



2020

Sunday Readings for
January–May 2023
Revised Common Lectionary
Year A



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH
A People United in Justice and Love

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Second Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) January 15, 2023

Readings

ISAIAH 49:1-7; PSALM 40:1-12; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9; JOHN 1:29-42

Collect

Almighty God,
 your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
 is the light of the world.
 May your people,
 illumined by your word and sacraments,
 shine with the radiance of his glory,
 that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
 to the ends of the earth;
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: ISAIAH 49:1-7

The second Servant Song is appointed for this day to develop further the meaning of Jesus Christ and the significance of baptism for the Christians. The church has seen in the Servant Songs descriptions of Jesus Christ, who himself is the light of the nations, and has applied this passage also to baptism, as God calls the baptized to be servants to bring light to the world.

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 40:1-12

I waited patiently upon the Lord who stooped to me and heard my cry.

God lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet on a high cliff and made my footing sure.

God put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are they who trust in the Lord! they do not resort to evil spirits or turn to false gods.

Great things are they that you have done, O Lord my God! how great your wonders and your plans for us! There is none who can be compared with you. Oh, that I could make them known and tell them, but they are more than I can count.

In sacrifice and offering you take no pleasure (you have given me ears to hear you); burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required.

And so I said, "Behold, I come. In the roll of the book it is written concerning me:

'I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep within my heart.'

I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I did not restrain my lips; and that, O Lord, you know.

Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance; I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation.

You are the Lord; do not withhold your compassion from me; let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever.

For innumerable troubles have crowded upon me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me.

Second Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

Over the course of the three years in the weeks between Epiphany and Lent, the lectionary appoints semicontinuous readings from 1 Corinthians, chosen because this seminal letter of Paul describes the communal life expected among believers and calls them to lives of love. Today's selection speaks of the church as called to be saints who call upon Jesus' name, one way that Christians have described baptism.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To

the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel: JOHN 1:29-42

As is often the case, John's gospel presents a more developed Christology than do the synoptic gospels. John's account of Jesus' baptism develops the meaning of the baptism by providing more Christological titles. Christ is the sacrificial lamb, the teacher from God, and the one anointed to save the world.

The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

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.

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.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) January 22, 2024**Readings**

ISAIAH 9:1-4; PSALM 27:1, 5-13; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18; MATTHEW 4:12-23

Collect

Almighty God,
 by grace alone you call us
 and accept us in your service.
 Strengthen us by your Spirit,
 and make us worthy of your call;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading - ISAIAH 9:1-4

As is sometimes the case, the reading provides the Old Testament passage that is cited in the gospel. Along with Matthew, Christians have seen in Jesus Christ the great light that the prophet anticipates and the salvation God promised. Most of this passage is appointed also for Christmas Eve. On this Sunday, the passage stresses the light of Jesus' ministry.

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Psalms 27:1, 5-13

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

For in the day of trouble, O God, you shall keep me safe in your shelter; you shall hide me in the secrecy of your dwelling and set me high upon a rock.

Even now you lift up my head above my enemies round about me. Therefore I will offer in your dwelling an oblation with sounds of great gladness; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call; have mercy on me and answer me.

You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not your face from me, nor turn away your servant in displeasure. You have been my helper; cast me not away; do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will sustain me.

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

Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen up against me, and also those who speak malice.

What if I had not believed that I should see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!

Second Reading 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18

In today's semicontinuous reading of 1 Corinthians, Paul writes that baptism is about the death of Christ and the power of God, not about identification with quarreling groups of Christian believers. The twenty-first-century church, with its myriad denominations, humbly hears Paul addressing our current fractured situation

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of

Christ might not be emptied of its power. For 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.

Gospel - MATTHEW 4:12-23

Matthew refers to Jesus as the great light and stresses the immediacy of the fishermen's obedience to Jesus' call. Jesus' call is to repentance. Over the centuries, Christian theologians have variously understood what Matthew means by "the kingdom of heaven."

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles - the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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.

