

LECTIONARY 2020

for use in the United Benefice of **Hornby** with Claughton
and **Whittington** with **Arkholme** and **Gressingham**

from **Sunday 1 December 2019**
to **Sunday 22 November 2020**

ADVENT 1

Sunday 1 December

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 2.1-5*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

This is the word

that Isaiah, son of Amoz, received,
concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come,

the mountain of the Lord's house
will be established
as the highest of mountains,
raised up high above the hills.

All the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,

'Let us go up

to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,

that he may teach us his ways,

that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,

and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The Lord will judge between nations,

and bring peace between peoples.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning-hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come,

let us walk in the light of the Lord!

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 122

SECOND READING – *Romans 13.11-14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters,

you already know
that now is the moment

for you to wake from sleep;

for salvation is closer to us now

than when we first became believers.

The night is far gone;

the day is near.

So let us lay aside the works of darkness,

and put on the armour of light.

Let us live honourably,

as in the day,

and not in revelling, drunkenness,

immorality, indecency,

quarrelling or jealousy.

Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ,

and make no provision for sinful ways.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 24.36-44*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said:

'About that day and hour,

no one knows,
neither the angels of heaven,
nor the Son,
but only the Father.

In the days of Noah,

before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying, and giving in marriage,
until the day that Noah entered the ark,
and they knew nothing
until the flood came
and swept them all away.

So it will be

at the coming of the Son of Man.

Of two people working in the field;

one will be received,
and the other sent away.

Of two people grinding grain together;

one will be received,
and the other sent away.

Keep awake, therefore,

for you do not know

on what day

your Lord is coming.

If the owner of the house had known

in what part of the night

the thief was coming,

he would have stayed awake

and would not have let his house
be broken into.

So always be ready,

for the Son of Man is coming

at an unexpected hour.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 2

Sunday 8 December

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 11.1-5,9-10*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.
A shoot shall come up from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out from his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and strength,
the spirit of knowledge
and of honouring the Lord;
and his delight shall be in the presence of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
The earth will shake at the force of his words;
the breath of his lips will strike down the wicked.
He shall be clothed
with righteousness and faithfulness.
Nothing will hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
On that day,
the root of Jesse shall stand
as a signal to the peoples.
The nations shall come to him,
and his dwelling shall be glorious.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 72.1-7, 18-19

SECOND READING – *Romans 15.4-13*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.
Everything that was written in former days
was written for our instruction,
so that by patience, endurance,
and the encouragement of the scriptures,
we might have confidence in God.
May the God of patience,
endurance, and encouragement,
grant you to live in harmony with one another
in Christ Jesus,
so that with one mind and one voice
you may give glory to God,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Give glory to God also
by welcoming one another,
just as Christ has welcomed you;
for Christ became a servant
to the children of Abraham
(in fulfilment of the promises that
God made to the patriarchs),
and Christ became a servant also
to the Gentiles,
that the Gentiles also
might give glory to God for God's mercy.

In the scriptures, it is written:

'I will praise you, O Lord, among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name';

and:

'Rejoice, all you nations';

and:

'Praise the Lord, all you nations;
let all the peoples praise him'.

Isaiah says,

'The root of Jesse shall arise to rule the nations;
and the Gentiles shall place their confidence in him.'

And so may the God in whom we trust
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
that you may have joyful confidence in God
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 3.1-12*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

In those days, John the Baptist appeared,
in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,

'Repent,
for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke,
when he said,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and his food was locusts and wild honey.

The people were going out to him
from Jerusalem,
and from all Judea,
and all the region along the Jordan,
and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.

When John saw that many Pharisees and Sadducees
were coming to him for baptism,
he said to them,

'You brood of vipers!
Who warned you to flee
from the wrath that is to come?

You must bear fruit
that is worthy of repentance!

Do not presume that it is sufficient
to have Abraham as your ancestor!
God could raise up, from these stones,
children to Abraham!

The axe is poised
so that any tree
that does not bear good fruit
can be cut down and thrown into the fire.

I baptise you with water for repentance,
but after me comes another who is more powerful,
and I am not worthy even to carry his sandals.

He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
He will separate the wheat from the chaff,
gathering the wheat into his barn,
and throwing the chaff into the fire.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 3

Sunday 15 December

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 35.1-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The wilderness and the dry land
will burst into bloom
and rejoice with singing.
The desert will be green
like the mountains of Lebanon,
like the fields and the forests
of Carmel and Sharon,
revealing the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
So encourage the weak,
and any who are trembling with fear in their hearts.
Say to them,
'Be strong, do not fear!
God is surely coming, with justice,
to save you.
The eyes of the blind shall see,
and the ears of the deaf shall hear.
The lame shall leap like a deer,
and the voiceless
shall sing for joy!
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 146.4-9

SECOND READING – *James 5.7-10*

A reading from the letter of James.

