

Becks Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Sunday, February 20, 2011  
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 7  
Holy Communion Setting Three



***OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT:***

*At Becks Evangelical Lutheran Church we offer everyone a place in the family of God.  
Without condition or judgment, ALL PEOPLE ARE WELCOME to join us in the  
worship, fellowship, and ministry of Jesus Christ!*

***OUR MISSION STATEMENT:***

*As "THE PEOPLE OF GOD", in this time and place,  
We are called to live in FELLOWSHIP with each other, in WITNESS to our faith at all times,  
and in STEWARDSHIP of ALL that we have*

**BECKS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

441 Becks Church Road, Lexington, NC 27292

Minister: Rev. David Martin [www.beckslutheranchurch.org](http://www.beckslutheranchurch.org)

Phone: (336) 249-2056 Fax: (336) 249-0325

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Closed Tuesday and Thursday

Council President: David Aldridge – Phone (336)-746-5819

**Welcome** to Becks Lutheran Church as we worship God, and learn and grow in faith. If you are visiting with us or are a former member, we appreciate you coming.

Please take a moment during the announcements to sign our **Fellowship Register**.

**Hearing devices** are available for those who are hearing impaired. Please see an usher for assistance.

**Doodle bags** filled with quiet activities for children are available in the narthex.

The members of Becks wish to thank **Laura Turlington** for providing our music today.

**The Sanctuary Candle** is lighted to the glory of God, and for the joy and blessing of Ethan Collin Lovell, their grandson, at his first birthday on February 9th by Patti and Jerry Lovell.

**The altar flowers** are given to the glory of God by the Women of the ELCA.

***Serving at Worship Today:***

**ACOLYTE:** *Will Jones*

**CRUCIFER:** *Kathryn Jones*

**LECTOR:** *Kimberly Buchanan*

**PRAYERS:** *Ophelia Walker*

**GREETERS:** *Vickie & Emily Whitehead*

**USHERS:** *David Aldridge*

**COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** *Maxine Mull*

**NURSERY:** *Unattended*

+ GATHERING +

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

*Morning Has Broken*

Smith

*The congregation stands*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who spread out the heavens and the earth, who gives light and breath to the nations, who makes all things new.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy and healing God,

**we confess that we have fallen short of the life you desire for us. We choose our priorities over your commandments. We divide the body of Christ. The earth groans under our demands. Have mercy, O God. Restore us and all things to health, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. Amen.**

Hear the voice from heaven: "You are my own, my beloved." You belong to Christ and through the power of the cross + your sins are all forgiven. God is faithful and will strengthen you, that your light may shine before others, that you may be God's holy people in the world.

**Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**GATHERING SONG:**

*Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death*

**Hymn # 452**

**GREETING**

The grace of God in Christ Jesus, poured out in every gift of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**KYRIE**

**Page 138**

**HYMN OF PRAISE**

*Glory to God in the Highest*

**Page 139**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Holy God of compassion, you invite us into your way of forgiveness and peace. Lead us to love our enemies, and transform our words and deeds to be like his through whom we pray, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*The congregation is seated*

+ **WORD** +

**FIRST READING: Leviticus 19:1–2, 9–18**

A reading from Leviticus:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

<sup>2</sup>Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. <sup>9</sup>When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup>You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>11</sup>You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. <sup>12</sup>And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. <sup>14</sup>You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. <sup>16</sup>You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your

neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. <sup>18</sup>You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 119:33–40**

*(Read responsively, first by the Lector side and then by the Pulpit side of the church.)*

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O LORD, the way | of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it | to the end.

<sup>34</sup>**Give me understanding, and I shall | keep your teaching;  
I shall keep it with | all my heart.**

<sup>35</sup>Lead me in the path of | your commandments,  
for that is | my desire.

<sup>36</sup>**Incline my heart to | your decrees  
and not to | unjust gain. R**

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from be- | holding falsehood;  
give me life | in your way.

<sup>38</sup>**Fulfill your promise | to your servant,  
which is for | those who fear you.**

<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach | that I dread,  
because your judg- | ments are good.

<sup>40</sup>**Behold, I long for | your commandments;  
by your righteousness en- | liven me. R**

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 3:10–11, 16–23**

A reading from 1 Corinthians:

<sup>10</sup>According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

<sup>18</sup>Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written,

"He catches the wise in their craftiness,"  
<sup>20</sup>and again,  
"The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,  
that they are futile."

