



July 19, 2026 | Sunday Worship | 9:30 a.m.

** Indicates an invitation to rise in body or spirit.*

Welcome & Announcements (*back of bulletin*)

*Call to Worship (*based on Psalm 139:7–10, 23–24*)

One: Where can we go from God's Spirit? Where can we flee from God's presence?

All: If we ascend to heaven, God is there. If we make our bed in the depths, God is there also.

One: God has searched us and known us before we spoke a word.

All: God meets us in familiar places and in unexpected places.

One: Come, let us awaken to the holy presence already among us.

All: We come to worship the living God.

*Opening Hymn "In Christ Alone"

lyrics on the screen

sang by Together for the Gospel Live

Opening Prayer (*Unison*) (*Inspired by Psalm 139 and Colossians 1:15–20*)

God of heaven and earth,

You are already present before we seek you,

already at work before we notice,

already loving us before we understand.

Open our eyes to your presence, our hearts to your grace,

and our lives to your calling, that we may recognize your work

in ordinary places and faithfully follow where your Spirit leads.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading Genesis 28:10–19 (NRSVue)

10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran.

11 He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.

12 And he dreamed that there was a stairway set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13 And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, 14 and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.

15 Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

16 Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said,

"Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!"

17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

One: This is the Word of God. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Message "Surely God Is in This Place — and I Did Not Know It"

Holy Communion: *All are welcome at this open table.*

Invitation to the Table; The Great Thanksgiving; Epiclesis; Breaking the Bread; Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Invitation to Generosity: Offering baskets are available on the side/back of the sanctuary. Or Mail your check: PO Box 1068, Girdwood, AK 99587, or give online; *scan QR code*→



Offertory Prayer (*Unison*)

Please join me in offertory prayer: **Gracious God,**

Every good gift comes from your generous hand.

Receive these offerings and use them to make your love known, that through our worship, our service, and our daily lives, others may discover that you have been with them all along. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayers and Celebration & The Lord's prayer

Concerns: "God in Your mercy" | **Response: "Hear our prayer"**

Joys: "Thanks be to God" | **Response: "Alleluia"**

*Closing Hymn “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me” by Selah
lyrics on the screen

*Benediction

*Sending Forth Song “On Eagles Wings” (CCLI Song #3127)
It is the tradition of the Girdwood Chapel UMC to form a circle, hold hands, and sing ‘On Eagles Wings.’

Our Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m. year-round

SERVICE NOTES

UMH: *United Methodist Hymnal*, TFWS: *The Faith We Sing*, Girdwood Chapel's CCLI Basic #: 11038417, CCLI Streaming License #: CSPL155734, NRSVue: *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*
The Worship Helpers—Greeter: Jody, Tech Helper:, Liturgist: Clark, Preacher: Pastor Hyunghee

Announcements:

- **Girdwood Food Pantry:** First Sundays 2-4p.m., 2nd&4th Wednesday 4-6p.m.
- **Welcome, Lost Creek Mission Team!** We are grateful to welcome the Lost Creek Mission Team from Lost Creek UMC (Oklahoma) to worship with us today. As they continue their mission work in Alaska, please keep them in your prayers, asking God to grant them safety, strength, and joy, and to bless their ministry wherever they serve.
- **Facility Use:** ART CAMP | July 20-31 | 8am-4pm
- **Finance Team Meeting:** July 23 | 3 p.m. | in the church office
- **2026 Summer Message Series “*Mission and Evangelism in Our Context*”:** We will explore what mission and evangelism mean in the unique context of Girdwood. Using the Revised Common Lectionary, along with selected biblical passages and insights from mission and evangelism scholars and practitioners, we will reflect on how God calls us to live, serve, and share the good news in our community today.

WELCOME, LOST CREEK MISSION TEAM!
Together in Christ.
Together in Mission.

May God bless your ministry
throughout Alaska.

Sunday Column July 19

– WHY THE GOOD NEWS HAS TO BE STRANGE

I want to say something that might sound counterintuitive: the gospel should be a little strange. Not off-putting, not hostile, not alienating. But genuinely strange. If the good news we offer sounds exactly like what the surrounding culture already affirms, something has probably gone wrong.

Here is why. The world we live in operates on certain assumptions: that competition is natural, that scarcity is the fundamental condition, that power protects what it has, that forgiveness is weakness, that the vulnerable should manage their own vulnerability. These are not usually stated as beliefs; they are simply the air we breathe.

The kingdom of God announces a different world: that abundance is possible, that the vulnerable are the particular concern of God, that forgiveness is strength, that the last shall be first, that enemies are to be loved. This is not a list of nice ideas. It is a description of a different social order — one that has been inaugurated in Jesus and that Jesus' followers are called to embody.

When the church loses this strangeness — when the gospel sounds like a motivational framework for personal success, or a blessing on the existing social arrangements, or a technique for inner peace that asks nothing in particular of the outer life — it has ceased to be the gospel Jesus preached. It has become something domesticated. Safe. Comfortable. Ineffective.

But there is also a danger in the other direction: becoming strange in a way that is merely sectarian, eccentric, or judgmental. The strangeness of the gospel is not the strangeness of refusal and withdrawal. It is the strangeness of radical welcome — of including

people who are normally excluded, of forgiving when forgiveness seems absurd, of sharing when holding seems rational.

Jesus was not strange in the way that cults are strange. Jesus was strange in the way that genuine love is strange in a world organized around self-protection. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners — not because he had low standards, but because he had different ones. Jesus welcomed children and women into his company in a world that systematically excluded them. Jesus died forgiving his executioners.

I think there is an opportunity here for a congregation like ours. People in Girdwood have, in many cases, walked away from institutional religion. They might have low tolerance for performance and high tolerance for honest imperfection. If the gospel we practice is genuinely strange in the right way — if it looks like radical welcome, unexpected generosity, forgiveness that does not calculate, care for the vulnerable that does not ask what is in it for us — people will notice. And some of them will want to come closer.

That kind of strangeness does not require us to have everything figured out. It requires us to take Jesus seriously. Which is, of course, its own kind of strange.

The good news is not less than what the world offers. It is more. And the 'more' is what makes it strange.

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