My brothers and sisters, be patient,
as you wait for the coming of the Lord.
The farmer waits patiently
for the precious crop from the earth,
until it receives
both the autumn and the spring rains.
You also must be patient;
but be confident in your hearts,
trusting that the coming of the Lord is near.
Beloved,
do not grumble against one another,
lest you also be judged.
See, the Judge is standing at the door!
For an example of patience and endurance
in the face of suffering,
remember the prophets
who spoke in the name of the Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 11.2-11*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When John (in prison)
heard what the Messiah was doing,
he sent his disciples to ask Jesus,
'Are you the one the prophets foretold,
or are we to wait for another?'
Jesus said to them,
'Go and tell John
what you see and hear:
the blind receive their sight,
the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,
the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.
Good news has come to the poor.
Blessed are those
who take no offence at me.'
As John's disciples went on their way,
Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John.
'What did you go into the wilderness to see?
A reed blowing in the wind?
What then?
Someone dressed in fine robes?
Those who wear fine robes are in royal palaces.
What then did you go to see?
A prophet?
Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.
This is the one about whom it is written,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
to prepare your way before you."
Truly I tell you,
of all who have ever been born of woman,
none has been greater
than John the Baptist;
yet even the least in the kingdom of heaven
will be greater still.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 4

Sunday 22 December

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 7.10-14*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, and said,
'Ask a sign of the Lord your God.
Let it be as deep as the underworld,
or as high as heaven,'

Ahaz said,

'I will not ask for a sign,
for I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Now hear, O house of David -

you who try the patience mortals,
and even try the patience of God!

The Lord will indeed give you a sign!

See, the young woman is with child,
and shall bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel,
which means,
'God is with us.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Magnificat

SECOND READING – *Romans 1.1-7*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

From Paul,

a servant of Jesus Christ,
called to be an apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God.

This good news

was promised long ago,
through the prophets,
in the holy scriptures:

the gospel of the Son of God,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the flesh,

he was descended from David.

In the Holy Spirit,

by his resurrection from the dead,
he was declared in great power
to be the Son of God.

Through him,

we have received grace,
and the commission to be apostles,
calling people of all nations to faith,
for the sake of his name,

including yourselves,

who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all God's beloved in Rome,

who are called to be saints:

Grace to you, and peace,

from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 1.18-23*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

The birth of Jesus the Messiah
took place in this way.

When his mother Mary
was pledged in marriage to Joseph,
but before they came together,
she was found to be with child
from the Holy Spirit.

Her husband Joseph,
being a righteous man,
and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,
planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this,
an angel of the Lord

appeared to him in a dream, and said,
'Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid
to take Mary as your wife,
for the child conceived in her
is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son,

and you are to name him Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place

to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord
through the prophet:

'See, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means,
'God is with us.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MIDNIGHT MASS

Readings for Christmas Day Set I

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 9.2,6-7b*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walk in darkness
shall see a great light.

On those who dwell
in the land of deep darkness -
on them, the light will shine.

For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given,
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government
and of peace
there shall be no end.

He will establish and uphold
the throne and kingdom of David,
with justice and righteousness,
from this time forwards,
and for evermore.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 96

SECOND READING – *Philippians 4.4-9*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again I say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness
be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything,
by prayer and supplication,
with thanksgiving,

let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God,

which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds
in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved,

whatever is true, whatever is honourable,
whatever is just, whatever is pure,
whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence,
and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.

And whatever you have learned and received

from all that I have said and done,
put this into practice also.

And the God of peace

will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 2.1-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

In those days, a decree went out
that all the world should be registered,
each in their own town.

Joseph went from Nazareth, in Galilee,
to Judea,
to the city of David, called Bethlehem,
because he was descended
from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary,
to whom he was engaged,
and who was expecting a child.

While they were there,
the time came for Mary to deliver her child,
and she gave birth to her firstborn son,
and wrapped him in bands of cloth,
and laid him in a manger,
because there was no place for them at the inn.

In that region there were shepherds, living in the fields,
keeping watch over their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord stood before them,
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were afraid.

But the angel said to them,

'Do not be afraid,
for I bring you good news of great joy
for all the people.

To you is born, this day, in the city of David,
a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you:

you will find the child wrapped in bands of cloth
and lying in a manger.'

And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host,
praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,

'Let us go now to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they went with haste
and found Mary and Joseph,
and the child lying in the manger.

The shepherds made known
what the angels had told them about this child,
and all who heard it were amazed.

And Mary treasured these words,
and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all that they had heard and seen,
as the angels had told them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Readings for Christmas Day Set III

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 52.7-10*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger
proclaiming peace,
bringing good news,
announcing salvation,
and saying to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

Hear your watchmen
lifting up their voices.

Together they are singing for joy,
for with their own eyes,
they see the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted
and redeemed his people.

The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 98

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 1.1-4*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago,
God spoke to our ancestors
in many and various ways
by the prophets,

but in these last days,
God has spoken to us
by a Son,

appointed by God
as inheritor of all things,
through whom

God created the universe.

He is the reflection
of God's glory,
the exact imprint
of God's very being,
and he sustains all things
by his powerful word.

When he had made purification for sins,
he sat down

at the right hand
of the Majesty on high,

having become
as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited
is more excellent than theirs.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 1.1-12,14*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning
with God.

All things came into being through him,
and without him
not one thing
came into being.

In him was life,
and that life
was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness
has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God,
whose name was John.

He came as a witness
to testify to the light,
so that all might believe
through him.

He himself was not the light,
but he came to testify to the light.

The true light,
which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.

He was in the world,
and the world came into being through him;
yet the world did not know him;
he came to his own,
and his own did not receive him.

But all who did receive him,
who believed in his name,
he called to become children of God.