<sup>21</sup>So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, <sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all belong to you, <sup>23</sup>and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation stands*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Page 142**

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 5:38–48**

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew:

**Glory to you, O Lord.** *Spoken boldly!*

<sup>38</sup>You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; <sup>40</sup>and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; <sup>41</sup>and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. <sup>42</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

<sup>43</sup>You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Spoken boldly!*

*The congregation is seated*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*“To be a child of God”*

Pastor Jeff Hoffner

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon;  
then the congregation stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY:**     *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

**Hymn #631**

## APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*As God's beloved children, let us pray that the light of Christ shine on the nations, the church, and all those in need.*

*A brief silence.*

That the church may be a temple of God's presence, built upon the foundation of Christ and united in our one baptism, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That the leaders of nations serve with honesty and justice, honoring our neighbors in all circumstances of life, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That in our call to holy living we treat your gifts of land and natural resources with dignity and concern for the health of all creation, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That you teach us to love and forgive even our enemies, and that you open our hearts to the needs of those seeking food, shelter, or health especially those we name out loud or in the silence of our hearts (*pause*), let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That you bless the ministries of this congregation, that your welcome and hospitality may lead us to love our neighbors as ourselves, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

*Receive our prayers and hopes, God of mercy and justice, for we pray in the name of Christ, the light of the world.*

**Amen.**

*The congregation is seated*

**+ MEAL +**

**OFFERING**

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.*

**OFFERTORY**

*The Gift of Love*

Carter

*The congregation stands*

**OFFERTORY SONG**

*Create in Me*

**Hymn # 186**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**Page 144**

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Page 144**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface for the day; the congregation responds:*

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

*The congregation is seated*

**COMMUNION SONG**

*Lamb of God*

**Hymn # 146**

*Christ welcomes you to this meal of the baptized.*

We receive communion today at the altar by intinction. After receiving the wafer, you may dip it into the chalice to receive the wine. Those unable to partake of wheaten bread or wine are assured that the Church affirms our Lord's whole and abiding presence in, with, and under each element alone. Those not receiving communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Return to your pew for meditation, prayer, and singing of the communion hymns. Please let an usher know if you need assistance

**COMMUNION MUSIC**

*Please enjoy the music as you reflect in thought and silent prayer.  
At the conclusion of the communion the congregation stands.*

**TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

**SONG AFTER COMMUNION** *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise* **Hymn # 204**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

+ **SENDING** +

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:**

*The Church of Christ, in Every Age*

**Hymn # 729**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Lift High the Cross*

**Smith**

+ + + + + + +

**This Week:  
February 20 - 26**

**Sunday**

2:00 p.m. Circle of Hope  
(Patti Lovell's home)  
Men at the Shelter

**Monday**

7:00 p.m. Exercise Group (*FEB*)

**Wednesday**

12:00 p.m. Midweek Bible Study  
(Office Complex)

**Friday**

5:00 p.m. Youth leave for LYO

**Saturday**

9:00 a.m. WELCA Retreat at Becks

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\*The Circle of Hope meets today at 2:00 p.m. at Patti Lovell's home.

There's still time, please submit all newsletter articles to the church office by Tuesday, February 22.

**Thank you** to everyone that brought magazines for the WELCA retreat!

**Looking ahead:  
February 27- March 5**

**Sunday**

8:30 a.m. Breakfast  
9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class  
9:15 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
Youth return from LYO

**Monday**

7:00 p.m. Exercise Group (*FEB*)

**Tuesday**

7:00 p.m. Circle of Love  
(Office Complex)

**Wednesday**

10:30 a.m. Young at Heart  
(Lex Style Trimmings)  
1:30 p.m. Prayer Shawl Ministry  
(Office Complex)  
7:00 p.m. Choir Practice  
(Choir room)

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**LYO** meeting for all attendees and parents following worship service today. Please meet on the front pews to finalize our plans.



### Touching Davidson County with Love

We will be collecting a special offering to support this ministry on **Sunday, February 27**. Sign-up sheets for volunteers will be available in March. *If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Everhart.*

#### Current Financial Update

Attendance Last Week:		85
Budget:	Offering Last Week	\$ 2,512.00
	Estimated Weekly Expenses	\$ 3,023.00
Building Fund:	Offering Last Week	\$ 635.00
	Monthly Expense	\$ 3,639.00
Line of Credit:	Balance as of January 19	\$0.00
Endowment Fund Loan		\$10,000.00



Once again **Habitat for Humanity and Thrivent Financial** are teaming together to build another house here in Lexington. Tom Garrett will be our contact and organizer here at Becks and the overall labor coordinator for all the Lutheran churches in our area. All the local Lutheran churches will be responsible for raising approximately \$8,000 with the remainder contributed by Thrivent and Habitat. The tentative start date is late April or May. Tom will have more information about volunteer sign up and fund raising shortly. In the meantime, if you would like to contribute financially, just make a note on your check or the pew envelopes that it is for Habitat. This is a great opportunity to do something tangible that stays right here in our community. Ask anyone who worked on or contributed financially on the last house and they will tell you of the great fellowship and feeling of accomplishment working with other people on a service project. This is a great way for Becks to contribute to mission work locally.



