



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH
A People United in Justice and Love

**Year C
Sunday Readings,
Collects, and Prayers in
2022:
Epiphany in January to
Trinity in June**

Resources have been taken from the following:

McCausland's Order of Divine Service: The Christian Year 2022, Liturgical Year C (Editor: Edward Simonton OGS, Mary Reynolds, hymn selection) (ABC Publishing: Anglican Book Centre, 2022)

Online Lectionary, Anglican Church of Canada: <https://lectionary.anglican.ca/>

ALTERNATIVE COLLECTS FOR YEARS A, B & C OF THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY AND SEASONAL PRAYERS OVER THE GIFTS AND AFTER COMMUNION Prepared by the Liturgy Task Force, Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee Of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-Final-2019.pdf>

A LITURGICAL PSALTER GENERAL SYNOD 2016 EDITION The Psalter of The Book of Alternative Services Emended for Contemporary Liturgical Use: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/GS2016-Liturgical-Psalter-2016-05-04.pdf>

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Readings for January to June 2022 (Liturgical Year C)

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Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 16, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5 • Psalm 36:5-10 • 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 • John 2:1-11

Collect

O God of steadfast love,
at the wedding in Cana
your Son Jesus turned water into wine,
delighting all who were there.
Transform our hearts by your Spirit,
so that we may show forth the light of your love
as one body in Christ. Amen.

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

This poem is set next to the Cana story because it describes the new world that God promises to establish and because it develops the marriage image that has been important for Christian interpretation of this gospel reading. Our baptism, at which we receive the “new name” of Christ, is like our marrying God, who is like our lover.

For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married.

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Psalm 36:5-10

In response to the poem from Isaiah, the assembly joins in singing Psalm 36:5-10. This lush psalm praises God’s love and likens communion with God to a feast, and we ask God to continue to bless us, as Christ blessed the newlyweds of the gospel story.

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

This Sunday begins a semicontinuous reading of 1 Corinthians. During the weeks after Epiphany, 1 Corinthians is read over the three years: chapters 1–4 in A, 6–9 in B, and 12–15 in C. In chapter 12 Paul presents the beginnings of Christian proclamation concerning the Holy Spirit, the divine spirit who now inhabits the body of Christ. At the beginning of a new calendar year, it is good to hear this list of the gifts that together build up the body of the church.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Gospel: John 2:1-11

Christ establishes a new world order, symbolized by the details of this story: his attendance at a wedding, his messianic distance from his natural mother, his providing what the couple needs, the astonishing abundance of Christ’s gifts, and the steward’s words about “the good wine.” Christ’s “hour” is coming on the cross. The story concludes with reference to the disciples’ belief in Christ. Later, in John 15, Christ himself is the vine.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.”

His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Prayer over the Gifts

Living God,
you have revealed your Son as the Messiah.
May we hear his word and follow it,
and live as children of light.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of glory,
you nourish us with bread from heaven.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit,
that through us your light may shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Third Sunday after the Epiphany (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity), January 23, 2022

Readings: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 • Psalm 19 • 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a • Luke 4:14-21

Collect

God of freedom,
make us impatient to greet the time fulfilled,
the poor lifted up,
the oppressed set free
and your love made manifest
in Jesus Christ, the Anointed Servant. **Amen.**

Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009)

First Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

The excerpt from Nehemiah, the sole selection from Nehemiah in the three-year lectionary, is set next to Luke 4 to show that Jesus continued the Jewish pattern of communal worship at which the Hebrew Scriptures were proclaimed and interpreted for the hearers. Although hearing the words of the law may incite mourning, Ezra says that encountering the voice of God always is joyful: “eat the fat and drink sweet wine”: in other words, let the party begin, and share it with others. We continue this pattern of worship on Sunday morning.

When the seventh month came—the people of Israel being settled in their towns— all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So, they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Psalm 19

To respond to the account of the people hearing Ezra read from the Torah, we join in Psalm 19, the first half of which praises Creator God for the sun and the second half of which praises our Redeemer for the words God has spoken, “more desired than fine gold, sweeter far than honey.”

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;

the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear,

enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

The people who gather to hear Jesus proclaimed in the Hebrew Scriptures and interpreted in the New Testament are the body parts that Paul metaphorically describes. For Paul, the church's communal embodiment of Christ is inspiring, for we have company in sorrow and we join together in joy.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts.

Gospel: Luke 4:14-21

Luke says that Jesus, filled with the Spirit, preaches that he himself is the fulfillment of historic hopes for the social transformation and physical healing that the messiah will bring. We on Sunday morning still hear Jesus speaking through the word, and we are to join him in proclaiming God's good favor to all, experiencing this healing, and enacting social transformation.

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the

Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Prayers of the People (from the 2022 WCC liturgy for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)

With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

The Magi came from the East to pay homage and offer special gifts from their cultures and countries. We pray today for all Christian communities around the world; in all of their diversity of worship and tradition:

Lord, we ask you to preserve these treasures, particularly in areas of the world where the presence and survival of Christians is threatened by violence and oppression.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

The early years of the Lord's life were marked by violence and massacres at the orders of the despot Herod.

We pray for children living in places in the world where violence continues and where its results are tangible:

Strengthen, O Lord, the bonds of unity and mutual love among our churches and help us to cooperate and witness to your holy Name. Inspire us to work without ceasing in order to defend the oppressed and include the marginalized. Encourage us to stand together in the face of tyranny and oppressive regimes as we seek your Kingdom among us.

O, Lord, hear our prayer.

After the visit of the Magi, the Holy Family experienced migration through the wilderness and became refugees in the land of Egypt.

We pray for all the refugees and uprooted people in this world:

Equip us, Lord, to show hospitality to those driven from their homes, and grant us the spirit of welcome to those looking for a safe haven.

O, Lord, hear our prayer.

The birth of Jesus was good news for all, gathering people from different nations and religions in worship of the holy child.

We pray for our efforts to seek harmony and dialogue with other religions:

Lord, give us humility and patience to walk with others with respect on their journey.

O, Lord, hear our prayer.

The Magi returned to their home by a different way.

We pray for our churches in this changing world:

Lord, help us to find new and creative ways to follow you and to witness to you so that the world may believe.

O, Lord, hear our prayer.

When the Magi saw the holy child, they rejoiced with great joy.^[13]

Heavenly Father, fix our eyes on him so we do not lose our way.

We pray for your many denominations and our seeking for unity – the healing of the very wounded body of Christ:

Unite us in the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

O, Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving God,

before the world began you called us.

Make holy all we offer you this day,
and strengthen us in that calling.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Gracious God,

our hands have taken holy things;

our lives have been nourished by the body of your Son.

May we who have eaten at this holy table

be strengthened for a unity of service in your world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, January 30, 2022

Readings Jeremiah 1:4-10 • Psalm 71:1-6 • 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 • Luke 4:21-30

Collect

Prophetic God,

strengthen and encourage us

to hear those who speak your uncomfortable truths

and who challenge our dearest prejudices,

so that we may know and heed prophets of our age;

through Jesus, the son of Joseph. **Amen.**

Propers Working Group (2015)

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

The call of Jeremiah is set next to the reading in Luke 4 to intensify the identification of Jesus with the tradition of prophets, those who like Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah were called to the task of speaking the word of God. Christians have appreciated this particular call narrative as an indication of God's attention to even children. All the baptized are called to speak the things of God to others.

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Psalm 71:1-6

Having heard about the boy Jeremiah, we respond by singing Psalm 71:1-6, which speaks of God's care of us since even before birth. God is our rock, castle, crag, stronghold, deliverer, hope, strength.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

It is not easy to comment on 1 Corinthians 13 without getting merely gushy. The passage proclaims the love of God in Christ as now enlivening the community. Although called to faith while young children, believers are expected to grow up, to live into adulthood in lives that access and express the full love of God.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

Continuing from last week's gospel, today's gospel repeats its last verse, thus epitomizing the semicontinuous reading of Luke we now undertake. Whether we identify with the Jews worshiping faithfully in the synagogue or with the outsiders in Phoenicia or Syria, Christ comes to be our loving Savior, our liberator, our healer. Like the widow, we are fed, and like Naaman, we are cleansed in the water

Then Jesus began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Prayer over the Gifts

God of steadfast love,
may our offering this day,
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
renew us for your service.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Source of all goodness,
in this eucharist
we are nourished by the bread of heaven
and invigorated with new wine.
May these gifts renew our lives,
that we may show your glory to all the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Sunday February 6, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13) • Psalm 138 • 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 • Luke 5:1-11

Collect

Loving God,
you have called forth disciples
to live and speak your word.
May we hear, respond,
and proclaim the good news of salvation,
which we know in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.