The Word became flesh
and dwelt amongst us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Sunday 29 December

United Benefice Service in Gressingham
for the Patronal Festival of Saint John the Evangelist
Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 6.1-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.
In the year that King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, on high;
and the hem of his robe filled the temple.
Seraphs were in attendance above him.
Each had six wings,
and they called out together, saying:
'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'
The foundations of the temple were shaken
at the voices of those who called,
and the temple was filled with smoke.
And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips;
yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'
Then one of the seraphs flew to me,
holding a live coal
that had been taken from the altar
with a pair of tongs.
The seraph touched my mouth with it and said:
'Now that this has touched your lips,
your guilt has departed
and your sin is blotted out.'
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 John 1.6 - 2.2*

A reading from the first letter of John.
We cannot say that we have fellowship with God
if we are walking in darkness.
But if we walk in the light, with God,
we have fellowship with God and one another,
and the blood of Jesus the Son
cleanses us from all sin.
In the same way,
if we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us,
but if we confess our sins,
God, who is faithful and just,
will forgive us our sins,
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
If we say that we have no sin,
we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
I write these things
to warn you away from sin,
but if anyone does sin,
we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous;
and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins,
and for the sins of the whole world.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 15.1–17*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.
Jesus said to his disciples:
'I am the true vine,
and my Father is the keeper of the vineyard.
He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit,
and he prunes those branches that do bear fruit,
to make them more fruitful still.
Like cherished vines,
you have already been cleansed,
by the word that I have spoken to you.
Now abide in me, as I abide in you.
Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself,
unless it abides in the vine,
neither can you, unless you abide in me.
I am the vine, and you are the branches.
Those who abide in me, and I in them,
bear much fruit;
while apart from me, you can do nothing.
Whoever does not abide in me
is thrown away like a cut branch.
But if you abide in me,
and my words abide in you,
ask for whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you.
My Father is glorified by this,
that you bear much fruit,
having become my disciples.
As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you;
now abide in my love.
If you keep my commandments,
you will abide in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and abide in his love.
I have said these things to you
so that my joy may be in you,
and your joy may be complete.
And this is my commandment -
that you love one another
as I have loved you.
There is no greater love than this:
that you lay down your life for your friends.
You are my friends,
if you do what I command you.
I do not call you servants any longer,
because the servant does not know
what the master is doing;
but I have called you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything that I have heard from my Father.
You did not choose me, but I chose you,
and I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
fruit that will last,
so that the Father will give you
whatever you ask in my name.
All of this I say to you
to direct you to love one another.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

THE EPIPHANY

Sunday 5 January

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 60.1-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Arise, and shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you;
for darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness shall cover the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together,
they come to you.

Your sons shall come from far away,
and your youngest daughters shall be carried
on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea
shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations
shall come to you.

A multitude of camels
shall cover your land,
from Egypt and Arabia.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and they shall proclaim
the praise of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 72.1-7, 10-14

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 3.2-3a, 5-6*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

By the grace of God, and for your sake,
I have this commission;
for a glorious truth
(that was previously unknown)
has been made known to me by revelation.

In former generations,
it was not made known,
but now,

by the Spirit,
it has now been revealed
to God's apostles and prophets
through the gospel:

that the Gentiles are our brothers and sisters,
sharers in the same promise,
and members of the same body
in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 2.1-12*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

In the time of King Herod,
after Jesus was born (in Bethlehem of Judea),
Magi from the East
came to Jerusalem, asking,

'Where is the child
who is born
to be king of the Jews?

For we observed his star, at its rising,
and we have come
to pay him homage.'

When King Herod heard this,
he was troubled,
and all Jerusalem with him.

He called together
all the chief priests,
and the scribes of the people,
and enquired of them
where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him,
'In Bethlehem of Judea;
for it is written in the prophets:
"You, O Bethlehem,
in the land of Judah,
are by no means least
among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the Magi,
and learned from them the exact time
when the star had appeared.

Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,
'Go and search diligently for the child;
and when you have found him,
bring me word
so that I may also go
and pay him homage.'

So the Magi set out,
and there, ahead of them, went the star
that they had seen at its rising;
until it stopped over the place
where they would find the child.

When they saw that the star had stopped,
they were overwhelmed with joy.

On entering the house,
they saw the child,
with Mary his mother,
and they knelt down,
and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure-chests,
they offered him gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream
not to return to Herod,
they left for their own country
by another road.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 1

Sunday 12 January

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant, my chosen one.

and my soul delights in him.

I have put my spirit upon him

to bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout or lift up his voice,

or make it heard in the street.

A bruised reed he will not break,

and a dimly burning wick he will not quench.

He will faithfully bring forth justice:

he will not grow faint or be crushed

until he has established justice on earth.

The coastlands wait for his teaching.

I am the Lord;

I have called you in righteousness;

I will take you by the hand and protect you.

I will give you as a covenant to the people,

and as a light to the nations,

to open the eyes that have been blind,

and to free the prisoner and the captive.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 29

SECOND READING – Titus 3.4-6

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

The goodness and loving-kindness

of God our Saviour

have now been revealed;

and we are saved,

not by any good works

that we have done,

but by God's mercy -

through the waters of re-birth,

and renewal in the Holy Spirit.

God pours out the Holy Spirit

richly upon us,

through our Saviour Jesus Christ;

and being reconciled with God,

by God's grace,

we have been made inheritors

of eternal life.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 3.13-17

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Jesus came from Galilee

to the Jordan,

to be baptised by John.

John resisted, saying,

'I ought to be baptised by you!

Why do you come to me?'

But Jesus said, 'Let it be so for now,'

and John conceded.

