

Today we hear the story of David being chosen king over all Israel.

This is not the moment he is crowned;
this is not Arthur pulling the sword from the stone.
This is not the coronation,
but it is the most important moment.

This is the moment when we know that God has chosen David.

There are still battles to fight.
Against Goliath,
the Philistine giant;
against Saul,
the current occupant of the throne.
David still has work to do,
but here,
God has chosen David.

Youngest,
smallest of the boys.
We say it is a surprise for God to do this.

But why should we be surprised any more?
David is the latest,
not the first,
of God's surprising choices.

Isaac was not the first born;
Jacob was not the first born.
Joseph was not the first born.

Why are we surprised by the time we get to David?

God chooses who God will.

Perhaps we could have been surprised early on,
but not now.

Moses was something of a surprise.

Is he a Hebrew or an Egyptian?

Moses certainly did nothing to earn God's trust.

He wasn't on a hero quest;
he wasn't on a quest at all.

Moses was simply out doing his job,
and God chose to meet him.

God chooses who God will.

Today,

God chooses Burkley Wilder Karpik.

At our 10:30 service),

we will baptize this lovely,

wonderful,

hilarious,

giggling five and a half year old little girl.

It is no surprise to anyone that God would choose Burkley.
Spend just a few minutes with her,
and you can see that she is a walking,
talking advertisement
for grace and life and joy.

God chooses who God will,
and it is no surprise that God chooses Burkley.

Why are we ever surprised?
God chooses you.
Are you surprised?
God chooses me.
Often, I am surprised.

None of us are surprised that God chooses Burkley.
And here is where our story and Burkley's
are exactly the same.

None of us have done anything
to deserve God's choosing us.

Burkley is a delight,
and God chooses her.
I am not always a delight,
and God chooses me.
One day,
hard as it is for me to imagine,
Burkley will not always be a delight in her every waking moment,
and God will continue to choose her.

God chooses who God will.

God chooses everyone,
all the time.

And this is the surprising part.
We have been hurt by others,
why would God choose them?
We have done the hurting,
why would God choose us?
This is the surprising part,
the part we have such a hard time with
- God chooses of us,
all the time,
since the beginning.

We don't have to earn it;
it's not a formula
or an equation
or a recipe.

It sounds unfair.

It sounds wrong.

It sounds like grace.

Grace frustrates us when we are on top.
Grace saves us when we are not.

In the gospel reading today,
Jesus tells us a funny story.

*Jesus said,
“The kingdom of God
is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,
and would sleep and rise night and day,
and the seed would sprout and grow,
he does not know how.*

I know this was 2,000 years ago.
I know that microscopes and advanced biology were a long way off,
but it strains credulity
to think that a farmer,
or even a simple peasant of any kind,
wouldn't understand
that a hard seed sprouts into a plant,
given a little time,
a little light,
and a little water.

We all tucked seeds into dirt-filled dixie cups
when we were about Burkley's age.
We all set them in the window sill
and tried not to overwater them.

And we all gasped in wonder
as the little seed broke apart
and an even smaller green shoot sprouted up.

We were surprised when we were five or six,
but now we know how it works,
and we are amazed every single time.

Jesus is not really talking about farmers.
He's talking about the kingdom of God.

Farmers understand how seeds work,
and we know how Grace works:
God chooses who God will,
and God chooses everyone!

The thing about seeds and grace,
is that no matter how much we understand them,
they still feel like a miracle;
we are amazed every single time.

No matter how many times we see a tomato seed
turn into a summer's worth of salads and sauce,
it will feel like a miracle every single time.

No matter how many times we see grace work,
it will surprise us,
it will feel like a miracle,
every single time.

There comes a point every summer,
when we stop marveling over the tomato plant
and how it grows
and how it smells when you rub the stalk between your fingers.

There comes a point
when you've got no time for anything but the harvest.

And grace works like that too.

We'll try and make sense of it again next spring;
for now,
 just enjoy it
 and tell the whole world about it too.

God chooses me.

God chooses Burkley.

God chooses you.

God chooses who God will.

God chooses grace.

 Every single time.