First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

The call narrative of Isaiah is set next to Luke 5 because both Isaiah and Peter experience the power of the Almighty, confess their sinfulness, and are sent to do the work of God. Such a pairing of an Old Testament with a New Testament passage exemplifies the similarities throughout the Bible. Thus can Paul say that Christ was raised in accordance with the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

Psalm 138

Having heard the story of the call of Isaiah, we respond by joining in Psalm 138. The text of the psalm places us in the temple along with Isaiah. Now we praise God's steadfast love, and as if we see the armies of Assyria and Babylon on our borders, we anticipate God's protection from all our enemies.

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Every Sunday is Easter, the Christian celebration of the resurrection. This text is also an option for Easter Day Year B. We are now those who experience the presence of the risen Christ. We are who we are by the grace of God.

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

We are now the crowd gathered to hear Jesus, the Word of God. We look to Jesus when we are in need. We kneel before Christ to confess our sinfulness. We are called to catch people. Luke's positive portrayal of the early Christian community is evident in his claim that the disciples "left everything and followed Jesus," and it supports the proposal that the Jesus' movement was an itinerant, perhaps unemployed and homeless, group awaiting the eschaton. What does this mean for us?

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.

So, they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of

Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Prayer over the Gifts

God of compassion and forgiveness,
receive our offering this day,
and make us one with him who is our peace,
Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Eternal God,
in you we find peace beyond all telling.
May we who share in this heavenly banquet
be instruments of your peace on earth,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 13, 2022

Readings: Jeremiah 14:5-10 • Psalm 1 • 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 • Luke 6:17-26

Collect

God, you root those who trust in you
by streams of healing water.
Release us from the bonds of disease,
free us from the power of evil,
and turn us from falsehood and illusion,
so that we may find the blessing of new life in you
through the power of Christ. **Amen.**
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.

First Reading: Jeremiah 14:5-10

This passage is set next to Luke 6 as another biblical example of the rhetorical pattern of Yes and No. Christians understand that the water that nourishes us is baptism, and the tree is the cross. The passage is similar to much Christian ethics in that it focuses not only on deeds, but also on the intentions of the heart.

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord.

They shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse— who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Psalm 1

Responding to the curses and blessings from Jeremiah, we join in the similar passage of Psalm 1, which also relies on the metaphors of the fruitful tree and the worthless plant. In Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Psalm 1 is printed on the same page (339) as the frontispiece of the Psalms, a depiction of the tree nourished by the pool of water, the tree that the church is meant to be.

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.

They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

We who are to bear fruit are empowered by our faith in Christ, who is the first fruit of God's recreation of the world that will come about in the final resurrection.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Gospel: Luke 6:17-26

We who are to bear fruit are empowered by our faith in Christ, who is the first fruit of God's recreation of the world that will come about in the final resurrection.

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. "Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

"Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
you are the strength of the weak
and the comfort of sufferers,
receive all we offer you this day;
turn our sickness into health
and our sorrow into joy.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of tender care,
in this eucharist we celebrate your love
for us and for all people.
May we show your love in our lives
and know its fulfilment in your presence.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany, February 20, 2022

Readings: Genesis 45:3-11, 15 • Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 • 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 • Luke 6:27-38

Collect

God of mercy,
keep before us the love you have revealed in your Son,
who prayed even for his enemies.
In our words and actions help us to follow his example,
so that we may transform hatred into love and selfishness into generosity;
through Jesus Christ, our great reward. Amen.
A Prayer Book for Australia (1995) alt.

First Reading: Genesis 45:3-11, 15

According to the Genesis narrative, Joseph is aided toward forgiving his brothers because he trusts that God had directed everything for the greater good. However, for many Christians, it is difficult to see the hand of God underneath the power of evil. Thus this story might be helpful to some contemporary believers, but to others not. Over the centuries Christians have seen Joseph as a picture of Christ, who forgives everyone, even those who crucified him, and through whom God saves the people from certain death.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.

God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

Having heard the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers, we join together to sing Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40. This instructional acrostic psalm begins with advice that fits with the story of Joseph, through whose grace his extended family found “safe pasture” and “abundance of peace.” Joseph’s faith allows him to refrain from anger and to await God’s vindication. By praying this psalm, we adopt for ourselves the model of Joseph.

Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

Refrain from anger and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.

But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their refuge in the time of trouble.

The Lord helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Paul's description of the resurrected body exemplifies the inability of human speech to articulate our faith in God's new creation. Paul writes about the seed dying, which is not literally true. None of our language about eternal life can be literally accurate. Yet together we "look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

The forgiveness from God that Luke stresses in his gospel has implications: we are to forgive others. Followers of Jesus are called into extraordinary ethics, not merely towards general goodness. The stark radicalism of these passages—love your enemies, offer the other cheek, give to everyone who begs, do not judge—has inspired some saints, such as Francis, and some movements, such as Christian pacifism, to adopt exceptional lifestyles that challenge the more ordinary life lived by most of us.

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
accept all we offer you this day.
Lead us to love you with all our heart,
and to love all people with your perfect love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Gracious God,
in the eucharist we celebrate your love
for us and for all people.
Grant that strengthened by these holy gifts,
we may show your love in our lives,
and know its fulfilment in your presence.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Last Sunday after the Epiphany (Transfiguration Sunday), February 27, 2022

Readings: Exodus 34:29-35 • Psalm 99 • 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 • Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

Collect

God of transfiguration,
transform our hearts and minds
so that we may hear your message,
and fill the world with your glory;
through Jesus Christ, the chosen one. **Amen.**

Propers Working Group (2015)

First Reading: Exodus 34:29-35

The story of Moses' veil is one of the three Old Testament passages that the lectionary places next to the Transfiguration. Moses can look directly at Jesus; the disciples are able to see the shining divinity of Christ; and in the resurrection by faith, so can we all.

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Psalm 99

Having heard the story of Moses' veil, we respond by joining in Psalm 99. This royal psalm, which lauds God as great, awesome, holy, and mighty, refers to Moses and the divine cloud. It is as we in our church building are now on "God's holy hill."

The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The Lord is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name. Holy is he!

Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Extol the Lord our God; worship at his footstool. Holy is he!

Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name. They cried to the Lord, and he answered them.

He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; they kept his decrees, and the statutes that he gave them.

O Lord our God, you answered them; you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Contemporary devout Jews do not think of the Torah's representation of God as shining so radiantly that they cannot approach it. However, Paul's encounter with the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:8) had led him to regard Judaism as a veil that could be removed in Christ. The Spirit of God means to transform us, just as Jesus was himself transformed by God. Paul's interpretation of passages from the Hebrew Scriptures begins the Christian practice of seeing in biblical Judaism

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth, we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

Gospel: Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

We too have encountered the presence of God, not on a Palestinian mountain, but in Jesus Christ. We too are called children of God, thanks to our baptism into Christ. Here on Sunday we listen to him, and for us now and at the end of time Jesus is the transforming manifestation of God. The optional verses are the one place in the three-year lectionary with the story of the healing of the epileptic boy. To proclaim both stories is to tie the inexpressible glory of God with the power of Jesus to exorcize evil.

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

[On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy God,
receive all we offer you this day,
and bring us to that radiant glory
which we see in the transfigured face
of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

May we who are partakers of his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know
his power to change and save.
We ask this in his name. **Amen.**

Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Readings: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 • Psalm 51:1-17 • 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 • Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Collect

O God,
you delight not in pomp and show,
but in a humble and contrite heart.
Overturn our love of worldly possessions
and fix our hearts more firmly on you,
so that, having nothing,
we may yet possess everything,
a treasure stored up for us in heaven. **Amen.**
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

The reading from Joel begins Lent with the stark call to repentance. The community is to meet together to weep and fast and pray. At the conclusion of this long season of Lent and Easter, the lectionary returns to a quote from Joel in Peter's sermon on Pentecost that promises the coming of the Spirit.

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near— a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, "Where is their God?""

