

Dove Tales



July 2022
Vol. XXXIV Issue 9

A publication of Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church

*"Increasing Love for God and Neighbor by Going Deeper, Reaching Farther,
Transforming Lives"*



Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the
Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom.

2 Corinthians 3:17



Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church

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Rev. David Wasson, Senior Pastor



Then Jesus said, “This is what God’s kingdom is like. It’s as though someone scatters seed on the ground, ²⁷ then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn’t know how. The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it’s harvest time.”

He continued, “What’s a good image for God’s kingdom? What parable can I use to explain it? Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it’s the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; but when it’s planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade.” – Mark 4:26-32 (CEB)



What’s unseen but potentially everywhere? It’s so small that it’s hidden, but can spread rapidly and with great impact, consuming and altering communities, people, and nations that appear indestructible. You might be thinking of a virus, specifically COVID, but that’s not the answer I’m looking for. Instead, I propose that this is the way of the Kingdom of God.

Check this out! Our imagination can train us to develop eyes that see and ears that hear Jesus helping us understand the nature of the Kingdom of God. What *is* this kingdom like? As we look through a few of Jesus’ tiny parables clumped together here in Mark 4, I suggest that the Kingdom of God is *ubiquitous*, *ordinary*, and *hidden*.

Jesus has a way of breaking down empires, dismantling the kingdoms of this world, and dislodging our sense of control over our own lives. In these two parables in Mark, the Kingdom of God is literally down to earth, earthy, humble, common. When talking about God, we often prefer to speak of God as Lord or King, especially when talking about a kingdom— a kingdom needs a king, obviously.

But throughout the Gospels, in Jesus’ parables we meet a sharecropper working a field, a trash tree, a baker (and a female one at that), a merchant, and so on. These are common stories of ordinary working-class people doing everyday things; hardly exciting, and certainly not exalted. Jesus’ parables aren’t fantastic tales like Aesop’s fables of talking animals, or like Greek or Roman myths of gods in disguise stalking unsuspecting humans. God’s kingdom isn’t someplace in the obscure “sweet by and by,” or “when the roll is called up yonder;” rather, it’s **up close**, it’s near, it’s as close as the wheat seed, growing underground secretly, subtly.

Or, take the mustard seed. Jesus has a sense of humor—his listeners would probably have chuckled when hearing this parable. Where Jesus lived, the mustard seed, *brassica nigra*, was *not* a crop they would’ve planted. In fact, it was actually a common, robust weed. In many parts of the world, it’s considered an invasive species! The reign of God certainly isn’t much of a cash crop. But it’s not easily eradicated either.



It's like a yard full of dandelions or thistles—so common they're certainly not appreciated. Hardly magnificent. The mustard seed is the kudzu or mulberry tree of its day. It's not sown or nurtured like our church garden's tomato or cucumber plants. It shows up often where it's not welcome. And then it spreads and spreads and spreads... like kudzu covering entire hillsides, like prickly thistles in a bed of lavender—it's invasive, it's unpredictable.

It doesn't sound very appealing. And yet, Jesus says that this weed tree becomes a place where birds of the air come and make nests— it provides a place of shelter and nurture.

What others have determined to be junk, God identifies as redeemable, and transformative. It is so ordinary we may not even notice it— that's why Jesus calls us to pay attention, to train our eyes and ears on this kingdom. It's ubiquitous— everywhere. The Kingdom of God is not merely coming. It *has* come; it's already among us, as Jesus says in Luke 17:21.

There are a couple things about the kingdom we tend to misunderstand— the misperception that the kingdom of God is something that will occur only in the future, and that its presence is contingent upon us. To the first, we might say that yes, the kingdom *will* come, but the kingdom of God *has* already come... in the person and spirit of Jesus. And to the second, the misunderstanding that the presence of God's kingdom is dependent upon us, we might attend to the words of Willie James Jennings. In his commentary on the book of Acts, Jennings offers that, just as Paul and Barnabas resisted being identified as gods by the people of Lystra in Acts 14, so the work of disciples is the work of *clarification*, that is, separating the messengers of God from the presence of God; we too often confuse our presence with the presence of God in a place. Rather, God is here; God is at work, with or without us.

It might be worth exploring at this point, what *is* the kingdom of God? If the presence of God is everywhere, where *do* we see it? We're all practiced at telling stories that reveal the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven. Where do you see the ordinary, hidden, presence of God— the reality of the kingdom of God, in your particular place? If the kingdom really is ever-present, what we really need are eyes to see it, and apocalyptic discipline to reveal it, even in its hidden ordinariness.

