

# unburdened

You can imagine the eager sincerity with which the disciples approached Jesus to tell them that they stopped someone doing Jesus' work in Jesus' name, but who wasn't a member of their group (Mark 9:38-50). They thought they had done a great thing! But, the ministry of Jesus doesn't belong to us. It's not ours to give or deny. It is God's work, and though we may want to try and protect the church from "outsiders" that's not our job. We don't get to say who is in, and who is out. That isn't our burden to bear.

James, the "brother of the Lord," and leader of the nascent Christian community in Jerusalem, talks to his people about what Christian community is all about (James 5:13-20). It's the place where the sick and suffering can receive prayer, the place where people of faith will lay hands on you to ask God for healing, the place where people who have been blessed with much can give thanks and praise, and the place where sins can be spoken out loud and not only will no one offer judgement but people will offer forgiveness.

In Numbers (Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29, Track 2), Moses is struggling with the weight of leadership because the people are complaining so much. He brings his frustration and anger to God, and God listens to his plea. The weight which Moses carried around with him was spread out on 70 people. He didn't have to walk alone. He didn't have to bear the burden of leadership by himself.

flannelgraph

©rickmorley.com

Proper 20B Revised Common Lectionary

The Book of Esther contains the great story of a the unlikely orphan queen Esther, the king of Persia, and the redemption of God's People in an uncertain time (Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22, Track 1). Our Jewish brothers and sisters especially remember this story on the Feast of Purim. When the Jewish people were set to be systematically persecuted, Queen Esther outs herself as a Jew to her husband the King, and asks for his protection for her people - protection which is granted.

## Prayer

Sometimes my burden feels like too much to bear, O God. Help me to remember that your yoke is easy and your burden light. Help me to remember that anything I bear, I don't bear alone, and that you are with me always. Amen.

## On the way to "soccer practice"...

What burdens do we bear? What feels like too much? Do we feel alone? Are we REALLY alone? How can we use our faith to remind us that God is with us, and helps us bear our burdens?

## Social Media Flannelgraph

Share how your Christian community supports you when you are burdened, sick, suffering, or guilty. Share how God works through your community on good days and bad days.