Psalm 51:1-17

Psalm 51:1-17 is a penitential psalm that the Hebrew Bible puts in the mouth of King David when he repented of adultery and murder. This magnificent prayer for forgiveness is filled with body imagery and is appropriate for a day in which ashes are placed on our foreheads. Psalm 51 can be sung either at the outset of the service or after the first reading.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Ash Wednesday begins Lent as the acceptable time, the day of salvation, the time to be reconciled to God. During these weeks, the church meditates on what it means that God made Christ to be sin, that we might become the righteousness of God.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Since the Middle Ages, this text was proclaimed on Ash Wednesday, and its call for almsgiving, prayer, and fasting lays out what have been called the three disciplines of Lent. The discipline of fasting means not to denigrate the human body, but to symbolize the turn from self-indulgence to care for the neighbor and reliance on God. In the surprise of faith, we discover that these disciplines can accompany us to the alternative treasures that come from God alone.

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
turn us from sin to faithfulness.
Accept our offering,
and prepare us to celebrate
the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of compassion,
through your Son Jesus Christ
you reconciled your people to yourself.
Following his example of prayer and fasting,
may we obey you with willing hearts
and serve one another in holy love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Sunday in Lent, March 6, 2022

Readings: Deuteronomy 26:1-11 • Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 • Romans 10:8b-13 • Luke 4:1-13

Collect

God of the wilderness,
your Spirit leads us to face the truth,
unprotected and exposed:
in our times of trial
help us to resist the worship of empty power,
so that we may find our true food
in Jesus Christ, the broken bread. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009), alt.

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

We now are like the Israelites, in the desert of Lent, awaiting our arrival at Easter, the land of milk and honey. Yet each Sunday in the bread and wine we are already sharing the food of the Promised Land. As the ancient Israelites united in a covenant creed, so in Lent we renew our baptismal creed, and in spite of testing, we celebrate God's bounty to us.

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us."

When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God:

"A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me."

You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Having heard the ancient Israelite statement of faith, we ready ourselves for the gospel narrative of Jesus in his wilderness by joining in Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16. For our journey through the desert, we look to God as our refuge and habitation, and we trust that God's angels will guard us in all our ways.

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.

With long life I will satisfy them and show them my salvation.

Second Reading: Romans 10:8b-13

Our creed is triune: filled with the Spirit of our baptism, we call Jesus Lord. Inspired by God's generosity, our baptismal identity opens us up to all.

The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim!) Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

We too live in a wilderness where evil is ever before us. Yet we too have the Spirit of God and are called to worship only the Lord God. The gospel speaks the good news that Jesus is with us in all our times of testing.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Prayer over the Gifts

God our refuge and our strength,
receive all we offer you this day,
and through the death and resurrection of your Son
transform us to his likeness.
We ask this in his name. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Faithful God,
in this holy bread
you increase our faith and hope and love.
Lead us in the path of Christ
who is your Word of life.
We ask this in his name. **Amen.**

Second Sunday in Lent, March 13, 2022

Readings: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 • Psalm 27 • Philippians 3:17-4:1 • Luke 13:31-35

Collect

Hope beyond all human hope,
you promised Abraham and Sarah
descendants as numerous as the stars.
You promise light and salvation
in the midst of darkness and despair,
and redemption to a world that will not listen.
Gather us in tenderness
and open our ears to your word,
so that we may live faithfully and confidently in your promises.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002), alt.

First Reading: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

The Spirit of God, manifest as fire, visits us with the promise of life: a life imaged both as multiple descendants and as a homeland. Like Abram, we believe in this promise, and such faith counts as righteousness. In the cross, Christ takes on the lot of the slain animals.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.

Psalm 27

Having heard of God’s covenant with Abram, we respond by joining in Psalm 27. Although God is the light of fire, we are not afraid. We join with Abram in a sacrifice of praise. We need shelter in the hidden places of God: so we are ready to receive the gospel of God’s protecting wings. During Lent, we wait for the Lord.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! “Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek.

Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help.

Do not cast me off.

Do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Now we are those who are citizens of heaven—an activist image, an urban picture. During Lent we join with Paul in awaiting our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: “Lord,” the divine title we Christians give to “Jesus,” which is the given name “Joshua,” whom we honor as “Christ,” the one anointed by God to transform the world.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

We are like helpless chicks; a fox is lurking; and Christ is our mother hen. Lent is a time to cast out demons and to await the third day when Christ finishes his work of salvation. We give to Jesus Christ the divine “name of the Lord.”

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Prayer over the Gifts

God our provider,
you have not fed us with bread alone,
but with words of grace and life.
Bless us and these your gifts,
which we receive from your bounty,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
Evangelical Lutheran Worship (2006)

Prayer After Communion

Compassionate God,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage;
may our fasting be hunger for justice;
our alms, a making of peace;
and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts;
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**
Evangelical Lutheran Worship (2006) alt.

Third Sunday in Lent, March 20, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 55:1-9 • Psalm 63:1-8 • 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 • Luke 13:1-9

Collect

God of infinite goodness,
throughout the ages you have persevered
in claiming and reclaiming your people.
Renew for us your call to repentance,

surround us with witnesses to aid us in our journey,
and grant us the time to fashion our lives anew;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002), alt.

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

The poem from Second Isaiah provides apt background for the gospel from Luke. Human notions about punishment and mercy are different from God's exuberant covenant invitation to pardon and free food. Christians have interpreted this poem as a call to the sacraments of baptism and communion, and think of Lent as a time for seeking this God who wishes to be found.

HO! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalm 63:1-8

*Having heard Isaiah's poem calling us to the divine waters, we respond by singing **Psalm 63:1-8**. In the metaphors of this poem, we are thirsty, the land is dry, yet we anticipate the richest of foods that God provides. We are helped by God to search for God.*

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;

my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So, I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Paul sees Israelite history in light of Christ: “the rock was Christ.” The common religious idea that God punishes sinners is both cited and criticized, for Paul writes that none of us can claim an inherent goodness. For Christians, the cloud and the wind are signs of the Holy Spirit.

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So, if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Gospel: Luke 13:1-9

Soon Jesus himself, like some Galileans, will die at the hand of Pilate. Although the passage includes the commonplace religious idea that God punishes sinners, Luke’s rendition of the fig tree stresses instead divine mercy. We are granted yet another year: be glad for the manure.

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So, he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still, I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Prayer over the Gifts

Spring of life and Source of goodness,
receive all we offer you this day,
and bring us to the living water,
Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of our pilgrimage,
we have found the living water.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forth on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Fourth Sunday in Lent (Mothering Sunday), March 27, 2022

Readings: Joshua 5:9-12 • Psalm 32 • 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 • Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Collect

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004), alt

Second Collect: A Collect for Mothering Sunday

God of love,
passionate and strong, tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ, Mary’s child. Amen.

Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004), alt.

First Reading: Joshua 5:9-12

The two sons are each of us: we are all the foolish runaway who wastes what God has provided, and we are all the smug good guy who condemns the outsider. So it is that Augustine, and Luther after him, taught that all humans are sinful, all need the forgiveness that God offers. The description of a celebrative feast symbolizes the communal nature of the individual's forgiven life. Christians have interpreted this feast as a picture of holy communion.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal (a place of rolling) to this day.

While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Psalm 32

Having heard about the Israelites' feast in the Promised Land, we join together in Psalm 32. The great waters did not overwhelm us (v. 6). We are guided by God (v. 8). At today's feast, we rejoice in God's mercy (v. 11).

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore, let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

In this passage Paul speaks of people who are worried because they are not reconciled with God. It is difficult to judge for how many contemporary people is this the case. The passage is tied to the parable of the prodigal son because both brothers needed reconciliation, either with God or with the community. The new cosmic situation in which such bonds are possible was effected by Christ's resurrection.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The two sons are each of us: we are all the foolish runaway who wastes what God has provided, and we are all the smug good guy who condemns the outsider. So it is that Augustine, and Luther after him, taught that all humans are sinful, all need the forgiveness that God offers. The description of a celebrative feast symbolizes the communal nature of the individual's forgiven life. Christians have interpreted this feast as a picture of holy communion.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So, he told them this parable: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them.

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

“When he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” So, he set off and went to his father.

“While he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy and compassion, on this Mothering Sunday
your Word calls us home to faith and love.

Accept all we offer you this day,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Giver of life,
you enlighten all who come into the world.
Fill our hearts with the splendour of your grace,

that we may perfectly love you
and worthily praise your holy name,
through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Fifth Sunday in Lent April 3, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 43:16-21 • Psalm 126 • Philippians 3:4b-14 • John 12:1-8

Collect

Extravagant God,
lavishing your love on our poverty of heart:
inspire us to give with generosity,
to love life so that we may find it again,
and thus the world will be filled
with the fragrance of your love;
through Jesus Christ, who offers himself for us. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009), alt.