The Becks Junior Girl Scouts are selling cookies today at Lowe's Hardware in Lexington until 5:00 p.m. and at Biscuit King on Hwy 8 from until 3pm. If you have a sweet tooth and would like to support our Girl Scouts please stop by one of their booths and pick up a box today.

**Lexington Memorial Hospital** is hosting a **Caregivers Solution** on Tuesday, February 22 at 3:00 p.m. in Classroom 1&2. The topic this month is *The Generation Gap & the "Sandwich" Generation*. For additional information please call 238-4454 or see the *Community Bulletin Board*.

**St. John's Lutheran Church** invites you to attend the "**Jazz Vespers**" on Saturday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m. The event will feature legendary blues and jazz artist Joe Robinson. There is no charge for this event, for additional information call 704-636-3431 or see the *Community Bulletin Board*.

There will be a special meeting for everyone on the **Lenten Drama Team** on Sunday, February 27 immediately following the worship service. Please plan to meet in the FEB to introduce the upcoming drama and enjoy a pizza lunch.

You are cordially invited to a **One Day Retreat** being hosted by **Becks WELCA** on behalf of the Mission Growth Committee of the North Carolina Synodical Women's Organization here on Saturday, February 26, 2011. Registration and refreshments begin at 9:00 AM. The cost is \$8.00 and includes materials, snacks and lunch. The Retreat study is *"Faithful Women, Invite - Encourage - Serve* and will be lead by Becky Hoppensteadt.

**Remember those in the hospital with a card -** Please continue to keep **Richard Ratcliff** in your thoughts and prayers as he recuperates at the Lexington Memorial Hospital. Great news, **Wendi Trexler** is now home from the hospital. Please continue to keep her in your thoughts and prayers:

Richard Ratcliff  
CC Room 643  
250 Hospital Drive  
Lexington Memorial Hospital  
Lexington, NC 27292

**The Circle of Hope** is sponsoring a Paper Products Drive for Family Services. They are asking for donations of ANY paper products such as like toilet paper, paper towels, and tissues. These are used at the shelter, and for counseling and therapy sessions, youth programs, and parent programs. A box has been placed in the FEB hallway near the WELCA table for donations. Please contact Jackie Helton with questions at 249-4749.



#### **UP-COMING EVENTS:**

1. **Faith Center at Kure Beach is NOT for sale.** More information is on our web site.
2. **Summer Staff search is under way for quality Christian adults to serve as counselors on our 2011 summer staff.** Applicants must be 19 years minimum, love kids, and want a fun and exciting challenge.
3. **Summer Camp** Register now! Brochures have been sent to your church. Information available on web site. (\*\*Yes we have the brochures available now!\*\*)
4. **Work Day at Camp Agapé is March 26<sup>th</sup>.** Stay overnight Friday, work Saturday breakfast and lunch are provided. Projects includes putting up the cross at the Lakeside Chapel, painting, trail work, wood splitting Also if you are not able to do physical work we have light office work. Must have reservations E-mail [ACEed@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:ACEed@agapekurebeach.org)
5. **Spring Golf Outing 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual April 11<sup>th</sup> at Lochmere Club in Cary.** Overnight accommodations at Camp Agapé. Help send a kid to camp!
6. **Mother – Daughter overnight retreat May 6-7, 2011.** Celebrate your relationship with the women in your family. For Mothers and Daughters of all kinds and all ages. Contact Katie at [program@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:program@agapekurebeach.org) or call Camp Agapé for details.
7. **Special Needs:** electric or gas golf carts
8. **Volunteers needed** for various maintenance tasks, wood working, painting, and plumbing.
9. **HURRY-- KURE BEACH WINTER RATE --** February 11-13 and February 25-27  
**Contact Camp Agapé:** Telephone: 919-552-9421 / **E-mail:** [agape@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:agape@agapekurebeach.org)  
**Contact Kure Beach:** Tele 910-458-0783 / **E-mail:** [kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org)  
**Agapé Kure Beach Ministries Website--** [www.agapekurebeach.org](http://www.agapekurebeach.org)