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 service in your world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) January 29, 2023

Readings

MICAH 6:1-8; PSALM 15; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31; MATTHEW 5:1-12

Collect

Living God,
in Christ you make all things new.
Transform the poverty of our nature
by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading - MICAH 6:1-8

Christians recognize that Jesus' call to a life of justice follows in the Old Testament tradition, in which prophets spoke God's word of righteous living to a people who had received God's saving deeds. The Micah passage parallels the Beatitudes.

Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord." "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm 15

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart.

There is no guile upon their tongue; they do no evil to a friend; they do not heap contempt upon a neighbour.

In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honour those who fear the Lord. They have sworn to do no wrong and do not take back their word.

They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take a bribe against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

Second Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31

The cross of Christ represents a paradoxical divine wisdom that is alien to the world's common understanding of reality. We stand within the righteousness that comes to us through the cross as we hear the stern Sermon on the Mount.

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: MATTHEW 5:1-12

The Beatitudes describe the rigorous values that according to Matthew characterize the Christian life. In the service of the word, we hear Matthew's description of life within God's kingdom, and we turn for forgiveness and renewal in the service of holy communion. Jesus Christ is himself the embodiment of the Beatitudes.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in

spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

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.

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.

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) February 5, 2023

Readings

ISAIAH 58:1-9A (9B-12); PSALM 112:1-9 (10); 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-12 (13-16); MATTHEW 5:13-20

Collect

Merciful Lord,
 grant to your faithful people pardon and peace,
 that we may be cleansed from all our sins
 and serve you with a quiet mind;
 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 58:1-9A (9B-12)

This prophetic passage is appointed as background to Matthew's words. Jesus reiterates the prophet's call to justice and the biblical metaphor of light. Christians see in Jesus the continuation and culmination of the Jewish hope for righteousness. This passage is also an optional reading for Ash Wednesday.

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

[If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.]

Psalm 112:1-9 (10)

Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the Lord and have great delight in the divine commandments!

Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches will be in their house, and their righteousness will last for ever.

Light shines in the darkness for the upright; the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

It is good for them to be generous in lending and to manage their affairs with justice.
For they will never be shaken; the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.

They will not be afraid of any evil rumours; their heart is right; they put their trust in the Lord.

Their heart is established and will not shrink, until they see their desire upon their enemies.

They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast for ever; they will hold up their head with honour.

The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash their teeth and pine away; the desires of the wicked will perish.

Second Reading 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-12 (13-16)

The "spirit of the world" that Paul writes about is precisely what Matthew is urging Christians to reject in favor of a radically transformed life in the Spirit. Christians see in Paul's description of the actions of God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit the foundation of the later doctrine of the Trinity.

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" - these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.])

Gospel: MATTHEW 5:13-20

Christians receive the call to be salt and light, for the gospel means to transform not merely the self or the members of the church, but the entire world. The impossibility of our living such a perfect life makes us rely on the mercy of God and the power of the Spirit.

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

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.

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.

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) February 12, 2023

Readings

DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20 PSALM 119:1-8; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9; MATTHEW 5:21-37

Collect

Almighty and everliving God,
 whose Son Jesus Christ healed the sick
 and restored them to wholeness of life,
 look with compassion on the anguish of the world,
 and by your power make whole all peoples and nations;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20

As is sometimes the case, the first reading provides some background for the gospel reading. In today's Matthew selection, Jesus reiterates the theology of the Deuteronomist: the people must obey God's commands, or they will be punished. This passage from Deuteronomy can be seen as descriptive of the seriousness of the baptismal promises.

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Psalm 119 – 1: 9

Happy are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!

Happy are they who observe your decrees and seek you with all their hearts;

who never do any wrong, but always walk in your ways.

You laid down your commandments, that we should fully keep them.

Oh, that my ways were made so direct that I might keep your statutes!

Then I should not be put to shame, when I regard all your commandments.

I will thank you with an unfeigned heart, when I have learned your righteous judgements. I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

Second Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9

During these Sundays we continue to read through Paul's scolding of the Corinthians. Paul's description of factions within the body written in 54 ce speak also to our current situation.

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

Gospel: MATTHEW 5:21-37

We hear Matthew's words about anger, offense against the other, lust, divorce, and swearing. We are all guilty of something here, and there appears to be no way to avoid suffering the "hell of fire" and paying "the last penny." We pray for mercy, and we come to the meal for comfort. In the history of the church, some of these statements have been literalized, most not.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. You have heard that it was said, 'You

shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

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.