First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

The poem from Isaiah is set parallel to John's account of the anointing woman both for its references to water, since the excerpt reiterates Lent's baptismal emphasis, and for the idea of "a new thing": the honor that the story grants to a bold woman exemplifies the new thing that the early church saw as brought into existence by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians have seen this poem's references to water as suggestive of baptism.

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals, and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

Psalm: 126

Having heard the poem from Isaiah 43 about the coming of a new thing, we join together in Psalm 126. Psalm 126, in which we laugh with the returning exiles in communal joy for what the Lord has done. In Psalm 126, we call out for water, and our faces are watered with tears.

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

We are not Mary of Bethany, nor have we the religious pedigree of Paul, yet with both we know Christ and the meaning of his death and resurrection. Although Paul trusts in Christ for salvation, he also strains forward, pressing on, to be in Christ.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had; these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: John 12:1-8

Nearing the end of Lent, we join Jesus and his friends at table. John's account was crafted about six decades after the death of Jesus and means to proclaim the resurrection faith of first-century believers. The meal that Jesus' followers share always points to his death. Like Mark, John sometimes describes women as those who best understood the meaning of Christ's ministry. Yet the poor remain with us, and we are now to serve their needs as the way to honor the very body of our Lord.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver of life,
your Son has destroyed the power of death
for all those who believe in him.
Accept all we offer you this day
and strengthen us in faith and hope;
through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all the living. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of hope,
in this eucharist we have tasted the promise
of your heavenly banquet
and the richness of eternal life.
May we who bear witness to the death of your Son,
also proclaim the glory of his resurrection,
for he is Lord for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Palm Sunday (Liturgy of the Palms & the Liturgy of the Passion) April 10, 2022

Readings for the Liturgy of the Palms: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 • Luke 19:28-40

Readings for the Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a • Psalm 31:9-16 • Philippians 2:5-11
• Luke 22:14-23:56 [or Luke 23:1-49]

Collect

Holy and immortal God,
as we enter into this holy week
turn our hearts to Jerusalem,
so that, united with Christ and all the faithful,
we may enter the city not made with hands,
your promised realm of justice and peace,
eternal from age to age. Amen.

A Prayer Book for Australia (1995) alt.

READINGS FOR THE LITURGY OF THE PALMS:

Psalm: 118:1-2, 19-29

The palm procession may include the singing of Psalm 118, which is a communal praise to God for victory. Verses 19-29 were perhaps sung as part of a festive temple procession at the Feast of Tabernacles. The phrase “the stone that the builders rejected” has been seen by Christians as a reference to Christ. Although this Sunday is the start of Holy Week, Sunday is always the day of Christ’s resurrection: thus, “this is the day that the Lord has made,” and together we rejoice.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

Gospel: Luke 19:28-40

Holy Week begins with a palm procession and the proclamation of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem from the gospel of Luke. Christ enters the assembly now, just as he did then, and with the angels at his birth we praise his presence among us.

After he had said this, Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

READINGS FOR THE LITURGY OF THE PASSION:

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

Christians have seen in the Servant Songs descriptions of Jesus Christ. In Christian interpretation, the reading sounds as if Jesus is describing his own ill treatment. The emphasis on vindication is important for Luke's repeated theme of forgiveness.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who

are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me; therefore, I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Psalm: 31:9-16

Following a Christian use of the third Servant Song, Psalm 31:9-16 functions to reiterate the suffering of the servant and to recall the passion of Christ. We stand with Jesus in his trust of God. In the singing of this psalm, we hold before God all innocent victims who are suffering. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.

For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.”

My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

We join with Christians of the first century in a creedal poem: Christ humbled himself to death, and God has raised him as Lord. The ancient song is a summary, not only of our baptismal faith, but also of the Holy Week beginning today.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: Luke 22:14-23:56

Twice each Holy Week we hear the entire story of the betrayal, arrest, trials, abuse, and crucifixion of Jesus. Since it is Sunday, we listen to Luke, the synoptic gospel of this year. In Luke's gospel, the death of the messiah is the merciful act of a loving Savior who brings forgiveness to the whole world. Several of the details in Luke's narrative are among the most beloved in the church's memory of the passion. Proclaimed in the Sunday assembly, the passion of Christ leads to the eucharist, which is always a celebration of the resurrection.

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

The Dispute about Greatness

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

"You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

"Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." And he said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!" Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me."

Purse, Bag, and Sword

He said to them, "When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "No, not a thing." He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was counted among the lawless'; and indeed, what is written about me is being fulfilled." They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough."

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!"

Peter Denies Jesus

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down

together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

The Mocking and Beating of Jesus

Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" They kept heaping many other insults on him.

Jesus before the Council

When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"

Jesus before Pilate

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered, "You say so." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place."

Jesus before Herod

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

Jesus Sentenced to Death

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.”

Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So, Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus[m] there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then

he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The Death of Jesus

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

The Burial of Jesus

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
we pray to you through the suffering
and death of Jesus, your only Son.
Alone we can do nothing,
but through his sacrifice,
may we receive your love and mercy. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God our help and strength,
you have satisfied our hunger with this eucharistic food.
Strengthen our faith,
that through the death and resurrection of your Son,
we may be led to salvation,
for he is Lord now and for ever. **Amen.**

Monday in Holy Week Monday April 11th, 2022

Readings Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11; Hebrews 9:11-15; John 12:1-11

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son was crucified yet entered into glory,
may we, walking in the way of the cross,
find it is for us the way of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Psalm 36:5-11

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the strong mountains, your justice like the great deep; you save both mortals and beasts, O Lord.

How priceless is your love, O God! Your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

They feast upon the abundance of your house; you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light.

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, and your favour to those who are true of heart.

Let not the foot of the proud come near me, nor the hand of the wicked push me aside.

Second Reading Hebrews 9:11-15

When Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God! For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

Gospel John 12:1-11

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Prayer over the Gifts

Ruler of all creation,
your Son was anointed with costly oil
in preparation for death and the grave.
Receive all we offer you this day
for the sake of him who died that we might live,
Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen**

Prayer After Communion

God of our salvation,
in this eucharist
you have renewed us in your covenant.

Help us to follow in the path of him
who came to open the eyes of the blind
and bring prisoners out of darkness,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Tuesday in Holy Week Tuesday April 12th, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:20-36

Collect

O God,
by the passion of your blessed Son,
you made an instrument of shameful death
to be for us the means of life.
May our lives be so transformed by his passion
that we may witness to his grace;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Isaiah 49:1-7

Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." But I said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God." And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength - he says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the slave of rulers, "Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Psalm 71:1-14

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be ashamed.

In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; incline your ear to me and save me.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; you are my crag and my stronghold.

Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.

For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence since I was young.

I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength; my praise shall be always of you.

I have become a portent to many; but you are my refuge and my strength.

Let my mouth be full of your praise and your glory all the day long.

Do not cast me off in my old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.

For my enemies are talking against me, and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together.

They say, "Go after and seize the one whom God has forsaken; because there is no one who will save."

O God, be not far from me; come quickly to help me, O my God.

Let those who set themselves against me be put to shame and be disgraced; let those who seek to do me evil be covered with scorn and reproach.

But I shall always wait in patience, and shall praise you more and more.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world,

things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Gospel John 12:20-36

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light." After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

Prayer over the Gifts

Source of life,
accept all we offer you this day,
and turn us from sin and death,
that we may share in the tree of life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayer After Communion

Faithful God,
may we who share this banquet
glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
our salvation, life, and hope,
who reigns as Lord now and for ever. **Amen**

Wednesday in Holy Week April 13th, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9A; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32

Collect

Lord God,
your Son our Saviour gave his body to be whipped
and turned his face for men to spit upon.
Give your servants grace to accept suffering for his sake,
confident of the glory that will be revealed,
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Isaiah 50:4-9A

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens - wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Psalm 70

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.

Let those who seek my life be ashamed and altogether dismayed; let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back, because they are ashamed.

Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation say for ever, "Great is the Lord!"

But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me speedily, O God. You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry.

Second Reading Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

Gospel John 13:21-32

Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples the - one whom Jesus loved - was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once."