When Jesus had been baptised by John,

as he came up from the water,

the heavens were opened to him,

and he saw the Spirit of God,

descending like a dove,

and alighting on him;

and a voice from heaven said,

'This is my beloved Son,

and I delight in him.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 2

Sunday 19 January

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Isaiah 49.5-6

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord called me,
even before I was born,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and to gather Israel to him -
a great task,
for which the Lord my God is my strength.
And now the Lord 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 all the nations,
that my salvation may reach
to the ends of the earth.'
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 40.1-11

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 1.1-8

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

From Paul,
called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus
by the will of God;
and from our brother Sosthenes.
To the church of God in Corinth:
to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus,
called to be saints
alongside all those who,
in every place,
call (like us)
on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
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 to you
in Christ Jesus,
for you have been enriched in him
in every way,
in speech and knowledge of every kind,
growing in confidence in the message Christ,
and not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you eagerly await
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God will continue to give you strength,
so that you may be blameless
on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 1.29-34

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

John the Baptist
saw Jesus coming towards him
and declared,
'Here is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world;
the one who comes after me,
but ranks ahead of me,
because he existed before I was born.
Even though I myself did not know him,
I came baptising with water
that he might be revealed to Israel -
and now I have seen the Spirit
descending from heaven like a dove,
and resting upon him.
Even though I myself did not know him,
God who commissioned me
to baptise with water
said to me,
"The one on whom you see the Spirit descend
is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit."
This I have seen,
and now I testify
that this is the Son of God.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 3

Sunday 26 January

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Isaiah 9.1-4

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Hear, O land of Zebulun and Naphtali,

(on the road by the sea,
beyond the Jordan,
in Galilee of the Gentiles).

You have suffered anguish, affliction, and despair,
but now you will be filled with glory,
for the people who walked in darkness
will see a great light;
and on those who dwell
in the land of the shadow of death,
a light will dawn.

Your joy will be multiplied,
like the joy at the harvest,
or like the joy on the day
when the enemy is driven away;
for the yoke of your burden,
the bar across your shoulders,
the power of your oppressor,
will be broken.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 27

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 1.10-13,17-18

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to find agreement with one another,
so that there may be no more divisions amongst you;
that you may be united
in one mind, and one purpose.

For it has been reported to me, by Chloe's people,
that there are quarrels amongst you,
with some saying, 'I belong to Paul,'
while others say, 'I belong to Apollos,'
or 'I belong to Peter,'
or 'I belong to Christ.'

But Christ is not divided!

Paul was not crucified for you!
And you were not baptised in the name of Paul!
Indeed Christ did not send me to baptise,
but to proclaim the gospel,
and not even with eloquent words,
which might have distracted
from the power
of the message
of the cross of Christ.

The message of the cross
is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us, who are being saved,
it is the power of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 4.12-25

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When Jesus heard

that John the Baptist had been arrested,
he withdrew into Galilee.

He left Nazareth (where he had grown up),
and made his home
at Capernaum, by the sea,
in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali,

fulfilling the words

of the prophet Isaiah:

'Hear, O Land of Zebulun and Naphtali,
(on the road by the sea,
beyond the Jordan,
in Galilee of the Gentiles);

the people who dwell in darkness
will see a great light,
and on those who dwell
in the land of the shadow of death,
a light will dawn.'

From that time onwards,

Jesus began to proclaim,
'Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee,

he saw two brothers,
Simon, who is called Peter,
and Andrew his brother,
casting a net into the lake,
for they were fishermen.

And Jesus 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, the 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,
proclaiming the good news of the kingdom,
and curing every disease and every sickness
among the people.

His fame spread throughout all Syria,
and they brought to him
all the sick,

those who were afflicted
with various diseases and pains,
demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics,
and he cured them.

And great crowds followed him,
from Galilee, the Decapolis,
Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 4

Sunday 2 February

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Micah 6.6-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

What shall we bring

as an offering to the Lord,
when we bow down
before God most high?

Shall we bring burnt-offerings,
calves a year old,
a thousand rams,
or ten thousand rivers of oil?
Or even our firstborn,
as a sacrifice for sin?

These are not the offerings that please the Lord.

The Lord has shown you what is good,
and this is what the Lord requires:
to do justice,
to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 24

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.18,21-27*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

The message of the cross

is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us, who are being saved,
it is the power of God.

The best wisdom of the world
did not lead people to God;

but God has used

the foolishness
of our proclamation
to save those who believe.

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 called -

both Jews and Greeks -
the proclamation of Christ crucified
is 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, my 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.1-12*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When Jesus saw

the great crowds
that followed him,

he went up on the mountainside,
and sat down.

His disciples gathered around him,
and he began to teach 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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 5

Sunday 9 February

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 58.1,3b-9a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Shout out, and do not hold back,

says the Lord;

lift up your voice like a trumpet.

Announce to my people their rebellion,

to the house of Jacob their sins.

‘On the day of fasting,

you serve your own interests,

you oppress your workers,

you quarrel and fight.

This is not the fasting

that will make your voice

heard on high.

And yet the fast that I choose

is not a day to abase yourself,

to bow down your head like a bulrush,

or to lie in sackcloth and ashes.

This the fast that I choose:

that you remove the bonds of injustice,

and let the oppressed go free,

that you share your bread with the hungry,

bring the homeless poor into your house,

and fulfil your duties to your kinsfolk.

Then your light and your healing shall come,

your righteousness shall lead you on,

and the glory of the Lord shall protect you.

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;

you will cry for help, and the Lord will hear.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 112.1-9

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 2.1-10a,13a*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

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 amongst you

except Jesus Christ,

and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness,

with great fear and trembling.