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.

Transfiguration Sunday (White) February 19, 2023

Readings

EXODUS 24:12-18; PSALM 2; 2 PETER 1:16-21; MATTHEW 17:1-9

Collect

Almighty God,
 on the holy mount you revealed to chosen witnesses
 your well-beloved Son, wonderfully transfigured:
 mercifully deliver us from the darkness of this world,

and change us into his likeness from glory to glory;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading EXODUS 24:12-18

In describing the transfiguration experience as a mountaintop theophany, Matthew assumes that his readers know this Exodus passage, and in hearing Exodus 24, we understand more of Matthew's theology. The church now assembles on the mountain of the church to receive the word of God for the forty days of Lent.

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them." Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

Psalm 2

Why are the nations in an uproar? Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?

Why do the rulers of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together, against the Lord and the Lord's anointed?

"Let us break their yoke," they say; "let us cast off their bonds from us."

The One enthroned in heaven is laughing; the Lord has them in derision.

Then God speaks to them in wrath, and the divine rage fills them with terror.

"I myself have set my anointed upon my holy hill of Zion."

Let me announce the decree of the Lord, who said to me, "You are my heir; this day have I begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You shall crush them with an iron rod and shatter them like a piece of pottery."

And now, you monarchs, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Submit to the Lord with fear, and bow with trembling before the presence of the Lord; lest God be angry and you perish; for the divine wrath is quickly kindled.

Happy are they all who take refuge in God!

Second Reading 2 PETER 1:16-21

Not only the author of 2 Peter, but now also we affirm the mystery of Jesus Christ transfigured by divine majesty. We are now on the holy mountain, and we will stand to receive the gospel account.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Gospel MATTHEW 17:1-9

In the narrative of the transfiguration the church sees testimony to Jesus' status as the eschatological Son of Man and the beloved Son of God. Just as God spoke on a mountaintop in ages past, so now Christ speaks, first in the Sermon on the Mount, and now from the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew's message: "Listen to him." This Sunday, through these reading, we stand to do so. The church becomes the dwelling that Peter thinks to erect.

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

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.

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.

First Sunday in Lent (Violet) Sunday, February 26, 2023

Readings

GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7; PSALM 32; ROMANS 5:12-19; MATTHEW 4:1-11

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are but did not sin,
give us grace to discipline ourselves
in submission to your Spirit,
that as you know our weakness,
so we may know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Jesus withstood temptation, but we do not. Genesis 2–3 provides a foil to the gospel by presenting its opposite. This ancient tale of the origins of human suffering has much wisdom to offer. Although we do not encounter talking serpents, we do disobey God, and we do eat false foods, and we do invite others to join us in disobedience, and we do know shame and sexual sorrow.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you

shall die." Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

PSALM 32

Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!

Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!

While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

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

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

Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Second Reading ROMANS 5:12-19

Paul's analysis of the Genesis 2–3 story is helpful in our time. Not interested in probing the details of the ancient narrative, Paul uses the story to illumine Christ. The ancient story tells of sin and death, and Christ brings us to grace and life.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Gospel MATTHEW 4:1-11

We begin our Christian life with baptism and then, like Jesus, face temptations. Each temptation as described in Matthew has symbolic meaning for us: we are tempted to survive apart from the food from comes from God, to assume that God will miraculously protect us, and to worship the world instead of God. God's Word protects us, and angels attend us.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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.

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.

Second Sunday in Lent (Violet) Sunday, March 5, 2023**Readings**

GENESIS 12:1-4A; PSALM 121; ROMANS 4:1-5, 13-17; JOHN 3:1-17

Collect

Almighty God,
 whose Son was revealed in majesty
 before he suffered death upon the cross,
 give us faith to perceive his glory,
 that being strengthened by his grace
 we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading GENESIS 12:1-4A

As with many of the lectionary's first readings, Genesis 12 is chosen to parallel the gospel reading. Jesus calls on Nicodemus to be born again, and in parallel, we recall the story of the Lord calling Abram to begin a new life in a new land in the sight of God.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

The Lord will not let your foot be moved and the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord, the Lord, watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your side, so that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil and shall keep you safe.