Prayer over the Gifts

God of glory,
may our worship this day
fix the eyes of our faith on Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of our new humanity,
who is seated at the right hand of your throne,
now and for ever. **Amen**

Prayer After Communion

God our help,
your Son was betrayed by one who called himself a friend.
May we who call him Lord
ever remain his faithful people,
for he lives and reigns with you now and for ever. **Amen**

Maundy Thursday April 14th, 2022

Readings Exodus 12:1-4 (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1, 10-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31B-35

Collect

O God,
your Son Jesus Christ
has left to us this meal of bread and wine
in which we share his body and his blood.
May we who celebrate this sign of his great love
show in our lives the fruits of his redemption;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Exodus 12:1-4 (5-10),

Most second-century Christians continued to keep the Jewish Passover. Over the decades, the celebration moved from the date of Pesach to the following Sunday, because the primary focus had morphed from a memorial of God's liberation of the ancient Israelites into Christian praise for Jesus' resurrection, which is always celebrated on a Sunday. At the seder meal of Passover still today, Jews tell the story of Exodus 12. Christians remember the old Passover as a parallel to the new Passover. Over the Three Days we keep the Christian Passover: Jesus is the lamb whose blood saves the people from death.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

[Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.]

This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings

and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Psalm 116:1, 10-17

We respond to the story of the Passover meal with our thanksgiving song. In the words of Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, we join the ancient Israelites by lifting the cup of salvation, our sacrifice of thanksgiving, for we too have been freed from our bonds. In anticipation of the footwashing, we call ourselves God's servants.

I love the Lord who has heard the voice of my supplication,

I believed, even when I said, "I have been brought very low."

In my distress I said, "No one can be trusted."

How shall I repay you, O Lord, for all the good things you have done for me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon your name.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all the people.

Precious in your sight, O Lord is the death of your servants.

O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the Lord.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Appropriately on Maundy Thursday the second reading is Paul's narration of Jesus' last supper with his disciples before his death. During the Three Days, our eucharist heeds Paul's advice: we share food equally, as does one loving body, and we see the meaning of the meal in the death of Christ.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Gospel John 13:1-17, 31B-35

The liturgy of the Three Days features the Gospel of John, the last-written canonical gospel, described since the second century as, like an eagle, the gospel that flies highest and sees farthest about the meaning of Jesus' life and death. In John, the meal signifies the body of Christ by connecting Christ with the literal bodies of the believing community by means of the servant's task of foot-washing. After the foot-washing, Jesus spoke about his coming death as the glorification of God.

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord - and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving God,
we spread this table
to remember the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, your Son.
Accept all we offer you this day.
Bind us together in his love
and in the love he has commanded us to bring one another;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer After Communion

Holy God,
source of all love,
on the night of his betrayal
Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment,
to love one another as he loved them.
Write this commandment in our hearts;
give us the will to serve others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave his life and died for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Good Friday: The Celebration of the Lord's Passion Friday April 15th, 2022

Readings Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

Collect

Almighty God,
look graciously, we pray, on this your family,
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ
was willing to be betrayed
and given into the hands of sinners,
and to suffer death upon the cross;
who now lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Reading Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Already in the writings of the New Testament, Christians viewed Jesus in light of the fourth Servant Song, seeing Christ's voluntary suffering as effecting salvation for all. Reading Isaiah 53 provides a contrast to John's passion narrative, since Isaiah stresses the suffering of one who is like a lamb led to the slaughter.

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him - so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals - so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Psalm 22

After hearing the fourth Servant Song, we sing Psalm 22, a prayer for help in times of crisis, suffering, and despair. According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus prayed this psalm while on the cross, and its imagery also influenced John's narrative details about the crucifixion. The Good Friday Service of the Word includes this prayer, as we plead to God along with Jesus on the cross and accompanied by all who suffer. However, as befitting the Three Days, the lament in Psalm 22 concludes in communal praise. To clarify this movement within the psalm, the chant line can be altered beginning with verse 23.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; by night as well, but I find no rest.

Yet you are the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

Our ancestors put their trust in you; they trusted, and you delivered them.

They cried out to you and were delivered; they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

But as for me, I am a worm and not human, scorned by all and despised by the people.

All who see me laugh me to scorn; they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

“You trusted in the Lord; let the Lord deliver you; let God rescue you, if God delights in you.”

Yet you are the one who took me out of the womb, and kept me safe upon my mother’s breast.

I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; you were my God when I was still in my mother’s womb.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

Many young bulls encircle me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me.

They open wide their jaws at me, like a ravening and a roaring lion.

I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; my heart within my breast is melting wax.

My mouth is dried out like a potsherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.

Packs of dogs close me in and gangs of evildoers circle around me; they pierce my hands and my feet.

I can count all my bones while they stare and gloat over me.

They divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

Be not far away, O Lord; you are my strength; hasten to help me.

Save me from the sword, my life from the power of the dog.

Save me from the lion’s mouth, my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.

I will declare your name to my kindred; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

Praise the Lord, you that fear God; stand in awe of God, O offspring of Israel; all you of Jacob's line, give glory.

For God does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither turns away from them; when they cry to the Lord, they are heard.

My praise is of God in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship the Lord.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall give praise: "May your heart live for ever!"

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall bow before God.

For sovereignty belongs to the Lord, who rules over the nations.

To God alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust fall before God.

My soul shall live for God; my descendants shall serve God; they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn the saving deeds that God has done.

Second Reading Hebrews 10:16-25

The imagery in Isaiah that describes the sacrificial lamb is contrasted with the imagery in Hebrews, in which Christ is the high priest whose ministry of prayer, life of obedience, and willingness to suffer for others constitute his appeal to God for our forgiveness.

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds," he also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Gospel John 18:1-19:42

To make clear that Christians are not to despair at the memorial of Jesus' death, the gospel reading for Good Friday is the triumphant account in John 18–19. Christians gather on this day believing that Christ conquered death, and John's account with its many unique details proclaims that this Jesus is the divine I am, whose death finishes the work of effecting eternal life.

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed. Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this

man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in

one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfil what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced." After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy God,
your Son Jesus Christ carried our sins
in his own body on the tree,
so that we might have life.
May we and all who remember this day
find new life in him,
now and in the world to come,
where he lives with you and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. **Amen**

Prayer After Communion

Almighty and eternal God,
you have restored us to life
by the triumphant death

Readings for January to June 2022 (Liturgical Year C)

and resurrection of Christ.
Continue this healing work within us.
May we who partake of this mystery
never cease to give you dedicated service.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Holy Saturday April 16th, 2022

Readings: Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24; Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matthew 27:57-66 OR
John 19:38-42

Collect

O God,
creator of heaven and earth,
as the crucified body of your dear Son
was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath,
so may we await with him the coming of the third day,
and rise with him to newness of life;
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

First Reading Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength.

My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

Make your face to shine upon your servant, and in your loving-kindness save me.”

Second Reading 1 Peter 4:1-8

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does. The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

Gospel Matthew 27:57-66

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

John 19:38-42

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Resurrection of our Lord: Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022

Readings: Acts 10:34-43 • Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 • 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 • John 20:1-18

Collect

O God of the living,
you made the tomb of death
the womb from which you bring forth your Son,
the first-born of a new creation:
make us joyful witnesses to this good news,
so that all humanity may one day gather
at the feast of new life in that kingdom
where you reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**
Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.

First Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Throughout the eight Sundays of the fifty days of Easter from Easter Day through Pentecost, the three-year lectionary appoints first readings from Acts. The idea is that the Spirit extended the power of the resurrection from the empty tomb to the whole Christian church, spreading throughout the Greco-Roman world. Thus we can think of each Sunday's reading from Acts as another telling of the resurrection. In the sermon credited to Peter in Acts 10, Luke referred to the witnesses of the resurrection who "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." We believers see ourselves as among these witnesses.

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Psalm: 118:1-2, 14-24

The psalm response for the day is Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, a song of thanksgiving for victory. Although the psalm is cast in the first-person singular, the setting is after a battle, in which “the right hand of the Lord,” presumably brandishing a weapon, has conquered. Christians understand that Christ has conquered the powers of sin and death, and medieval art depicted Christ rising from the tomb holding up a cross-shaped standard. The “rejected stone” is Christ, now the cornerstone of the church, on whom the baptized build their lives; this resurrection day is the day that the Lord God has made. It is interesting that in 1559, when Elizabeth I was notified of the death of Queen Mary, she received the news that she was no longer a rejected stone but finally acclaimed queen by calling out v. 23 of this psalm: “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say, “His steadfast love endures forever.”