Our stories that reveal the Kingdom might sound small, insignificant, or maybe even unrelated to what you think of when you think of the Kingdom of God. But it's our telling of these stories which reflect the hidden ubiquity of God's Kingdom. They can remind us that God is at work in the world here and now, bringing about a new creation (2 Cor. 5.17).

In your summer travels and adventures, look for the places where God's kingdom is growing, and discover those places you can be a part of its expansion.

I'm continually grateful for you,
—Pastor Dave





Board of Church & Society

Dove Board of Church and Society believes: Voting Counts!

This year is an election year for federal, state, and local offices. The deadline to register for the primary election is July 5th. Ballots are mailed July 6th to vote by mail. August 2nd is Election Day for the primaries.

The general election deadline to register is Oct. 11th. Mail-in ballots are sent October 12th. Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th.

The Arizonans for Fair Elections initiative will be on our November ballot, assuming enough signatures are collected for it. This initiative is sponsored by citizens of Arizona. The initiative process is a right guaranteed by our state constitution. Petitions in support of this initiative can be signed at the Foothills Recreation and Aquatic Center, 5600 W. Union Hills Dr. , Glendale, on Saturdays in June and on July 3. Time is from 8 - 11 AM.

As people of faith, we believe all people have a basic human right to have a voice in their government. This initiative stands to limit the power of lobbyists, ensure access to voting and protect our elections from partisan meddling. More information about the initiative can be found at <https://azfe.org>.



Books! You may know that the Church and Society Committee has occasionally selected books related to our mission or particular social issue focus to read and discuss in a group of interested church attendees (and their friends). The last book we chose to do this with was "*What Every Church Member Should Know About Poverty.*" The discussions arising from that book group led us as a church to decide to look for ways to address poverty in our own community, and to our decision as a church to commit to helping to support Thrive Arizona as they help young people who are aging out of the foster care system and assist families who are trying to keep their children from being taken from them and placed into foster care.

As the Board of C &S begins to look for a new book to study, we have realized that we have missed out on using our own congregation as a source of input for book selection. So, if you have read, encountered, seen, or heard of any book that you think might be a candidate for a group study on a topic related to a social issue (e.g., social/economic inequality, voting rights, LGBTQ issues, education, women's rights, indigenous people's issues, women's health, violence issues, gun safety, minority issues, ecology/environment, children's/elder issues, judicial rights and issues, etc., ad infinitum), please let us know.

Email your book ideas to Robin Fisher-Terry at rft611@cox.net with the subject line "book ideas." Please include the book's title, author, and a short description of the book's topic or content.

Thanks for helping us!



Fellowship Opportunities

Little Doves Social Club

Do you have kids elementary aged or younger? Come join us! On July 16 from 2:00-3:30 pm, we will be playing Pictionary, Reverse Charades, and board games in the narthex. Bring your kids (and favorite game if you'd like) and join us! Adults are encouraged to join in the games too! You may come and go as your schedule permits.

Questions? Please contact Jen Centner at 480-818-1645 or Patrick Centner at 602-214-7836.

Quilt Group

The quilters are on summer break, but will start up again in the fall, on October 14. The group meets on Friday afternoons in Rooms 15/16 in Building D. If you'd like more information about our quilting group, please contact the church office at 623-572-7334.

Other Fellowship Opportunities

Many opportunities exist for fellowship at Dove, including Adult Sunday School classes, Bible Studies, and Dove's musical groups such as the Celebration Singers, Folk Group, and the Bell Choir. Please check the calendar found on the Dove website, www.doveofthedesert.com.



Folk Group

Vacation Time! The Folk Group is taking a short break in June and July. We'll be back July 25 for practice. The Folk Group is refreshed and raring to go! Join us on Monday evenings at 7:00 pm off campus. Call Karen Freeland for the address near Union Hills and 73rd Avenue (602-978-3274).

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9:00 to 10:00 am in Room 7. The group knits or crochets shawls, baby blankets, lap blankets, prayer squares, and other items to be given to Dove members and others in need of comfort.

For information, please call **Mimi Griffiths at 602.762.6709 or at mimig7852@gmail.com**. New people welcome! Please join us.

The Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch meets the first Thursday of every month at a local restaurant; our next Lunch Bunch is Thursday, July 7. If you'd like to join in, contact Steve and Rita Snyder at ridinzfun@aol.com or (703) 980-7673 (leave a message if no answer) to RSVP. It is important to RSVP, so we can reserve our space at the various restaurants.

July 2022 Church Calendar

- 2.....Church Work Day
- 3.....Communion Sunday
(8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am Worship)
- 4.....Independence Day Holiday
- 8.....Dove Tales Deadline
- 10.....Sunday Worship
(8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am)
- 16.....Little Doves Social Club
- 17.....Sunday Worship
(8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am)
- 24.....Sunday Worship
(8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am)
- 31.....Sunday Worship
(8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am)
- 31.....Fill the Shelves Food and Pet Drive



Prayer Line

The prayer ministry will be on a short hiatus during the month of July. During the month of July, the prayer list will not be mailed out, but prayers will be collected and prayed over. For emergencies, please contact the church office, or Rev. Dave for immediate follow-up.



Missions

Fifth Sunday

**Fill the Shelves Food Drive
St. Mary's Food Bank
Pet Food & Supply Drive**

On-Going

Justa Center & UMOM Donations



Care Ministry

The Care Ministry Team had it's first face-to-face meeting in over a year. Most of our facilitators were able to be present. It was wonderful seeing everyone's smiling face once again!

The Prayer Shawl Ministry needs more volunteers. We have gained a couple of new members (bless you), but we still need more to reach the number of members we had prior to the Covid pandemic. We meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 9:00 am in the Parlor at Dove. We crochet, knit, and visit for one hour and then bless any finished items that have been turned in. Obviously, much of our work occurs at home at our own leisure. We have a large supply of donated yarn to choose from, which is being stored by Mary Patterson. You may contact her at (623) 322-1654 if you would like to select some yarn and join us.

The Cancer Center of Goodyear is offering a training session on cancer care via Zoom on August 15 and 16. Our Cancer Care Ministry needs more trained people to interact with our cancer patient members. Contact Don Trotter at (623) 376-9506 if you are interested in signing up for this session.

We welcome Tom and Jane Davitt as new members of Care Ministry Team. Tom will be assuming facilitation of the Prayer Ministry from Pastor Jean Newell. Tom is a retired minister, and he and Jane have been attending our 8:00 am service. He will be a real asset to our team.

Thank you all for your tremendous response to my recent call for recycled vases for the Flowers to the Homebound Ministry. Unfortunately, we received a few that were too large for our purposes. We use medium-sized vases, ten to twelve inches tall. We do not use small bud vases. The altar arrangements do not contain enough long-stemmed flowers to make up an arrangement in the large vases. We still welcome medium-sized recycled vases as this is an ongoing need. They may be placed in the partitioned box next to the refrigerator in the Dove kitchen.

Thank you all for your care for our elderly and homebound members. God bless you!



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Friday 9:00 am-12:00 pm

***Dove Tales* is a monthly publication of
Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church.
The editorial staff reserves the right to edit all
items submitted for publication.**



Special Prayers

Condolences:

Rita and Steve Snyder and family on the death of Rita's father, Dale Curtis.

Church Prayers:

Each year, we pray for all the churches in the West District. In July, please pray for these churches:

- **Mission Bell UMC, Glendale** (Rev. Doug Reynolds)
- **Mountain View UMC, Cottonwood** (Rev. Jonathan Hall)
- **New Church Start, Yuma** (Rev. Sandra Jimenez, Pastor Manuel Jimenez)



Fill the Shelves!

With summer heat on the way, we sent out a special request to add cases of water to your food donations on May 29th. We, as the Dove community, answered the call by donating 1,080 bottles of water. The pick-up drivers for St Mary's Food Bank were blown away by your generosity.

Thank you for supporting St. Mary's Food Bank and local no-kill animal shelters.

**1080
BOTTLES
DONATED**

Thank You Dove
Community!



Next Fill the Shelves Drive:

Sunday, July 31 8:00 to 12:15 pm

Drop-off boxes are located on the west patio under the trees

For questions contact, please contact:

Pet Ministry ~ Mary Clark
602-615-5078
budandmary2002@gmail.com

Food Donations ~ Peggy Burt
847-727-4763
mkburt2@att.net



Dove of the Desert

**United Methodist Church
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Glendale, AZ 85308**

Return Service Requested

Sending July Blessings to:



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