My proclamation

was not in persuasive words of wisdom,

but relied on the power of the Spirit,

so that your faith might rest

not on human wisdom

but on the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom -

not the wisdom of this age or its rulers

(which is coming to nothing),

but God’s eternal and glorious wisdom,

which is now being revealed.

If the rulers of this age had understood true wisdom,

they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written,

‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard,

no human heart has conceived,

what God has prepared for those who love him’.

These things, God has now revealed to us

through the Spirit,

and we speak of these things

in words

not taught by human wisdom,

but taught by the Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.13-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus taught his disciples, saying:

‘You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt has lost its taste,

how can it 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 hidden.

And when you light a lamp,

you do not put it under a bowl,

but on the lampstand -

and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way,

let your light shine out,

so that all 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,

your righteousness

must be greater than that

of the scribes and the Pharisees

if you are to enter

the kingdom of heaven.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 6

Sunday 16 February

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Exodus 20.1-17

A reading from the book of Exodus.

God gave these commandments to the people.

'I am the Lord your God,

who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol,

whether in the form of anything
that is in the heaven above,
or the earth below,
or the waters under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them;

for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,
accounting the iniquity of the elders on their offspring
to the third and fourth generation
of those who reject me,

but showing steadfast love

to a thousand generations
of those who love me
and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name

of the Lord your God in vain,
for the Lord will not hold guiltless
the one who takes the name of God in vain.

You shall remember the sabbath day,

and keep it holy.

Six days you shall labour,

and do all your work,

but the seventh day

is a sabbath

to the Lord your God;

you shall not do any work -

you, your son, or your daughter,

your male or female servant,

your livestock,

or the foreigner living amongst you;

for in six days

the Lord made the heavens, the earth,

the sea, and all that is in them,

but rested the seventh day;

therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day

and made it holy.

You shall honour your father and mother,

that your days may be long, in the land

that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house;

you shall not covet your neighbour's wife,

or male or female servant, or ox, or donkey,

or anything that belongs to your neighbour.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 3.3-6,10-11,16-17

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

My brothers and sisters,

let there be no jealousy or quarrelling amongst you,

with one saying 'I belong to Paul',

and another saying 'I belong to Apollos',

for Paul and Apollos are only servants

within the work of the Lord.

I may have planted,

and Apollos may have watered,

but God gave the growth.

I may have laid the foundation,

and Apollos may be building upon it,

but the foundation is Jesus Christ,

and you are God's temple,

built upon that foundation,

with God's Spirit dwelling in you.

Let no one harm God's temple,

for God's temple is holy,

and you are that temple.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus taught his disciples, saying:

'I tell you,

your righteousness

must be greater than that

of the scribes and the Pharisees

if you are to enter

the kingdom of heaven.

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.

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.

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.

Let your "Yes" mean "Yes",

and let your "No" mean "No".

Anything more than this

comes from wickedness.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Psalms 119.1-8

EPIPHANY 7

Sunday 23 February

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Leviticus 19.1-4, 9-18*

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

The Lord said to Moses:

Speak to the whole congregation of the people of Israel,
and say to them:

Be holy, for I am holy,
says the Lord your God.

Honour your mother and your father,
and keep my sabbaths;
I am the Lord your God.

Do not turn to idols,
or make cast images for yourselves;
I am the Lord your God.

When you reap the harvest of your land,
you shall not reap to the very edges of your field,
or gather the gleanings of your harvest;
you shall not strip your vineyard bare,
or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard;
you shall leave them for the poor and the foreigner;
I am the Lord your God.

You shall not steal.

You shall not deal falsely.

You shall not lie to one another.

You shall not swear falsely by my name,
profaning the name of your God:
I am the Lord.

You shall not defraud your neighbour,
you shall not steal,
and you shall not keep for yourself
the wages of a labourer
until morning.

You shall not revile the deaf
or put a stumbling-block before the blind.

You shall honour your God:
I am the Lord.

You shall not render an unjust judgement.
You shall not be partial to the poor,
nor defer to the great;
with justice you shall judge your neighbour.

You shall not go around as a slanderer
among your people,
and you shall not profit
by the blood of your neighbour:
I am the Lord.

You shall not hate, in your heart, anyone of your kin.

You shall reprove your neighbour,
or you will incur guilt yourself.

You shall not take revenge,
or bear a grudge against any of your people,
but you shall love your neighbour as yourself:
I am the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 119.33-40

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 3.18-23*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

If you think you are wise in this present age,
you should become a fool,
that you may become truly wise;
for the wisdom of this world
is foolishness to God.

The scripture says,

‘The Lord catches the wise in their craftiness,’
and ‘the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise -
that they come to nothing.’

So let no one continue boasting
about their preferred human leaders,
for all things belong to you -
not just Paul, Apollos, and Peter,
but the whole world,
even life and death,
and the present and the future.

All these things belong to you
when you belong to Christ,
(and in belonging to Christ, belong to God).
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.38-48*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus taught his disciples, saying:

‘You have heard that it was said,
“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”
But I say to you,

do not resist an evildoer.

If someone strikes you on the right cheek,
offer the left as well.

If someone sues you for your shirt,
give your coat as well.

If someone forces you to walk one mile,
walk two.

Give to those who ask.

Lend to those who come to borrow.

You have heard that it was said,
“You shall love your neighbour,
and hate your enemy.”

But I say to you,
Love your enemies,
and pray for those who persecute you,
so that you may be children
of your Father in heaven;
for he makes the sun to rise

on the wicked and the good alike,
and he sends rain
on the righteous and the unrighteous.

If you love only those who love you,
what reward would there be for that?
Even tax-collectors do the same.

