

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Luke 1:1–4

Dedication to Theophilus

¹Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

[Introduction]

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:
The Gospel According to St. Luke.

You might not have realized this is the year of Luke.

The lectionary each year focuses on a Gospel.

Year One – Matthew; Year Two – Mark; Year Three – Luke

And the Gospel According to St. John is peppered throughout all three years.

We are coming to the end of the Luke year.

And this past week, October 18th, was the day the church remembers St. Luke?

[Luke] St. Luke –

His name is only mentioned three times in the New Testament,

so much of what we know about St Luke is from inference and tradition.

So What do we know?

— The Greek in his gospel is the best of the evangelists, even poetic at times.

So it is a safe to say that Luke was very literate, quite well-read, and ***a writer***.

— Because his gospel tends to be chronological

and he likes to add historical notes, like who was governor or king at the time Luke is often viewed as ***a historian***.

— The fact that his gospel contains the *Song of Zechariah*, the *Song of Mary* and the *Gloria in Excelsis* – well that has caused many to believe that Luke was also ***a musician***. After all, he seems to have an appreciation for these songs.

— You know, there is even a tradition that says St Luke was a painter as well, and in fact many Christian traditions put St Luke is the patron saint of artists.

A writer, historian, musician, painter...

But even with his name mentioned only three times

there are two things about St Luke that we know for certain.

St Paul refers to him as “the beloved physician” in Colossians 4:14, so we know Luke was a *physician*, a doctor.

And what is interesting about this is

that we often think of doctors as having a higher social status,
but this was not the case in the Roman world.

In fact many doctors were Greeks who were slaves,
or who had at least begun their lives as slaves.

So...

It is very likely that Luke was of a lower social status than Paul, a true Roman citizen.
It is very likely that Luke was more on the social level of Peter or, ironically, Jesus.

Perhaps it is because he was a doctor and of a lower social status
that Luke often highlights how Jesus
addresses the suffering and those of lower social status.

And of course we also know that St. Luke was a *Christian*.

He was a person who had heard the Gospel message and who had come to believe in
Jesus as the One who had freed him from his sin.

All of this....

A writer, historian, musician, painter...

A doctor and a Christian

combines into a picture that at first glance does not seem to reflect most of us.

After all, most of us are not doctors.

I'm pretty sure none of us were slaves.

Most of us don't think of ourselves as

masters of literature, talented musicians or painters.

Oh for sure, some of us like to think we share some of those things with Luke
but very often after hearing that summary of Luke's life
most people think to themselves

that the only thing they appear to have in common with him is their faith;
that we, like St. Luke, through the message of the Gospel
have come to believe in Jesus as the One who has freed us from our sin.

[*Most is Common*] Yet the fact is, of all the saints,
Luke may be the one with whom you have the most in common.

St Luke is not an apostle, pastor or preacher.

St Matthew, St Mark, St John, they are all remembered as Evangelists and Apostles.

BUT Luke is simply St Luke the Evangelist,
and called Evangelist not because he went out and preached
but because he wrote the the Gospel that bears his name.

While Jesus may have called Peter, James and John from their nets,
Matthew from his ledger books,
He did not call Luke to lay aside his medicines and bandages.

Luke remained a physician.
And he accompanied St Paul on missionary journeys, but not as a fellow-preacher,
he went as a doctor and as a companion.

Jesus called Luke to remain in the profession suited to his gifts and talents,
and Luke use those talents to the glory of God and the good of his neighbor. Just like you.

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| <p>When you were created in your mother's womb, God blessed you with a mixture of gifts and talents unique to you. And even before you were created in your mother's womb, Jesus died for your sins, and called you to faith by His Gospel.</p> |
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But one of the things we are reminded of when we remember St Luke
is that the call to faith is not an automatic call to ministry,
to service specifically in the Church.

God does not say to everyone when they come to faith,
“Now I want you to become a missionary, now I want you to become a pastor”
for NOT all of us have the gifts and talents necessary for that work.

The talents of most of us are better used in other professions, so we serve there instead.

And yet here, in this sanctuary
there are some here who ARE called into the ministry.
15 years ago I sat in the pew with two little girls,
when members encouraged me to go into the ministry.
And Vicar was in preschool when he was desired to go into the ministry.
Young and old, preacher and teacher, some are called into the ministry.

The call of the Gospel is not always a call to ministry,
yet it is always a call to serve,
to use your gifts and talents to the benefit of those around you.

Lutherans especially have long recognized this, and even given a special name to it.

We call it the doctrine of Vocation,
the teaching that each of us have special talents and gifts,
and that we are to use these gifts and talents,
not for God, but in service of our neighbor.

Sure, St Luke may be considered the patron saint of artists,
but perhaps as Lutherans we should consider him the patron saint of vocation,
for in Luke we are reminded:

- That all God-pleasing professions are blessed and enriched by our faith.
- That God does not want you to somehow re-mold your talents so that they are more pastor-like or more churchly.

He wants you to take the talents and gifts you have and use them to the best of your ability, and then use them in the place He has put you. Do what is before you.

And in this way you bring glory to His name and benefit those around you.

God will then bless our work and bestow upon it a greater importance, immeasurably more, than we alone could ever give to it.

[*Conclusion*] Oh....

We may not have the special talents we see in others.

We may not be scholars, or eloquent speakers, or physicians.

But have all been called to the cross of Jesus.

We have all been told our sins are forgiven.

We have all been called to faith in Jesus,

and so, like St. Luke, we are called to humble service

of those around us with the gifts God has given,

as the Lord stands by us and strengthens us,

so that in us all might see the love of Jesus,

and see how we too were rescued,

to be brought safely

into His heavenly kingdom.

To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen!

Oh, St. Luke is a saint, but don't worry, you are one too.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...

to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.