



Grain

“O Creator of the universe, let our leaders take bold action to protect our common home from the climate emergency. Let each one of their actions be guided by love for neighbor, love for creature, and love for all of your creation. And let me be a mustard seed today. In both small and big actions, let what I do today multiply so our common home is protected for all creatures.” Amen –Rev. Jonathan Barker

Field

1He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” **2**He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. **3**Give us each day our daily bread. **4**And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.” **9**“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. Luke 11:1-4 and 9

Thoughts by Rev. Jonathan Barker, Grace Lutheran Church, Kenosha, WI

I signed up for this email list because I wanted to participate in more of God’s kingdom coming to Wisconsin by advocating for measures that bring more justice and mercy. I want to see more of God’s “kingdom come.” I imagine that’s why many of you are involved with LOPPW.

For a long time, what I thought this meant was doing advocacy work—calling local politicians, hosting rallies, writing op-eds, going on long hunger strikes, helping with voter registration drives and even getting arrested once (and I still think all of this is super important and something that our churches don’t do enough of). About a year ago, my perspective on this changed when I read a biography about Dietrich Bonhoeffer. On the one hand I was struck by how radical he was and on the other how churchy he was. This was someone who cared so much about justice he was willing to become part of an underground assassination conspiracy as well as someone who was constantly teaching people to praise God, pray, and live in Christian community. I realized studying Bonhoeffer’s life that my own advocacy work needed to be grounded more in prayer.

In our gospel we read this interesting example of a person knocking on his friend's door until he finally opens it. Jesus told this story as an example of the importance of persisting in prayer. I wonder if we are persisting in prayer on the advocacy issues that are most on our hearts. For example, do we pray daily that our politicians will take actions so each person in Wisconsin has enough bread for the day?

On January 1st this year, I committed to pray for climate action every morning using a prayer I wrote called, The Mustard Seed Prayer (under the Grain). Since that day more than 200 people have committed to praying the Mustard Seed Prayer each morning. Out of these prayers came my congregation’s first Earth Day Sunday Service, my congregation’s planting a pollinator garden and standing on the busiest corner in Kenosha each Friday calling on Sen. Ron Johnson to vote for climate action (which even got featured on the front page of the Kenosha news).

Jesus says to you, “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened.” Amen. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Jonathan