And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,
what more are you doing than others?
Even Gentiles do the same.

So be perfect,
as your heavenly Father is perfect.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 1 – Sunday 1 March

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Genesis 3.1-7*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Now the serpent was more crafty
than any other wild animal
that the Lord God had made.

The serpent 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 the fruit of any tree in the garden;
except that God said,

"You shall not eat the fruit of the tree
that is in the middle of the garden,
or even 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,
was a delight to the eyes,
and was to be desired, to bring knowledge,
she took fruit from the tree, and ate;
and she gave some also 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 32

SECOND READING – *Romans 5.12-19*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Sin came into the world through one man,
and death came through sin;
and death spread to all,
because all have sinned.

It is said that sin cannot be measured
where there is no law,
yet sin was already in the world
before the law was given,
and death exercised dominion
from the time of Adam
to the time of Moses.

Now Adam can be compared
to the one who was to come -
and the trespass of the one
can be compared
to the free gift of the other.

Many died through the trespass
of the one man Adam;

but God's grace has now abounded for many
through the free gift
that came by the grace
of the one man, Jesus Christ.

The judgement

following the one trespass of Adam
was condemnation for sin,
but the free gift of grace
in Jesus Christ
after many trespasses
is the forgiveness of sin.

Death exercised dominion
through the trespass of Adam,
but now, dominion in life
belongs to those
who receive the abundance of grace,
and the free gift of forgiveness,
through Jesus Christ.

Just as the one trespass
led to condemnation for all,
so the one act of righteousness
leads to forgiveness and life for all.

By the disobedience of Adam,
many were made sinners;
now, by the obedience of Christ,
many will be made righteous.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 4.1-11*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

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 Jesus answered,

'It is written,
"Your life does not depend on bread alone,
but on 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,

'It is also written,
"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'

Then the devil took him to a very high mountain,
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world,
and their splendour; and the devil 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 angels came and ministered to him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 2 – Sunday 8 March

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Genesis 12.1-4a*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said to Abram,

'You are to leave your country,
and your people, and your father's house,
and go to the land that I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation,

and I will bless you,

and I will make your name great,

so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

and censure those who dishonour you;

and in you,

all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went,

as the Lord had told him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 121

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 1.8-12*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

Do not be ashamed

of the testimony about Christ our Lord.

And do not be ashamed of me, his prisoner,

but join with me

in suffering for the gospel,

relying on the power of God,

who saved us, and called us, with a holy calling,

not on account of anything we had done,

but on account of God's own purpose and grace.

This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus

before the the beginning of time,

and it has now been revealed

through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus,

who has abolished death

and has brought life and immortality to light

through the gospel.

For this gospel,

I was appointed a herald,

and an apostle, and a teacher,

and for this reason, I suffer as I do,

but I am not ashamed,

for I know the one in whom I have put my trust,

and I am sure that he is able to guard

until the end

all that I have entrusted to him.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 17.1-9*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus took with him

Peter and James,

and James's brother John,

and he led them up a high mountain,

by themselves.

And Jesus was transfigured before them.

His face shone like the sun,

and his clothes became dazzling white.

Then Moses and Elijah appeared,

talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus,

'Lord, it is good for us to be here;

if you wish, I will make three shelters here,

one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'

While Peter was still speaking,

a bright cloud overshadowed them,

and from the cloud, a voice said,

'This is my Son, the Beloved,

the one in whom I delight.

Listen to him.'

When the disciples heard the voice,

they fell to the ground,

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, 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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 3 – Sunday 15 March

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Exodus 17.1-7

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The whole congregation of the Israelites made their journey in stages, as the Lord commanded.

In one place where they rested, there was no water for the people to drink.

The people quarrelled with Moses, saying, '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, saying,

'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 with you some of the elders of Israel;

and 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 Quarrel, and Testing,

because the Israelites quarrelled

and tested the Lord, saying,

'Is the Lord amongst us or not?'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 95

SECOND READING – Romans 5.1-2,5-8

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

We have been reconciled to God by faith,

and so, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

we have peace with God,

and we receive the gift of God's grace,

in which we stand.

And now that God's love

has been poured into our hearts

(through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us),

we have a joyful confidence in the glory of God,

and a hope that will not be disappointed;

for while we were still weak,

Christ died for us, the ungodly.

It is rare for anyone to die for another -

even for one who is good -

but the proof of God's love for us is this:

that while we were still sinners,

Christ died for us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 4.5-14

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Jesus came to a Samaritan city,

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 midday.

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 asking you for a drink,

you would have asked him for the gift of living water.'

The woman said to him,

'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep.

Where would you get that living water?

Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob,

who gave us this well,

and drank from it himself,

as did his sons and his livestock?'

Jesus said to her,

'Everyone who drinks this water

will be thirsty again,

but those who drink the water

that I will give them

will never be thirsty.

The water that I will give

will become within them

a flowing fountain of water

for eternal life.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 4 – Sunday 22 March

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – 1 Samuel 16.1b, 6-7, 10-13a

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

The Lord said to Samuel,
'I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem,
for I have provided for myself a king,
amongst his sons;
so fill your horn with oil,
and set out.'

In the house of Jesse and his sons in Bethlehem,
Samuel looked first on Eliab (the eldest son),
and thought,
'Surely this is the Lord's anointed.'

But the Lord said to Samuel,
'Do not look on his appearance,
or on the height of his stature,
because I have rejected him.

Mortals may look on the outward appearance,
but the Lord looks on the heart.'