The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

Second Reading ROMANS 4:1-5, 13-17

As is usual with the second readings for about half of the church year, this second reading is chosen to coordinate with the first reading and the gospel. Romans is seen as particularly appropriate for Lent; thus four of the Lenten epistle readings come from Romans. On this Sunday, Paul's commentary on Abraham presents the Christian interpretation of the call of Abram: God blessed Abraham, not because he obeyed the Jewish law, but because he had faith in the promises of God, the same faith into which Nicodemus and all the baptized are invited.

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")-in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Gospel JOHN 3:1-17

The four Lenten Johannine discourses begin with Jesus' teaching about being born again. Until the nineteenth century, the church understood "being born again" as referring to baptism. In Lent, catechumens are prepared for Easter baptism, and the community, as Martin Luther says, daily crawls back to the font, to be renewed in the promises of this second birth.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, what whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Prayer over the Gifts

God of wisdom,
may the light of the eternal Word,
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
guide us to your glory.
We ask this in his name.

Prayer After Communion

Creator of heaven and earth,
we thank you for these holy mysteries,
which bring us now a share in the life to come,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Third Sunday in Lent (Violet) Sunday, March 12, 2023

Readings

EXODUS 17:1-7; PSALM 95; ROMANS 5:1-11; JOHN 4:5-42

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life,
may we always thirst for you,
the spring of life and source of goodness;
through him who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading EXODUS 17:1-7

The narrative of Moses striking the rock is set as a parallel to the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. In both, God provides miraculous water. Like the Israelites, we too are journeying towards the water of life, quarreling along the way, yet requiring what only God can give. God is our water.

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

PSALM 95

Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before the presence of the Lord with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to God with psalms.

For you, O Lord, are a great God, and a great sovereign above all gods.

In your hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are yours also.

The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have moulded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For you are our God, and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand.

Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!

“Harden not your hearts, as your forebears did in the wilderness, at Meribah, and on that day at Massah, when they tempted me.

They put me to the test, though they had seen my works.

Forty years long I detested that generation and said, ‘This people are wayward in their hearts; they do not know my ways.’

So I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter into my rest.’”

Second Reading ROMANS 5:1-11

The lectionary continues its Lenten readings from Romans. The passage for this Sunday, with its strong language about sinners, is appropriate on the day that we consider the quarreling Israelites, the five-times-married Samaritan woman, and ourselves.

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. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel JOHN 4:5-42

Since at least the fourth century, the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman has been used to explicate Christian baptism. Christ himself both provides and is the living water. In Lent we join with the Samaritan woman, seeking the living water of Christ and telling our neighbors of the one who quenched our thirst.

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not

share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you." Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."

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.

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.

Fourth Sunday in Lent (Violet) Sunday, March 19, 2023

Readings

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13; PSALM 23; EPHESIANS 5:8-14; JOHN 9:1-41

Collect

Almighty God,
through the waters of baptism
your Son has made us children of light.
May we ever walk in his light
and show forth your glory in the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

The boy David was anointed by the prophet and then received the Spirit of God. In the early church, baptisms usually included an anointing with oil. So in baptism, we too are anointed, either metaphorically or literally, and having received the Spirit, we too reign in God's kingdom. The title "Christ" means "the anointed one," and Christians are those anointed with Jesus Christ to live a transformed life. This story parallels John 9 as a picture about baptism.

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the

Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Second Reading EPHESIANS 5:8-14

Interrupting our Lenten reading of Romans, the passage from Ephesians readies us to hear about the man born blind. Christ shines also on us; we too are to live no longer in darkness, but rather as lights in the world.

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light - for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Gospel JOHN 9:1-41

At least since the fourth century, the church has used the narrative of the man born blind as a picture of every believer's baptism, which in early centuries was commonly called "enlightenment." Our baptism has given us the light of Christ, by which we live, and with which we illumine the darkness in and outside ourselves. Along with the seeing man, we affirm our Lenten faith, "Lord, I believe." We too are sent by baptism to live a new life.