*\*\* Youth Campers please do not forget that the church offers scholarship funds.*

***We Remember These  
Persons In Our Daily Prayers***



**Nursing Home:** Goldie McCrary, Arteal Porter.

**Members:** Lena Beck, Linda Beck, Susan Beck, Sylvia Beck, Mary & Lamont Black, Cornelia Briggs, Ruby Briggs, Vivian Briggs, Margaree Broadway, Gaye Burkhart, Lessie Gaddy, Evelyn Hanes, Vermell & Ernest Ingle, Chris Jenkins, Bruce Kirk, Mary Kuebler, Jean Lavelle, Maxine Mull, Ruby Perrell, Richard Ratcliff, Lucille Rhodes, Martha Shore, Helen Sink, Bill Swing, Wendi Trexler, Carley Vawter, David Vawter, Derick Vawter, Sandy Vawter, Velna Vawter, Arlene Walker, Ophelia Walker.

**Loved Ones, Friends & Neighbors:** Linda Walkup, Jacqueline Mundy, Scott & Marinda Benson, Doris Worrell, Darrel Swing, Nancy Swing, Judy Broadway, Johnny Price, Don Hunt, Gwen Copley, Teresa Gregg, Dr. Gerald Briggs, Priscilla Beck, Lori Everette, Mike Martin, Rita Tranham, Theresa Young, Kathy Roberts, Susan Layton, Edith Thomason, Curtis Fletcher, Fay Young, Dana Gandy, Chuck Woodsford, Steven Hartley, Larry Brown, Jean Plummer, Jennifer Atkinson & family, Rita Miller, James Freeman, Trevor Graham, John Moorefield, Martha Rackley, Kayla Finchum, Wendy Duffey, Tammy Benson, Donna Lindler, Evelyn Fritts, Butch Williams, Andy Gurkin, Amanda McLemore, Vanhoy "Squeak" Hines, Gladys Briggs, Lynn Fletcher, Jessica Fletcher, Tula Beck, Brandi Kofiner, Tanner Jordan, Carole Gasque, Mary Abrams, Dawn Parrish, Anita Scott, Lynn Beck, Neena Mabe, Darlene Bradenberg, Mary Shipe, Cheryl Rawley, Anne Burkhart, Bill Berrier, Jim Everhart, Jeff Lanier, Glen MacDermod, Jack Mobley, John Ray Ward, Noah Byerly, Steve Bartlett, Kent McGuire, Mary Abrams, Charlie Berry, Stephanie Dotson, Tommy Lovell, Katee Spry, Vickie Rhodes, Mike Ball, Carol Henderson, Susan Hedrick, Curtis Leonard, Victor Lamb, Kathy D. Leonard, Joey Alexander, Sarah & Ralph Wallace, Joyce & Randy Jones, Julia Moore, Janice Hill, Roger Younts, Jean Hill.

**Missionaries:** Carol Halter (Hong Kong).

***If you have names to add or remove from our prayer list, please write them on the back of the fellowship pad that you sign each week and write your name in parenthesis.***

## **TEXTS FOR NEXT WEEK:**

Isaiah 49:8–16a, Psalm 131, 1 Corinthians 4:1–5, Matthew 6:24–34

## **NOT PERFECT, BUT COMPLETE**

Images of holiness and perfection thread their way through today's readings: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). "God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Cor. 3:17). "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). We are to love both neighbor and self, and even enemy. And we are called to be not just holy, but perfect. But how? We are aware at every turn of how far from perfection we fall.

The original language of our gospel is of help. In Greek, we are to be *teleioi*: not "perfect," but complete. Mature. We are called not to artificial smoothness but to wholeness. Not flawlessness, but the state of being filled, finished, fully-grown.

Consider the sale tags of certain objects: "The fabric in this garment is made from hand loomed silk yarn. The irregularities and variations in the weave and color are in no way to be considered defective. They are characteristic of the fine yarn which gives this fabric its beauty and texture." "In the tanning process the leather is allowed to shrink naturally as it dries. This process also creates a variety of grain sizes and lines which are the true distinction between naturally shrunken leather and embossed imitations.... The variations and nuances of shading and the unevenness or roughness of texture are what gives this product its unique personality and are not to be considered as imperfections."

Such belongings point us toward the one to whom we belong, who fashioned us more skillfully than any artisan, and favors the real over imitations. Our efforts to love will always be uneven. But as we practice, we undergo weathering, seasoning, wrinkling. We learn what it is to be mature, textured, holy—and whole.

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