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,
but Samuel said to Jesse,
'The Lord has not chosen any of these.
Are all your sons here?'

And Jesse said,
'There remains yet the youngest,
but he is keeping the sheep.'

Samuel said,
'Send and bring him;
and we will not sit down to eat
until he arrives.'

When Jesse brought David in,
the Lord immediately said to Samuel,
'Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.'

Samuel took the horn of oil,
and anointed David
in the presence of his brothers;
and the spirit of the Lord
came mightily upon David
from that day forward.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 23

SECOND READING – Ephesians 5.8-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Once you were darkness,
but now you are light,
in the Lord.

Live as children of light,
for the fruit of the light
is goodness, and righteousness, and truth.

Seek to discern what is pleasing to the Lord,
and take no part
in the unfruitful works of darkness,
but instead, bring them to the light.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 9.1-3, 6-7, 14, 16-17, 33-39

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

As Jesus walked along,
he saw a man
who had been 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,
but that the works of God might be revealed in him,'
and Jesus spat on the ground,
made mud with the saliva,
spread the mud on the man's eyes,
and said to the man,
'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam'
(which means Sent).

The man went and washed,
and came back, able to see.

All of this happened
on the sabbath day.

The Pharisees argued amongst themselves.
Some insisted, 'This man is not from God,
for he does not observe the sabbath.'
But others said,
'A sinner could not perform such signs.'

The man who had been healed said,
'Surely his good works show
that he is a prophet.'

The Pharisees answered him,
'Are you, born entirely in sin,
presuming to teach us?'
And they drove him out.

Jesus found him and said to him,
'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'

He answered,
'Who is that, sir?
Tell me, so that I may believe.'

Jesus said to him,
'You are speaking to him.'

He said,
'Lord, I believe.'
And he worshipped him.

Jesus said,
'For judgement I have come into this world -
to bring sight to the blind,
and to expose the blindness
of those who think they can see.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 5 – Sunday 29 March

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 37.11-14*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The people of Israel say,

‘Our bones are dried up,
and all our hope is gone.’

But the Lord God says:

‘I am going to bring you up from your graves,

O my people;

and bring you back to the promised land.

I will put my spirit within you,

and you shall live,

and then you shall know

that I am the Lord.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 130

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.6,10-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

To set the mind on the flesh is death,

but to set the mind on the Spirit

is life and peace.

Christ is in you,

and though your body is dead in sin,

your spirit is alive

in the righteousness of Christ.

If the Spirit of the one

who raised Jesus from the dead

dwells in you,

the one who raised Christ from the dead

will give life to your mortal body also,

through the Spirit dwelling within you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 11:20-41,43-45*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to John.

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.’

Jesus said to Martha,

‘Your brother will rise again.’

Martha said to Jesus,

‘I know that he will rise again

at the resurrection on the last day.’

Jesus said to Martha,

‘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?’

Martha said to Jesus,

‘Yes, Lord, I believe

that you are the Messiah, the Son of God,

the one coming into the world.’

Martha went back

and called her sister Mary,

and told her,

‘The Teacher is here,

and is calling for you.’

On hearing this,

Mary got up quickly and went to Jesus

(who had not yet come to the village,

but was still at the place where Martha had met him).

Those who were with Mary, in the house, consoling her,

followed Mary,

because they thought

that she was going to the tomb

to weep there.

When Mary saw Jesus,

she knelt at his feet, and said to him,

‘Lord, if you had been here,

my brother would not have died.’

When Jesus saw Mary weeping,

and those who were with her also weeping,

he was deeply moved.

Jesus said, ‘Where have you laid him?’

They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’

And Jesus also began to weep.

Some of those who were there said,

‘See how he loved him!’

But others said,

‘He opened the eyes of the blind.

Could he not also

have kept this man from dying?’

Then Jesus came to the tomb,

greatly distressed.

It was a cave,

and a stone was lying against it.

Jesus said,

‘Take away the stone.’

Martha (the other sister of the one who had died)

said to Jesus,

‘Lord, there will already be a stench,

because he has been dead for 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.

Jesus looked upwards and said,

‘Father, I thank you for having heard me;’

then he cried out with a loud voice,

‘Lazarus, come out!’

The dead man came out,

his hands and his feet bound with strips of cloth,

and his face wrapped in a cloth.

Jesus said to them,

‘Unbind him, and let him go.’

And many of those who had come with Mary,

and saw what Jesus did,

believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PALM SUNDAY - Sunday 5 April

Readings for Year A

The Palm Procession reading is read outside at the beginning of the Palm Procession.

The Passion reading is usually read by the minister.

PALM PROCESSION – Luke 19.35-40

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

They brought the colt to Jesus,
threw their cloaks on it,
and set Jesus on it.

As Jesus rode along,
people spread their cloaks on the road.

As Jesus approached the path
down from the Mount of Olives,

the whole crowd of disciples
began to praise God joyfully
with a loud voice
for all the deeds of power
that they had seen,
saying,

‘Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest!’

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,
‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop.’

Jesus answered,
‘I tell you,
if the people were silent,
the stones would shout out.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MAIN LITURGY

FIRST READING – Isaiah 50.4-7

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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
the Lord God awakens my ear,
that I may listen, and learn.

The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I did not turn away.

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.
I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 31.9-16

SECOND READING – Philippians 2.5-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Let the same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus.

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.
Being born in human form,
he humbled himself through obedience,
even to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

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

This is the word of the Lord.

