

Day of Luke the Physician: Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 19, 2025
Deacon Ben Remmert

Isaiah 43:8-13 Psalm 124 2 Timothy 4:5-11 Luke 24:44-53

Today we celebrate the feast day of St. Luke the evangelist to which the church honors him as the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. His gospel is noted for its detail about Jesus's birth and its focus on social justice and outreach to Gentiles. The little we know of St. Luke is gathered from the Scriptures: he was of Gentile origin, a Greek from the city of Antioch in ancient Syria, and he made his living as a physician. He was an early convert to Christianity and was a companion of St. Paul on his missionary journeys, right up to Paul's martyrdom. St. Luke was himself martyred for the faith several years later, which is why we are wearing red vestments today. It is in these writings, penned with his own hand under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we can attempt to sketch a portrait of the life of this evangelist; to better understand his life and his lessons play in our spiritual life as compassionate, attentive, and joyful people of God.

As one reads St. Luke's Gospel, there is a noticeable emphasis on Jesus' compassion and mercy for the lost and poor, the sick and suffering, for the outcasts and strangers. As a doctor, we can infer that St. Luke was very familiar with sickness and suffering and was probably himself a very compassionate man. His experience as a physician would be good preparation for his work as a missionary of Christ's mercy and healing. Only in Luke's Gospel do we find these stories of Jesus: the healing of the ten lepers; the three beautiful parables of mercy in chapter fifteen; the story of the Good Samaritan; the parable of the poor beggar Lazarus and the rich man; and the moving scene of Jesus reaching out to the little man Zacchaeus, the despised tax-collector of Jericho. It is from Luke we are reminded to always be on the lookout for where God is calling us in the obvious places and not so obvious places.

In the first summer of my father's passing, I took a week to rest at friend's lake house in Lewisville, Texas to grieve and get away to a quiet place. On the second evening of my trip I went fishing, one of my most treasured activities that I did with my father. The first evening I was catching fish left and right off the dock. An hour into it a truck pulled up, and a middle-aged man got out and tried to start up a conversation. Having so much fun fishing, concentrating on the next catch, and not wanting to be bothered, I gave the man the cold shoulder. He soon left. I was bothered by my actions of ignoring the man later that day who just wanted to have a conversation with me. An action that my father would never do as a traveling salesman for Cameron International Corporations, selling values to chemical refineries in the Corpus Christ and Victoria area and making "new friends."

I went fishing again the next evening and caught nothing, only nibbles. Again, a vehicle pulled up, but this time, a younger man got out with his fishing pole and started to fish beside me. After a feeling of déjà vu, I immediately realized what God was doing and using some of the lessons my dad taught me, it was not difficult to start a conversation about fishing. This built a connection with this young man that eventually led him to talk about his family. When he heard that I was rostered minister of the church, he shared that he had been away from the Church for some time and wanted to come back. What hurt him most was that he had two children that were not baptized, and he wanted so much to make this right. I gave him the best advice I could and told him I would pray for him, and a short time afterward, we parted ways. That day I didn't have fish on my stringer, but it didn't matter, that night, by God's grace, we made a catch.

Our lives can be beacons of light and hope in this dark and despairing world, we just need to be prepared. St. Luke calls us to be especially attentive to the needs of each other and share the light and hope that we have in Jesus Christ. And we don't have to look very far--they are in our community, in our work and classrooms, in our neighborhoods. We only need to pay attention and not be caught up in our own selves. There are people who come here looking for a place to call home, and some of them have suffered a great deal. What are we doing to pay attention outside of our walls? What are we doing to reach out? How are we going to them and not expecting them to come to us?

We are invited to be like St. Luke and be joyful in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. As St. Luke writes about the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church, our presence and our prayers bear witness to grace and the hope and the love that still manifests itself against all odds, in the most unlikely of circumstances and in the least receptive people and places. We dedicate ourselves anew accompanying the lost, sick, outcasts, and suffering that our work might make manifest today's blessing in our hymn of the day we are about to sing:

*Grant that we all, made one in faith,
In your community may find
The wholeness that enriching us,
shall reach the whole of humankind.¹*

Amen.

¹ O Christ, the Healer, We have Come, ELW 610.