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;

the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

The reading from Isaiah 65 relies on an ancient belief about the perfection of the first creation, and this passage from Paul suggests the perfection of a final creation. Here we are in the middle, with death and other enemies still powerful forces to contend with. We hope in Christ, the first fruit of the tree of life.

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Gospel: John 20:1-18

In John, from Jesus' death comes life: thus he was buried in a garden and, although at first not recognized by Mary, he manifests his identity to her and announces his ascension to God. Especially medieval Christians treasured this resurrection account for the tenderness suggested between Christ and the woman. The baptized life of the Christian was described as just such an encounter with the risen Christ in a well-watered garden.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So, she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Prayer over the Gifts

Blessed are you, O God,
ruler of heaven and earth.
Day by day you shower us with blessings.
As you have raised us to new life in Christ,
give us glad and generous hearts,
ready to praise you and to respond to those in need,
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**
Evangelical Lutheran Worship (2006) alt.

Prayer After Communion

Life-giving God,
in the mystery of Christ's resurrection
you send light to conquer darkness,
water to give new life,
and the bread of life to nourish your people.
Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection,
so that we may show your glory to all the world,
through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**
Evangelical Lutheran Worship (2006) alt.

Second Sunday of Easter April 24, 2022

Readings: Acts 5:27-32 • Psalm 118:14-29 [or Psalm 150] • Revelation 1:4-8 • John 20:19-31

Collect

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked,
no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
so that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God, the Source of all life. **Amen.**
Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004) alt.

First Reading: Acts 5:27-32

Throughout the Sundays of the fifty days of Easter, passages from Acts proclaim the ongoing power of Christ's resurrection, which is not a single day's event, but is the continuing power of God in the believing community. In this excerpt, the believers continue the ministry of Christ by testifying publicly to his death and resurrection with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us."

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

Psalm: 118:14-29

Having heard Peter's testimony to his faith in Christ's resurrection, we join to sing Psalm 118:14-29, which continues the psalm sung on Easter Day. As contemporary Christians, we sing an ancient battle song, in which the resurrection is the Lord's victory. Christ is the cornerstone; "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord," we cry out here and at the Lord's table; so we continue the joyous Easter procession. An option is Psalm 150, in which our song of praise is accompanied by many musical instruments. We can think of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, and drum of Nebuchadnezzar's court now praising the risen Christ.

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you.

You are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

His steadfast love endures forever.

Second Reading: Revelation 1:4-8

During the fifty days of Easter in year C, the second readings are exultant passages from the book of Revelation. It is as if in the resurrection of Christ, we all are already gathered around the heavenly throne with all the saints and angels to praise the victory of the Lamb. Yet at the same time, we look forward to the end of time, when the agonies described in Revelation will be no more, for believers will follow Christ to be born again from the dead. This creedal excerpt sets the stage for the subsequent six selections.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

The church continues the pattern alluded to in John's gospel, of assembling on the first day of the week to receive the Spirit of the cross and resurrection and to exchange the peace of Christ. As we expect of John, the narrative in chapter 20 testifies to the identity of Christ as Lord and God. For Christians, to touch Christ is to touch God, and we do this in the flesh of our neighbor's hand at the peace and with the bread of Christ in our palm at communion.'

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Prayer over the Gifts

God of grace,
you have freed us from our sins
and made us a kingdom in your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Accept all we offer you this day,
and strengthen us in the new life you have given us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Radiant God,
we have seen with our eyes
and touched with our hands
the bread of life.
Strengthen our faith
that we may grow in love for you and for each other;
through Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

Third Sunday of Easter May 1, 2022

Readings: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20) • Psalm 30 • Revelation 5:11-14 • John 21:1-19

Collect

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God, who raises the dead to life. **Amen.**
Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004) alt.

First Reading: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

Saul, forgiven for his previous actions, is called and then baptized to be a follower of Jesus, the Son of God. The early church referred to baptism as enlightenment, for all believers were blind but now can see. Like Saul, we too are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you

persecute me?” He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”

The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

Psalm 30

Having heard the story of Christ's appearance to Saul, we join together in Psalm 30. Through these words we can become like Saul, who experiences God's favor. As well, we can rejoice, along with the Christians in Damascus, that God has saved us from our enemies. It's Easter, and we can dance for joy.

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

As for me, I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.” By your favor, O Lord, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication: “What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?”

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me! O Lord, be my helper!" You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

Second Reading: Revelation 5:11-14

Believers are invited into the vision of the risen Christ reigning over all things. The vision means to comfort Christians, who know that life includes persecutions, aging, and death, with the apocalyptic message that at the end of time, all evil will be conquered, and everything that exists will worship God.

When I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Gospel: John 21:1-19

Christ appears to his followers, both the loyal and the disloyal, while they are at work, and like them, we realize his presence especially in the breaking of the bread. The episode of Peter's denial during the passion is better known than this account of Christ's forgiveness and subsequent commissioning of Peter to follow Christ through life and death. "Come and have breakfast, and then follow me," says the risen Christ, to Peter and to us all.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So, Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Prayer over the Gifts

Creator of all,
you wash away our sins in water,
you give us new birth by the Spirit,
and redeem us in the blood of Christ.
As we celebrate the resurrection,
renew your gift of life within us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Author of life divine,
in the breaking of bread, we know the risen Lord.
Feed us always in these mysteries,

that we may show your glory to all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Fourth Sunday of Easter May 8, 2022

Readings: Acts 9:36-43 • Psalm 23 • Revelation 7:9-17 • John 10:22-30

Collect

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of the flock:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
so that all your people may be gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God, the Shepherd of Israel. **Amen.**
Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004) alt.

First Reading: Acts 9:36-43

During the Sundays of Easter, the first readings come from Acts, to emphasize the ongoing power of Christ's resurrection through the Spirit. Here a disciple is praised for her contributions to a charity (albeit a gender-stereotyped one), and Peter aided by prayer can raise the dead. Resuscitation of a corpse is not what the New Testament means by resurrection. Yet those who are in Christ can experience a renewed life.

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time, she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs.

Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So, Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Psalm 23

The most beloved psalm in Christian use, Psalm 23, was interpreted in the fourth century as a description of the baptized life. The green pastures are the time of baptismal catechesis; the still waters are the font; the soul is restored by the infusion of the Spirit; the right pathways are the moral life of the transformed believer; God's rod and staff are our guidance for Christian living; the table is the eucharist, with a cup overflowing with mercy; the house of the Lord is the community of the church, within which we enjoy God's goodness. We thus can think of the first person pronouns—"I" and "me"—as referring to the one body of Christ.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me.

In the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Second Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

Martyrdoms and other "great ordeals" continue in the twenty-first century. Christians have interpreted the "springs of the water of life" as baptism. This Sunday, as we gather around the table, we are singing with the martyrs songs of praise. The Lamb at the center of the throne is the bread and wine we share.

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might

be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Gospel: John 10:22-30

Concluding the three years of reading John 10 on the fourth Sunday of Easter, we praise the risen Christ as the shepherd whose voice calls us to follow him into eternal life. The entire flock is in the hand of Christ, which is God's hand. The sheep are given life, but they must follow him there.

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So, the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

Prayer over the Gifts

God of loving care,
you spread before us the table of life,
and give us the cup of salvation to drink.
Keep us always in the fold of your Son Jesus Christ,
our Saviour and our shepherd. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of steadfast love,
watch over the Church redeemed by the blood of your Son.
May we who share in these holy mysteries
come safely to your eternal kingdom,

where there is one flock and one shepherd.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 15, 2022

Readings: Acts 11:1-18 • Psalm 148 • Revelation 21:1-6 • John 13:31-35

Collect

God of glory,
whose love took the shadowed road of death
and found life in the darkness:
may his love be our law,
so that, undimmed by fear,
we may witness to the power of new birth,
through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009) alt

First Reading: Acts 11:1-18

Throughout the centuries, Christians have debated the meaning of church membership and its openness to nonmembers. So Peter's vision continues to challenge the church: what in our time and in our religious community are the rules that separate insiders from outsiders? Does Luke intend that Christians have no such barriers? Christians have not agreed to what extent Luke's call to repentance (v. 18) fits with the elimination of any traditions of religion or morality.

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"

Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance, I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely, I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.'

