



# SERMONS AT SAINT MARK'S

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THE REV. ADAM CONLEY, CURATE

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JUNE 7, 2026

GENESIS 12:1-9; PSALM 33:1-12; ROMANS 4:13-25; MATTHEW 9:9-13, 18-26

## YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL



*Felicity Mae Ruby Kleve*

How are you receiving the gospel this morning? How is your imagination processing the good news as you hear it pronounced by our deacon and lectors, or as

you chant responses to the psalm, or as you read along in the service leaflet?

Matthew gives us three gospel tableaus in quick succession. The stories are brisk, told with brevity and yet brimming with an

unshakable confidence in the power of Christ's presence. Power to reconcile disparity in humanity; power to make us well.

I find myself contemplating the fringe of Jesus' cloak as a pathway to wellness. We heard the story of the woman who trusts that Christ's life-giving and healing love is as full at the periphery as it is at the center. Her singular courage reminds us to trust that God is with us at our fringes, our edges, our vulnerabilities, our failures, our suffering. In God's hands, these become markers guiding our journey into the heart of Christ.

Felicity Mae Ruby Kleve found the fringe of Jesus' cloak here at Saint Mark's when she started attending services last summer. The life and ministry of this cathedral parish community were a safe and stabilizing force in her otherwise troubled world.

I'm sharing what would normally be confidential pastoral information about a parishioner because her family has given their permission and because I know Felicity wouldn't mind. Tragically, Felicity is no longer alive. She died at Harborview Hospital on May 11, the result of a terrible and tragic accident on a Lime bike.

Felicity's father and sister from Kansas City knew she'd found a church home she loved. She talked about it with them a lot. But they never had a chance to learn the church's name while she could still communicate.

It's a credit to Felicity's Dad, Dan, that he reached out to every single one of Felicity's social media contacts until he learned his

daughter's faith community was Saint Mark's Cathedral. He did this in time to find me, and I had the privilege yesterday of leading a committal service for Felicity's remains on a Bremerton ferry in the waters of Puget Sound and the Salish Sea.

Some of you knew Felicity. Many of you would recognize her. She was so outgoing and friendly. Wearing her big smile, she was unafraid to walk up to anyone to say hello.

She loved rainbows and color and was remarkably adept at assembling some – I'm gonna say – memorable gender-fluid outfits. Felicity was a trans woman in her 20s. The true name she found for herself – Felicity – perfectly suited her joyful personality.

Now, Felicity is helping us engage the good news of the gospel through the powerful witness of her too-short life.

I see parallels with the woman suffering a twelve-year health crisis. Healing for both includes trust in the Christ who draws us all from the fringes into the heart of loving community.

Felicity was having a rough time of it when she first started coming here. She was living in a shelter and hard up for resources. Her world was unstable.

Happily, a couple of months ago, she found her way into an Oxford House – a communal residential dwelling committed to shared goals and rules for maintaining sobriety from drugs and alcohol. Felicity was justifiably

proud to be the first person ever admitted with a unanimous vote.

When Felicity died, she was two years into recovery after suffering the consequences and estrangements of her addiction for many years.

I honestly have so much respect for her because somehow she was able to remain sober while she was effectively homeless without stable housing. As someone also in recovery, I honestly don't know if I could have done that without a roof over my head. I'm proud of you, Felicity.

Going back to church – this time an affirming church – gave Felicity fresh energy and purpose.

With God's help, Felicity began to rebuild. She built upon the bedrock of her sobriety and her renewing faith. She found a stable home, she found stable people, and she found a stable job as a dishwasher at an exclusive eatery.

The deep source of Felicity's joy in recent months was this cathedral community. She clung with all her might to the fringe of Jesus' cloak as she found it here until it drew her, with the prayers and support of her faith community, into a season of wellness, of being made whole.

My friends, it is good to remember we are the fringe. We are all Christ's holy fringe, and we helped Felicity find her footing as she did her own spiritual and practical work on her journey into wellness.

Felicity's work was her faith in action. She trusted the gospel promise that we don't, we can't, do this work alone. Our help is in the God who comes alongside us in our suffering in the person of Jesus Christ, offering radical solidarity, radical wellness, radical hope, even if we but touch the hem of his robe.

“Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.” Jesus says this to the woman who stepped out of the harsh shadows and edges of her social isolation.

The text isn't explicit about severe measures of ostracization, but we know that Levitical law pronounced her ritually unclean because of her relentless twelve-year bleeding trauma. This woman would have experienced great need, great loneliness, great suffering.

But she finds her way to Jesus, who says, “Take heart, daughter, [courage!], your faith has made you well.”

Your faith has made you well.

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On a recent Sunday morning, Felicity wrote a poem about her newfound joy and peace in finding a spiritual home.

Here it is:

Sitting in the pews  
used to be my least favorite  
part  
of every week  
I just disliked it

I had been forced to go  
and was largely surrounded by  
people who looked at me in  
judgment

It felt like an empty, cursed  
place

But here at my church

I feel free, at home

I can be me and I feel so

Loved, accepted

Appreciated for who I am

What a dream

And I leave here each week

with peace in my heart

Love flowing through me

and I hear exactly what I need

to hear

God thank you for this place of

Peace

I can trust with holding my heart

God thank you

for you.

Felicity's poem is a legacy gift to us. It bears witness to the fact that at Saint Mark's we carry God's grace not only to our familiar neighbors in the pew but also to seekers on the fringes. The gospel is alive here.

We are also wise to remember that Christ's love desires to be known in the unfamiliar, maybe even sometimes uncomfortable, corners of our human neighborhood.

We must always welcome the stranger.

Felicity's poem is also a challenge for the times we fail to seek out and acknowledge Christ in the stranger. How many Felicities come here only to leave, unable to find or grasp the fringe of Jesus' cloak because, through inattention or fear, we've hidden it away?

Or how many wounded seekers find only the glittering vestments of our idols and insecurities, wrapped around some of us so tightly we have no freedom of movement or thought to contemplate anyone other than ourselves?

Thankfully, the gospel we carry to others is the gospel given to us, too. We don't do this alone. Christ not only offers the fringes of his cloak but the fullness of his person. When we reach for him in faith, he responds by drawing us into the center of his sacred, loving heart.

The gospel came to the hemorrhaging woman just as it came to Felicity, and just as it comes to you and me. Reach for it, embrace it, and give it to the next Felicity you find who really needs it. *The gospel is felicity*. It will change your life.

**Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26** *[As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.]*