New Life Episcopal Church

Uniontown, Ohio



A Sermon for the 21st Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2026

Rev Barbara Bond

St. Luke

Ecclesiasticus 38:1-4, 6-10, 12-14, Luke 4:14-21

Healing

Jesus came to the synagogue at the beginning of his ministry and said, “I’m going to tell it like it is.” He read from Isaiah, and said that this prophet had predicted Jesus’ coming, and here he was to fulfill the prophecy. In effect, Jesus announces his agenda.

This was a very strong statement and it rather shocked those assembled in the synagogue. Some of them took umbrage at what Jesus had said, especially when he added that many of them were pretty numb-skulled. Some of them wanted to throw him over a cliff. They did not succeed in killing him that time, but resentment would build because of Jesus’ truth telling. St. Luke the Evangelist captures this moment in his Gospel, and it is the Gospel for St Luke’s Feast Day, today.

Truth telling is important and we have excellent Biblical examples in the prophets, in Moses and Jesus. At the present moment in our country, there is a serious lack of truth telling. The vicious political ads on television have driven me away from watching anything. I resign from watching television until November 3.

But that is not my topic for today. As we celebrate St. Luke the physician, we should be thinking about healing.

Healing takes many forms. Clearly our country is in need of healing now and in the future, as the opposite sides in politics rage against each other. There is nothing peaceful about this moment in our country or in the world. Prayers for peace would indeed be prayers for healing the fractures that separate us..

The more familiar form of healing is for physical ailments –sickness, disease, physical damage from accidents or violence. Some situations are chronic – long lingering struggles to deal with day to day, while some are acute, a response to an immediate emergency.

Healing is also in our prayers regarding mental illness. These situations can be chronic or acute – life-long depression, schizophrenia, and other ailments of the mind can be as devastating as any physical affliction. Acute mental issues can often be helped by medications or talk therapy. All of these conditions cry out for our compassion and understanding. When we pray for healing, we include all those with mental illness.

Is there room for sin in this discussion? Of course. We all have things that we regret, and sometimes we carry around a burden of self-inflicted guilt. Let us pray for healing from our own past errors, or perhaps something we are struggling with right now.

In the broad topic of healing, let us not forget healing in our relationships. We can deal with this directly, by speaking to the person one-on-one, or perhaps writing them a letter. We can direct our prayers for healing to God and ask for divine intervention, but dealing directly with the person involved may be more effective. But who knows – God is definitely in charge of healing, and a direct appeal to God may help you to understand your situation better – praying for your own patience and understanding, not necessarily for changing the other person. "Hey God, make so-and-so a nicer person!" How about, "Hey God, make me a nicer person."

We also yearn for healing from our losses. This parish has lost parishioners and family members to death this year. Each death represents wrenching loss to us. Yet death itself can be a form of healing, an end to earthly suffering for the afflicted and the beginning of a different kind of life beyond.

Other kinds of healing, other kinds of loss. Perhaps the loss of a friendship, the loss of a job, the loss of the ability to do what was easy, say, 20 years ago. These losses all require acceptance and healing from hopes and dreams no longer possible.

Today we honor St. Luke on his feast day, for his exquisite gospel writing, for his medical expertise, for his compassion, for his understanding of the human condition and how much we need to hear the Good News in our world. Let us be present to each other and celebrate how we too can be signs of hope and love to a needy world.