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

Psalm 148

Having heard that in Christ historic barriers are removed, we praise God with the exultant Psalm 148, which is appointed also for the first Sunday after Christmas. In this poem, all the created earth (even those sea monsters that will be eliminated at the end of time, according to the book of Revelation!) join the church in praise. Like Peter, we are surprised by the inclusivity within God's dominion.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike; old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!

Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-6

Our hope is in God, who promises to make all things new for the believing community. God's promises are always realized both now and in the future, and so in some ways we are already in the new Jerusalem, married to God, living without sorrow and death.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Gospel: John 13:31-35

The loving community of the church manifests the glory of God, which surprisingly is seen in the passion and death of Christ. That Christ, the Son of God, submitted to death reveals a loving, sacrificing God who nurtures a community that also is known for its mutual love and service. In about 200 ce Tertullian wrote that outsiders said of Christians, "See how they love one another," a testimony especially to Christian care for the poor, the sick and the dying. In such love is the glory of God.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now, I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
you show us your way
and give us your divine life.
May everything we do
be directed by the knowledge of your truth.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of love,
in this eucharist we have heard your truth
and shared in your life.
May we always walk in your way,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Sixth Sunday of Easter May 22, 2022

Readings: Acts 16:9-15 • Psalm 67 • Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5 • John 14:23-29 [or John 5:1-9]

Collect

Holy One,
you breathe the word of love
and the promise of new creation
into the secret places of our lives.
Teach us the costly way of fearless love and priceless peace;
through Jesus Christ, who dwells in us. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009) alt.

First Reading: Acts 16:9-15

Appealing not only to his Gentile audience but also to us, Luke tells of women of means who function independently and support the Christian mission. We join Lydia in the community of the praying women, and we hope to remain, with her, faithful to the Lord.

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by

the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Psalm 67

Having heard of the faith of Lydia, we join together in singing Psalm 67. Like Lydia, most Christians are not originally Jews, but come from what the psalmist calls "the nations," "the ends of the earth." In Psalm 67, they too are praising God.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us.

May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.

Second Reading: Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

One stunning detail about the new Jerusalem is its openness to all people, in contrast to human cities where gates tried to protect residents from enemy outsiders. We have already begun to live in this very city during our weekly worship: the crucifix we see is our tree of life, the font is the river of life, and on the forehead of all the baptized is shining the mysterious and powerful name of God.

In the spirit, one of the seven angels carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Gospel: John 14:23-29

This option for the gospel emphasizes the comforting presence of the triune God within the believing community. We are enjoined to keep God’s word (what Lutherans call “law”), and we are given the gospel promise that God will live within us.

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

Prayer over the Gifts

God of glory,
accept all we offer you this day,
and bring us to that eternal city of love and light,
where Christ is King.
We ask this in his name. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

God of resurrection,
you restored us to life
by raising your Son from death.
May we who receive this sacrament
always be strengthened to do your will,
in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

The Ascension of the Lord May 26, 2022

Readings: Acts 1:1-11 • Psalm 47 [or Psalm 93] • Ephesians 1:15-23 • Luke 24:44-53

Collect

Almighty God,
our Saviour Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven
that he might rule over all things.
Keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit
and in the bond of his peace,
and bring the whole of creation
to worship at his feet,
he who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Angelic figures tell the apostles not to look up toward heaven, yet this has sometimes become the content of this Thursday's worship. Rather, Acts calls us to receive the Holy Spirit and live as Christ's witnesses throughout the whole world.

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So, when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Psalm 47

On Ascension Day, the church sings an ancient enthronement song, Psalm 47. Going “up” probably originally referred to the Ark of the Covenant being carried in procession, and throughout the royal psalm, the king is imagined as “up,” “over,” and “highly exalted.” According to many ancient royal cosmologies, the king is high up on the pyramid, directly under the divinity, who is at the very top. (The common people support the pyramid on their backs and thus need to keep to their place, lest the entire pyramid topple down around them.) Christians use the image of God on high to praise Christ as the awesome one.

Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy. For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth. He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth. Sing praises with a psalm.

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23

The prayer presents several images useful for Ascension Day: God’s power is at work in Christ; Christ rules over all things; Christ’s name is revered above all others; Christ’s body as it were extends from the heavens to the earth—a kind of pillar of the universe; Christ fills all things.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53

The ascension of Christ to God is another way that Luke described the resurrection. From Christ's death and resurrection come forgiveness of sins and the power of the Holy Spirit. Since we no longer believe that God lives up in the sky, two fourth-century ways that theologians have spoken of the ascension are particularly helpful: Christ rose from death to fill the cosmos, and Christ ascended into the eucharist. Luther spoke of Christ's ubiquity, that is, that Christ is in the bread, in the community, indeed, in all things.

Then Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
our Saviour Jesus Christ
has promised to be with us until the end of time.
Accept all we offer you this day,
and renew us in his transfigured life;

for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Eternal Giver of love and power,
our redeemer Jesus Christ
has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom.
Confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Pentecost June 5, 2022

Readings: Acts 2:1-21 [or Genesis 11:1-9] • Psalm 104:24-34, 35b • Romans 8:14-17 [or Acts 2:1-21] • John 14:8-17, (25-27)

Collect

Holy Spirit,
sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire:
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
Common Worship: Additional Collects (2004)

First Reading: Acts 2:1-21

The narrative of Pentecost exemplifies Luke's expert storytelling ability. The reading includes hidden references to the Hebrew Bible, a citation from the prophets, a contemporary geography lesson, an account of miracles, and the folksy detail of the accusation of drunkenness. As we await the eschatological end of all things, we are now those who prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. Although some Christians connect glossolalia with Pentecost, Luke describes these "tongues" as other languages with which to evangelize the whole world. Christians have sought to do just this, even reducing many oral languages to writing so as to be able to create a written text of the Bible.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

In the psalm for the day, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, Christians usually translate the Hebrew of verse 30 with the term "Spirit," rather than breath or wind. The psalm praises God the creator, whose Spirit continually creates all that lives. Verses 27-28 have become part of a common table prayer. In an example of the lectionary's use of the Bible, the condemnation of verse 35a is omitted.

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

When you send forth your spirit, Lord, you renew the face of the Earth.

These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, Lord, you renew the face of the Earth.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works— who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

When you send forth your spirit, Lord, you renew the face of the Earth.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!

When you send forth your spirit, Lord, you renew the face of the Earth.

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-17

In Paul's discussion of the Spirit, the imagery of adoption connects the believers with Christ, the Son of God. "Abba" fits well with this discussion of adoption, since it is a child's form of address to the parent. Believers will receive the same relationship with God that Christ had: contrary to the first-century religious expectation, they stand before God without fear.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Gospel: John 14:8-17

The gospel of John is appointed for most of the primary festivals of the liturgical year because of John's high Christology and its centrality in the development of Christian doctrine. John says theologically the narrative of Pentecost: God sends the Spirit into the gathered community so that it can know the truth of Christ's resurrection. Christian theology subsumed John's description of the Advocate into its understanding of the Holy Spirit, and passages such as this led to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Spirit is now the link between the believing community and God.

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater

works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver of life,
receive all we offer you this day.
Let the Spirit you bestow on your Church
continue to work in the world
through the hearts of all who believe.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Refiner, illuminator
may we who have received this eucharist
live in the unity of your Holy Spirit,
that we may show forth his gifts to all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Trinity Sunday June 12, 2022

Readings: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 and Psalm 8 • Romans 5:1-5 • John 16:12-15

Collect

Holy and undivided Trinity,
you are an eternal harmony of gift and response:
through the uncreated Word and the Spirit of truth
embrace us and all creation in your extravagant love;
through the Wisdom of God,
who raises her voice to call us to life. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009) alt.

First Reading: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Christ, to whom the Trinity attests, was likened by the church fathers to this Woman Wisdom. Here already God is described as a plurality. For Christians, God is triune from the beginning: thus traditional biblical translations saw in Genesis 1:2-3 the Creator God, the Spirit (ruah), and the Word (“and God said”). In Christianity, the created world is very good, filled with the goodness of the triune Creator.

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth— when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world’s first bits of soil.