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to be-come his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We

know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Prayer over the Gifts

God of light,
your Word brings to us a new vision of your glory.
Accept our offering of praise and thanksgiving,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer After Communion

Father,
through your goodness
we receive your Son in word and sacrament.
May we always have faith in him,
Jesus Christ the Lord.

Fifth Sunday in Lent (Violet) Sunday, March 26, 2023

Readings

EZEKIEL 37:1-14; PSALM 130; ROMANS 8:6-11; JOHN 11:1-45

Collect

Almighty God,
your Son came into the world
to free us all from sin and death.
Breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit,
that we may be raised to new life in Christ,
and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

First Reading EZEKIEL 37:1-14

Christians have seen also in Ezekiel's vision a picture of the resurrection of the dead at the end of time. Both now and at the end we rise up in response to the word of the Lord. Through the power of the Spirit's breath, baptism begins our new life, a life that will never end.

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act," says the Lord.

PSALM 130

Out of the depths have I called you, O Lord;

Lord, hear my voice; let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss, O Lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with you; therefore you shall be feared.

I wait for you, O Lord; my soul waits for you; in your word is my hope.

My soul waits for you, O Lord, more than sentinels for the morning, more than sentinels for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy;

with whom there is plenteous redemption, and who shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Second Reading ROMANS 8:6-11

In the last of our four Lenten readings from Romans, Paul uses the language of death and life to describe the radical nature of the effect of the indwelling of Christ's Spirit. We are now dead to sin, and the new life of Christ is already experienced here and now.

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel JOHN 11:1-45

The church has seen in this last great Johannine sign a picture of baptism: we too were dead, but the word of Christ has called us from death and restored us to life in the Spirit. Thus Lent is our annual emerging from the grave, our helping to unbind one another for vibrant life together.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near

Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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.

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.

Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday April 2, 2022

Collect

Almighty and everliving God,
 in tender love for all our human race
 you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
 to take our flesh
 and suffer death upon a cruel cross.
 May we follow the example of his great humility,
 and share in the glory of his resurrection;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

Liturgy of the Palms

Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

PSALM 118:1-2, 19-29

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim, "The mercy of the Lord endures for ever."

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord.

“This is the gate of the Lord; he who is righteous may enter.”

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

On this day the Lord has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Hosannah, Lord, hosannah! Lord, send us now success.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord.

God is the Lord; and has shined upon us; form a pro-cession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

“You are my God, and I will thank you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.”

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good; his mercy endures for ever.

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9A; Psalm 31:9-16; Phillippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54 (short version)

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 31:9-16

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.

I have become a reproach to all my enemies and even to my neighbours, a dismay to those of my acquaintance; when they see me in the street they avoid me.

I am forgotten like a corpse, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot.

For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around; they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. I have said, "You are my God.

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 PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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: MATTHEW 26:14-27:66

One of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him. On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The

Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.” While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.” While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with

swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?” Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

[Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations

they make against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were

opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”]

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. 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.

Or

Gospel: Matthew 27:11-54

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

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Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Gracious God,
 the suffering and death of Jesus, your only Son,
 makes us pleasing in your sight.
 Alone we can do nothing,
 but through his sacrifice,
 may we receive your love and mercy.

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.

Maundy Thursday (Red) Thursday, April 6, 2023

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), 11-14

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

REFRAIN I will lift up the cup of salvation.

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

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

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.

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 April 7, 2023**Readings**

ISAIAH 52:13-53:12; PSALM 22; HEBREWS 4:14-16;5:7-9; 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.

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

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 4:14-16, 5:7-9

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.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

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.

Prayer After Communion

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
we pray to you to set your passion, cross, and death
between your judgement and our souls,
now and in the hour of our death.
Give mercy and grace to the living,
pardon and rest to the dead,
to your holy church peace and concord,
and to us sinners everlasting life and glory;
for with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
you live and reign,
one God, now and for ever.

The Sunday of the Resurrection: (White) Sunday, April 9, 2023

Readings

ACTS 31:1-6; PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24; COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, JOHN 20:1-8

Collect

Lord of life and power,
through the mighty resurrection of your Son,
you have overcome the old order of sin and death
and have made all things new in him.
May we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
reign with him in glory,
who with you and the Holy Spirit is alive,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 10:34-43

Throughout the eight Sundays of the fifty days of Easter from Easter Day to 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

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good; his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim, "The mercy of the Lord endures for ever."

