday closest to June 15**



Proper 6  
Year B  
RCL

<i>Track 1</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>Track 2</i>
1 Samuel 15:34-16:13		Ezekiel 17:22-24
Psalm 20		Psalm 92:1-4,11-14
2 Corinthians 5:6-10,[11-13],14-17		2 Corinthians 5:6-10,[11-13],14-17
Mark 4:26-34		Mark 4:26-34

## The Collect

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

## Old Testament

### 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the LORD.” But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

## **The Psalm**

## Psalm 20

### *Exaudiat te Dominus*

- 1 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble, \*  
the Name of the God of Jacob defend you;
- 2 Send you help from his holy place \*  
and strengthen you out of Zion;
- 3 Remember all your offerings \*  
and accept your burnt sacrifice;
- 4 Grant you your heart's desire \*  
and prosper all your plans.
- 5 We will shout for joy at your victory  
and triumph in the Name of our God; \*  
may the LORD grant all your requests.
- 6 Now I know that the LORD gives victory to his anointed; \*  
he will answer him out of his holy heaven,  
with the victorious strength of his right hand.
- 7 Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, \*  
but we will call upon the Name of the LORD our God.
- 8 They collapse and fall down, \*  
but we will arise and stand upright.
- 9 O LORD, give victory to the king \*  
and answer us when we call.

## The Epistle

### **2 Corinthians 5:6-10, [11-13], 14-17**

We are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord-- for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body



and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

~~[Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.]~~

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. 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. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

## **The Gospel**

### **Mark 4:26-34**

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it

grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.