When he established the heavens, I was there, when God drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Psalm 8

For scholars who translate the Psalter, Psalm 8 poses an interesting problem. The Hebrew of verse 4 means “human beings,” and thus in many recent translations, the psalm praises God for the creation of especially humankind who are called to praise the name of the “Lord our Lord,” YHWH Adonai. Thus this psalm is an apt response to the poem about creation in Proverbs. Yet because the ancient Hebrew for “mortals” is a masculine singular noun, like the English word “man” used to function, the psalm became important for early Trinitarian theologians as a way to describe the relationship of the Lord to the “son of man,” that is, Christ. Thus this psalm is also an apt poem for Trinity Sunday.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands.

You have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-5

Paul's point is clear and currently rather counter-cultural: God is available not to everyone, but to us through Jesus Christ, through whom we receive God's Spirit. The Spirit is not just any spirit, but a spirit that comes through the cross.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Gospel: John 16:12-15

That we are called Christian, the ones marked by Christ, is clear in this passage: the Father and the Spirit declare the truth we have witnessed in the crucified and risen Christ. Today in worship we receive this truth in the proclamation of this word.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Prayer over the Gifts

Living God, three in one and one in three
receive all we offer you this day.

Grant that hearing your word and responding to your Spirit,
we may share in your dynamic divine life.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Almighty and eternal God,
may we who have received this eucharist
worship you in all we do,
and proclaim the glory of your majesty.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord and

confident in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Second Sunday after Pentecost June 19, 2022

Readings: 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a and Psalm 42 and 43 • [Isaiah 65:1-9 and Psalm 22:19-28] • Galatians 3:23-29 • Luke 8:26-39

Collect

Lord, you step upon on our guarded shore
and confront our chaos:
may we who are divided and overwhelmed by the forces of death
learn from you to speak our own name
and proclaim your works of life;
through Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God. **Amen.**
Prayers for an Inclusive Church (2009) alt.

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a

Today's episode in the Elijah cycle is 1 Kings 19:1-4 [5-7] 8-15a, the story of Elijah encountering God in "a sound of sheer silence." Having incited the slaughter of the prophets of Baal, Elijah is escaping Queen Jezebel's wrath: many places in the Old Testament blame evil and apostasy on the influence of foreign women. In today's reading, it would be odd to omit verses 5-7, since it is central to the narrative that through the ministrations of an angel God strengthens Elijah for the forty-day journey to Horeb. Horeb is Sinai, the mountain that in Hebrew tradition is the place of divine theophany. Thus the story's set-up has Elijah reenacting the people of Israel. Yet, so typical of the Scriptures, there is then a reversal: God is manifest not in fire and smoke, but in the nothingness of their absence. Elijah's moaning and groaning about his personal situation is ignored as God sends him back to his ministry. Christians have used this story in many ways: as an example that God will strengthen us for our unpleasant tasks, as an image of God's feeding us with bread and wine, as a picture of the forty days of Lent, and as a sign of the paradox of the cross, that in God's silence may be God's word.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."

He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.”

He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” Then the Lord said to him, “Go, return on your way.”

Psalm 42 and 43

Psalm 42:1—43:5 were originally a single psalm, which fit well as a response to the story of Elijah at Horeb. Having heard of Elijah’s hunger, we sing of thirsting for God. Having heard of Elijah’s fear of Jezebel, we ask God for refuge. Having heard of Jezebel’s threat, we place our hope in God.

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?”

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I walk about mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?”

As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me!

For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you cast me off? Why must I walk about mournfully because of the oppression of the enemy?

O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.

I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Second Reading: Galatians 3:23-29

Luke's writings assume that life continued under the distinctions of Jew and Greek, but several decades prior, Paul had called the Christian community to live beyond these categories. The rejection of the ethnic categories of Jew and Greek occupied Christian consciousness in the first century. Facing the distinctions of "slave and free" came in the nineteenth century, and issues relating to "male and female" continue into the twenty-first century. Much religious practice assists persons to live in their culture; yet Paul challenges his readers to be shockingly counter-cultural.

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring; heirs according to the promise.

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

Situated in an alien worldview, in which for example demons cause insanity, talk with Jesus, and reside in an underground level of the earth, the graphic pig story may strike us as somewhat comic. Yet the narrative calls us to join the madman in acclaiming Christ as Son of God and, now that we are healed, in telling others what Jesus has done for us. The white robe of our baptism is like the clothing in which we sit at the feet of Jesus.

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time, he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So, he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So, he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So, he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Prayer over the Gifts

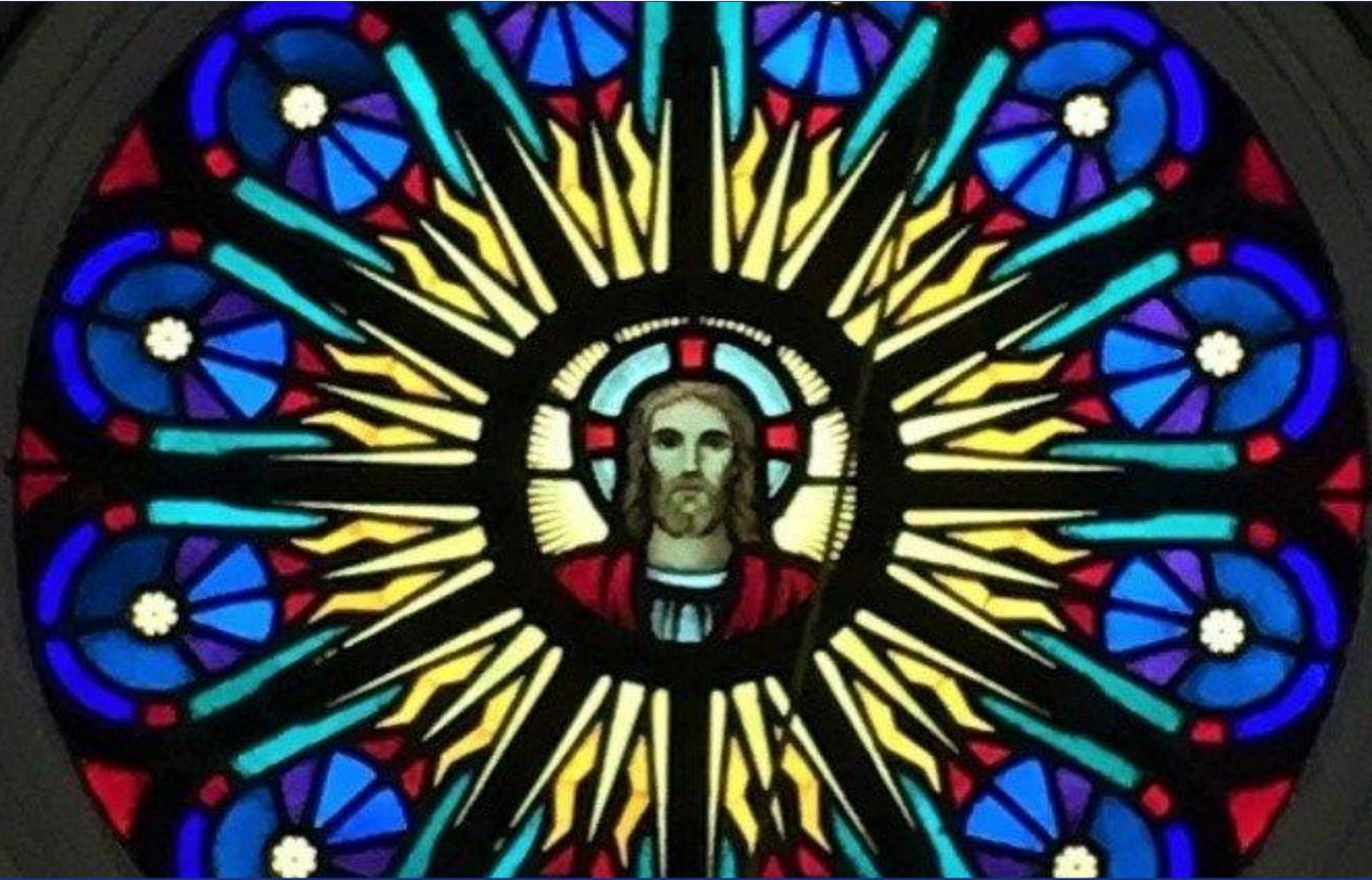
Eternal God,
you have made our Saviour Jesus Christ
the head of all creation.
Receive all we offer you this day
and renew us in his risen life,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Almighty God,
guide and protect your people
who share in this sacred mystery,

Readings for January to June 2022 (Liturgical Year C)

and keep us always in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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