The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

There is a sound of exultation and victory in the tents of the righteous:

"The right hand of the Lord has triumphed! the right hand of the Lord is exalted! the right hand of the Lord has triumphed!"

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me sorely, but did not hand me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord.

"This is the gate of the Lord; those who are righteous may enter."

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

On this day the Lord has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Reading COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

It is appropriate that, centuries after the life of Jesus, we hear from the letter to the Colossians on Easter Day: we ought not, its author argues, think that seeing angels is necessary for us to have faith in Christ's resurrection. Rather, baptism has brought us all into the benefits of Easter.

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hid-den with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Gospel: John 20:1-18

John's resurrection account fits well within the Three Days. For commentary on John 20, see the Easter Vigil.

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

God our strength and salvation,
 receive all we offer you this day,
 and grant that we who have confessed your name,
 and received new life in baptism,
 may live in the joy of the resurrection,
 through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Prayer After Communion

God of life,
 bring us to the glory of the resurrection
 promised in this Easter sacrament.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord.

Second Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, April 16, 2023**Readings**

ACTS 2:14A, 22-32; PSALM 16, 1 PETER 1:3-9; JOHN 20:19-31

Collect

Almighty and eternal God,
 the strength of those who believe
 and the hope of those who doubt,
 may we, who have not seen, have faith
 and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,
 who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 2:14A, 22-32

Throughout the Sundays of the fifty days of Easter, passages from Acts proclaim the meaning of the resurrection. Although many contemporary Christians do not share Luke's hermeneutic, we build this Sunday upon this early Christian proclamation of God's raising Jesus from the place of the dead to be the power of the church emerging throughout the world. Each Sunday we are witnesses of the resurrection.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know - this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up,

having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.' Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses."

Psalm 16

Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; I have said to the Lord,
 "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, upon those who are noble among the people.

But those who run after other gods shall have their troubles multiplied.

Their libations of blood I will not offer, nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.

O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot.

My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night.

I have set the Lord always before me; because you are at my side I shall not fall.

My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.

For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the Pit.

You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy,
 and in your hand are pleasures for evermore.

Second Reading 1 PETER 1:3-9

In Year A, the second readings throughout the Easter season read semi-continuously through the letter of 1 Peter, which can be seen as an early example of post-baptismal catechesis. What does it mean to be baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ? This passage readies us to hear the narrative concerning Thomas and John's words about those who have seen the risen Christ and those who have not, all of whom are called to "an indescribably and glorious joy."

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith - being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when

Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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.

Prayer After Communion

Loving 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.

Third Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, April 23, 2023**Readings**

ACTS 2:14A, 36-41; PSALM 116:1-3, 10-17; 1 PETER 1:17-23; LUKE 24:13-35

Collect

O God,
 your Son made himself known to his disciples
 in the breaking of bread.
 Open the eyes of our faith,
 that we may see him in his redeeming work,
 who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 2:14A, 36-41

The miracle of the resurrection continues, as thousands of people repent, believe, and are baptized. As usual, Luke sees the purposes of this conversion to be the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are now this baptized community, assembling weekly for this apostolic teaching, the meal with the risen Christ, and our prayers.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, "Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

PSALM 116:1-3, 10-17

I love the Lord who has heard the voice of my supplication,
who has listened to me whenever I called.

The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; I came to grief and sorrow.

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 PETER 1:17-23

According to this heavily metaphoric post-baptismal sermon, we are now the exile community that in Christ is judged, ransomed, purified, and born anew. The word grows in us each week, and the blood of Christ buys us back from the power of death.

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Gospel LUKE 24:13-35

The Emmaus story illustrates the weekly assembly of Christians, who first search through Moses and the prophets to hear about the messiah and who then share a meal and, in so doing, recognize the risen Christ. In keeping with Luke's many parallels between the sexes, some contemporary artists depict the two disciples as a man and a woman. This Sunday in our congregations, we find Christ in the scriptures and recognize Christ at our table.

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but

their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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.

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.

