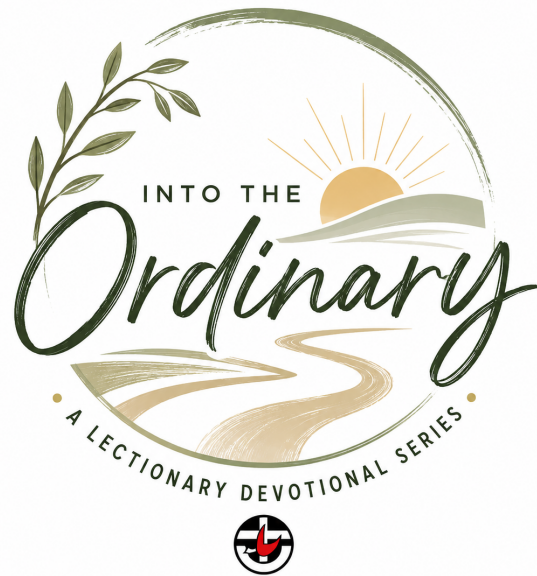




Ordinary Time

Lectionary reflections for 19th July - Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday

Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12,23-24; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

**As the grey weariness
of winter starts
to settle within us,
July's readings call us
gently into the
kin(g)dom life of
sharing burdens,
cultivating "good"
ground, practising
neighbourly care, and
trusting in God's slow
and subtle
transformation.
JULY:
GROUNDING**

Jacob's dream of a ladder between earth and heaven is not distant; it occurs while he is travelling in vulnerability and discomfort. Like the Psalmist who confesses that God's intimate knowledge of us reaches beyond geography and darkness, he proclaims "Surely God is in this place."

Paul describes life in the Spirit as a reordering of relationship with God through adoption, and with creation through a shared groaning for freedom. Matthew's parable urges patience and restraint: the servants' impulse to purify the fields is a caution against a violent uprooting of those who do not fit our prescriptive and premature judgements.

Instead, God meets people on the road, in diaspora, in intercultural spaces, and in our communal longing for a world not yet free.

Intercultural neighbouring becomes a practice of justice as we refuse narratives that make difference synonymous with threat, resist policies and speech that scapegoat vulnerable groups, and see in the sacred ground of shared space that “Surely God is in this place!”



PrayerPoem

God who dwells in-between,
not only in the sanctuary
but in the borderlands of language and culture,
meet us on the road where Jacob sleeps
on a stone and wakes to say,
“Surely you are in this place.”
We confess we have wanted a tidy field,
a clean story, a quick sorting of wheat and weeds.
But you teach patience.
You teach restraint.
You teach us not to rip up lives
in the name of righteousness.
Spirit who prays in groans,
who knows the ache of creation,
hold the long labour of freedom.
When we are tempted to make neighbours into threats,
soften our defensiveness.
This Intercultural Neighbouring Day,
train our discipleship in simple, brave practices:
listening longer than is comfortable,
sharing space without controlling it,
being curious instead of certain.
Make our tables wide and low
where everyone can reach the bread.
Make our communities places where difference is
a gift to receive.