

Rev. George Miller
Sept 21, 2025
Genesis 28:10-17

Finally! Finalmente! Endlich! A scripture that hearkens back to the fond memories of Sunday School.

After the pain of last week and a month of Creeds, Psalms, and Troublesome Fathers, we have a story that embodies the wonder, mystery, and awe of Scripture.

Like Jesus feeding folk with 5 loaves and 2 fish, we have a story many of us heard as a child, with a song we enjoy singing.

Jacob falling asleep on a stone and dreaming of a ladder that connects to heaven; angels to and from.

God, the Rock of Rocks, says to Jacob “I am the Lord, the God of your Dad and his Dad. This land will be yours and belong to your kids’ kids.”

On this heavenly ramp, God says “Your family will take root and bloom in every part of the world, and they will bless all the families of the earth.”

In this deserted desert place, Jacob, who has run away, hears God say “Know that I Am with you. I will watch over you. I will carefully tend to you.”

Don’t you love how much God sounds like a Big Poppa or Big Mamma who wants nothing but the best for their child?

Jacob wakes up. No more ladder. No more ramp. No more angels. Just emptiness, and the rock he fell asleep on.

Yet he feels full; empowered; part of something bigger than himself.

He says “I didn’t know it then, but I do now- The Lord is in this place. How amazing that right here the everyday and the holy meet.”

He takes his rock-pillow and calls the place “the House of God.” No doubt a sweet, sweet spirit.

How rich with truth this story is.

-God is found everywhere, in every situation

-Any space can be holy

-Even when all seems lost, God IS.

This ties back to previous sermons: the belief of God as our Rock- the place of refuge we come to, and the foundation we stand on.

How perfect that theology and imagery is for us.

Recently someone shared an article from **Sunset Hills Horizon** recounting the history of quarries like the one in Powder Valley.

Eons ago, deposits of limestone created the Merimac Basin, an abundant fossil bed.

In 1905 St. Lucas needed to replace the old frame church, so they decided to build one of stone.

George Helfert, owner of a quarry at the bottom of the Old Gravois Road hill, donated the stones.

Two teams pulled wagons loaded with quarried-stone up that hill, unhitched at the top, then went back down for the next load. A ramp was built and a horse-drawn pulley used to raise each stone.

St. Lucas is considered “the most significant stone building in the Sunset Hill area.” Our 25th Anniversary booklet says starting a new building “requires courage, determination, faith and love of God.”

The ancestors of St. Lucas had to be brave. Thank God they were, because here we are, 120 years later worshipping the God of Jacob in these generously donated rocks made of the limestone that came from soil down the hill.

Think of that amazing heritage. The metaphorical “rock” we come to for refuge and worship was constructed from rock in the soil.

Within this refuge made of local limestone, we give thanks and praise to the Eternal Rock we stand upon and find rest.

There is poetry in this. Our spiritual heritage is literally built on the heritage of this soil.

What other rocks do we rest upon and form our foundation?

Each week we say we’re transforming lives and love grows here.

There are 2 other Rocks we see every Sunday- our Mission Statement and our Promise found on the front of the bulletin.

Our Mission states “St. Lucas UCC unites Christians in the worship of God and affirms life-long Christian education, faithful discipleship, and caring service in God’s name.”

Wow. Our Mission, the Heartbeat, the Foundation of St. Lucas proclaims to be one of

- Unity

- Life-long learning

- Practices rooted in Christ

- Merciful acts rooted in God.

How are we climbing up that hill of hope? How are we, as a church, when it comes to unity, worship, education, actions, and integrity?

Our Promise states “St. Lucas UCC members, united in Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, strive to live faithfully, grow spiritually, and serve lovingly all of God’s creations.”

A second vow. Our Promise, the pledge St. Lucas proclaims is

- united members who
- follow God’s wisdom
- try our best to live as if every place, every situation has holiness
- continue to bloom, blossom
- care tenderly for what is God’s.

How are we climbing this hill of assurance? How are we when it comes to being united, allowing things to unfold at their own time, acting in faith, continuing to evolve and to do “diakonia”?

As we prepare for our Council Conversation, it is good to keep our Mission and Promise in mind, as they empower us to reflect on who we are as a church and as Christians.

It is good to keep the Mission and Promise in mind as we create and vote on our 2026 Budget. Budgets are statements of faith.

What we plan to spend and what we trust to receive are Theological Statements about what we believe about God, what dreams the Holy Spirit has for us, and where we trust Jesus to lead.

Today we got to experience a story that speaks to so many of us. What it means to be where you are; what it means to discover that God is there.

To be reminded of the words of presence and the assurance that God, our Big Daddy, our Grand Mama, is there, regardless if it is in the Garden or in the desert.

Since we are all descendants of Jacob, we have a faith founded on the assurances of God.

The God who stands besides us, the God who speaks to us, the God who says “I Am with you, and I will root for you no matter where you are.”

We don’t have to dream of heaven to know that heaven is right here, right now, especially when Christ is our foundation.

As our 25th Anniversary Booklet stated “courage, determination, faith and love of God.”

For that, let us say “Amen.”