Fourth Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, April 30, 2023

Readings

ACTS 2:42-47; PSALM 23; 1 PETER 2:19-25; JOHN 10:1-10

Collect

O God of peace,
 who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,
 that great shepherd of the sheep,
 by the blood of the eternal covenant,
 make us perfect in every good work to do your will,
 and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading ACTS 2:42-47

Christians have seen in Luke's inspiring description a goal for the Christian life. Baptism is to lead to care for the poor and to the praise of God.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in

the house of the Lord for ever.

Second Reading 1 PETER 2:19-25

This passage from 1 Peter is moved out of its sequence so that the reference to God as shepherd in verse 25 fits with the dominant metaphor of the day. Beginning the reading in verse 19, omitting the verse addressed to slaves, exemplifies the task of the lectionary: to select biblical passages that have relevance of the contemporary Christian community. The whole community is now guarded by Christ the shepherd.

For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel JOHN 10:1-10

The church understands Christ as both the shepherd and the gate, itself as the flock, and the enclosure as the church. According to John, sheep are a communal metaphor for shared abundant life. In John's gospel are eleven passages in which the name of God, I am, is tied to an image, and today's selection includes one of them: I am the gate. Christians have seen the sacraments as the pasture for the flock.

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

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.

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.

Fifth Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, May 7, 2023**Readings**

ACTS 7:55-60; PSALM 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 PETER 2:2-10; JOHN 14:1-14

Collect

Almighty God,
 your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
 Give us grace to love one another
 and walk in the way of his commandments,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 7:55-60

The Acts readings in Year A now skip to the narrative of the martyrdom of Stephen. The resurrection opens the church to share in both the Holy Spirit and the sufferings of Christ. Since the fourth century, the church has commemorated the martyrdom of Stephen on the day after Christmas, for the coming of Christ may bring about the death of his servants. Expressing Luke's Christology, Stephen addresses the same prayer to the Lord Jesus that on the cross Jesus had addressed to God; the risen Christ is God for us.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and

cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

PSALM 31:1-5, 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.

Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

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 Reading¹ PETER 2:2-10

Year A now backtracks in 1 Peter to hear a richly metaphoric description of the Christian community. Now we, the community of the resurrection, are the infants fed on God's milk, the building erected on the cornerstone of Christ, a nation of priests invited to approach the Almighty, a people enjoying divine light.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Gospel JOHN 14:1-14

Placed in John's gospel as a commentary on the crucifixion as constituting Jesus' glorification, John 14 is appointed during the Easter season as if the discourse applies also to the ascension, which is not recorded in John. On Sunday we see the Son in his body, and so we are seeing also the Father.

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." 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."

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.

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.

Sixth Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, May 14, 2023

Readings

ACTS 17:22-31; PSALM 66:7-18; 1 PETER 3:13-22; JOHN 14:15-21

Collect

Merciful God,
 you have prepared for those who love you
 riches beyond imagination.
 Pour into our hearts such love toward you,
 that we, loving you above all things,
 may obtain your promises,
 which exceed all that we can desire;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 17:22-31

This learned proclamation of the resurrection, beginning with God's creation of the world, assumes a sophisticated, polytheistic society, and it sounds newly applicable to us in the twenty-first century. Christians are called to share in this worldview that culminates in the resurrection.

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown God.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him - though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

PSALM 66:7-18

In your might you rule for ever; your eyes keep watch over the nations;
let no rebel rise up against you.

Bless our God, you peoples; make the voice of God's praise to be heard;
who holds our souls in life, and will not allow our feet to slip.

For you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried.

You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows,

which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats.

Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what the Lord has done for me,

The One to whom I called out with my mouth and whose praise was on my tongue.

I had found evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me.

Second Reading 1 PETER 3:13-22

This first-century use of Noah's flood as a metaphor for baptism became commonplace over the centuries in the church. For example, calling the worship space a "nave," or ship, imagined the church as the ark of salvation, and one option for a reading at the Easter Vigil is the Noah legend. Verses 21-22 remind us that the resurrection is proclaimed in many places outside the gospels' narratives of Easter Day.

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel JOHN 14:15-21

Continuing last Sunday's proclamation of John 14, we hear Jesus promising that he will remain with the community in the person of God the Advocate. The Spirit is on our side, defending us before the divine judge. Jesus is calling us to a life of love

Jesus said, "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. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

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.

Prayer After Communion

Loving God,
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.

Seventh Sunday of Easter (White) Sunday, May 21, 2023**Readings**

ACTS 1:6-14; PSALM 68:1-10, 33-36; 1 PETER 4:12-14; 5:6-11; JOHN 17:1-11

Collect

Almighty God,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven.
Mercifully give us faith to know
that, as he promised,
he abides with us on earth to the end of time;

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading ACTS 1:6-14

The ascension moves to the establishment of the church in Jerusalem. So our contemplation of Christ's ascension leads us to the faithful devotion of the praying community.

So when they had come together, the apostles asked Jesus, "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." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

PSALM 68:1-10, 33-36

Arise, O God, and let your enemies be scattered; let those who hate you flee.
Let them vanish like smoke when the wind drives it away; as the wax melts at the fire,
so let the wicked perish at your presence.

But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before you; let them also be merry and joyful.

Let us sing to God, sing praises to the divine name; let us exalt the One who rides upon the heavens;

Yahweh is the divine name, before whom we shall rejoice!

Protector of orphans, defender of widows, the One who dwells in holiness,
who gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners into freedom; but the rebels shall live in dry places.

O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

the earth shook, and the skies poured down rain, at your presence, O God of Sinai, at your presence, O God of Israel.

You sent a gracious rain, O God, upon your inheritance; you refreshed the land when it was weary.

Your people found their home in it; in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.

You ride in the heavens, the ancient heavens, O God; sending forth your voice, your mighty voice.

Ascribe power to God; whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

How wonderful is God in the divine sanctuary! The God of Israel gives strength and power to this people! Blessed be God!

Second Reading 1 PETER 4:12-14; 5:6-11

This Sunday is the last in the semi-continuous reading of 1 Peter. At least in hearing about the sufferings of the church we hold before us all persecuted Christians around the world. The community of the baptized takes comfort in the mighty God who cares for us.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel JOHN 17:1-11

What has been called the High Priestly Prayer of John 17 is divided between the three years of the lectionary on the Sunday after the Ascension. The church honors the glory of Christ's crucifixion along with that of his exaltation, which is referred to in the other readings. Proclaiming John 17 after, rather than before, Holy Week and Easter exemplifies the technique of the lectionary in layering biblical meanings in the worship life of the church.

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are

mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

Prayer over the Gifts

Source of all joy,
 receive our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.
 Keep us in the love of Christ
 and bring us to the vision of his glory;
 through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer After Communion

Eternal God,
 may we who share Christ's banquet
 be one with him as he is one with you.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
 the risen and ascended Lord.

The Day of Pentecost – (Red) Sunday, May 28, 2023

Readings

NUMBERS 11:24-30; PSALM 104:25-35, 37; ACTS 2:1-21; JOHN 7:37-39

Collect

Almighty and everliving God,
 who fulfilled the promises of Easter
 by sending us your Holy Spirit
 and opening to every race and nation
 the way of life eternal,
 keep us in the unity of your Spirit,
 that every tongue may tell of your glory;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

First Reading NUMBERS 11:24-30

In year A, the Pentecost narrative is linked with a parallel passage in Numbers in which many elders come to share religious leadership. The church continues to trust that God will inspire leaders for ministry.

Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!" And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

PSALM 104:25-35, 37

Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number, creatures both small and great.

There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan, which you have made for the sport of it.

All of them look to you to give them their food in due season.

You give it to them; they gather it; you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.

You hide your face, and they are terrified; you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.

You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; and so you renew the face of the earth.

May your glory, O Lord, endure for ever; may you rejoice in all your works;

you look at the earth and it trembles; you touch the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will praise my God while I have my being.

May these words of mine please you; I will rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Hallelujah!

Second 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.

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.'"

Gospel JOHN 7:37-39

The short passage from John 7 recapitulates the baptismal emphasis throughout Lent and Easter by acclaiming Christ as the living water. Recall that at his glorification on the cross, Jesus himself is thirsty; yet water flows from his side when he gives over his Spirit.

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

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.

Prayer After Communion

Father,
 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.