PASSION – Matthew 26.14 - 27.66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Judas agrees to betray Jesus

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 Judas Iscariot thirty pieces of silver.

And from that moment,
Judas Iscariot began to look for an opportunity
to betray Jesus to them.

The Passover prepared

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?’

Jesus 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.

The betrayal foretold

When it was evening,
Jesus took his place with the twelve;
and while they were eating, he said to them,
'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'
They became greatly distressed
and began to say to Jesus, one after another,
'Surely not I, Lord?'
Jesus answered,
'One who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me
will betray me.
The Son of Man will go as it is written of him,
but woe to the 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?'
Jesus replied, 'You have said so.'

Institution of The Lord's Supper

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 not drink again
of the fruit of the vine
until the day when I drink it anew
with you
in my Father's kingdom.'

The denial foretold

When they had sung a 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 Jesus,
'Though all become deserters because of you,
I will never desert you.'
Jesus said to Peter,
'Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows,
you will deny me three times.'
Peter said to Jesus,
'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.'
And so said all the disciples.

Jesus prays in Gethsemane

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.'
Jesus took with him
Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee,
and began to be anguished and distressed.
He said to them,
'My soul is deeply grieving, even to death;
remain here, and stay awake with me.'
And going a little further,
he threw himself on the ground, and prayed,
'My Father, if it is possible,
let this cup pass away from me;
yet not as I will, but as you will.'
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;
for 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.'

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus

While Jesus 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 Judas, the betrayer,
had given them a sign, saying,
'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.'
At once Judas came up to Jesus, and said,
'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.
Jesus said to Judas,
'Friend, do what you are here to do.'
Then they came and laid hands on Jesus
and arrested him.
One of the disciples with Jesus
put his hand on his sword,
drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest,
cutting off his ear,
but Jesus said to him,
'Put your sword back into its place;
for all who take the sword
will perish by the sword.'

For I could appeal to my Father,
who would at once send twelve legions of angels,
but how then
would the scriptures be fulfilled,
which say it must happen in this way?
To the gathered crowd, Jesus said,
'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
might be fulfilled.'
Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus before the High Priest

Those who had arrested Jesus
took him to the house of Caiaphas the high priest,
where the scribes and the elders had gathered.
Peter followed them at a distance,
to the courtyard of the high priest,
where he sat with the guards,
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
who claimed that Jesus had said
that he was 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 Jesus,
'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,
after this, 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 to the scribes and elders,
'Why do we still need witnesses?
You have 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?'

Peter's denial of Jesus

Peter was sitting outside, in the courtyard.
A servant-girl came to Peter and said,
'You also were with Jesus, the Galilean.'
But Peter denied it before all of them, saying,
'I do not know what you are talking about.'
When Peter went out to the porch,
another servant-girl saw him,
and she said to the bystanders,
'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.'
Again Peter denied it, with an oath, saying,
'I do not know the man.'
After a little while
the bystanders came up, and said to Peter,
'Certainly you are one of them,
for your accent betrays you.'
Then Peter 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 Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Jesus brought before Pilate

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 Jesus, led him away,
and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

The suicide of Judas

When Judas, the betrayer,
saw that Jesus was condemned,
he repented
and brought back the thirty pieces of silver
to the chief priests and the elders.
Judas said,
'I have sinned, by betraying innocent blood.'
But they said,
'What is that to us? See to it yourself.'
Judas threw down the pieces of silver in the temple
and departed;
and he went and hanged himself.
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 that had been set on him,
and they gave them for the potter's field,
as the Lord commanded.'

Pilate questions Jesus

Now Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor;
and Pilate asked Jesus,
'Are you the King of the Jews?'
Jesus said, 'You say so.'
But when the chief priests and the elders
made accusations against Jesus,
he did not answer,
and Pilate said to Jesus,
'Do you not hear
how many accusations they make against you?'
But still Jesus gave no answer,
not even to a single charge.

Barabbas or Jesus

Now at the festival
it was the governor's custom
to release a prisoner for the crowd,
anyone they wanted.
At that time they had a notorious prisoner,
called Barabbas.
So after the crowd had gathered, Pilate said to them,
'Who do you want me to release for you,
Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?'
For Pilate realised
that it was out of envy
that the chief priests and elders
had handed Jesus over to him.
While Pilate 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 the release of Barabbas,
and to have Jesus killed.
Pilate, the governor, said to them again,
'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,
'Crucify him!'
Pilate asked,
'Why, what evil has he done?'
But they shouted all the more,
'Crucify him!'

Pilate hands Jesus over to 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 Pilate released Barabbas for them;
and after having Jesus flogged,
handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers mock Jesus

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 twisted some thorns into a crown,
and put it on his head.
They put a reed in his right hand,
then 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.

The crucifixion of Jesus

As they went out,
the soldiers came upon a man from north Africa,
named Simon,
and they compelled him to carry the cross.
When they came to the place called Golgotha
(which means the Place of the Skull),
they offered Jesus 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 amongst 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.'
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.'

If 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 God wants him;
for he claimed to be the Son of God.’
The bandits who were crucified with him
also taunted him in the same way.

The death of Jesus

At midday, darkness came over the whole land,
for three hours.
Then Jesus cried with a loud voice,
‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’
which means,
‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’
When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,
‘He is calling for Elijah.’
One of them ran and brought 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 very 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 was the Son of God!’

The women at the cross

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.

The burial of Jesus

When it was evening,
there came a rich man, from Arimathea,
named Joseph,
who was a disciple of Jesus.
He went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus;
and Pilate ordered that it should be given to him.
So Joseph of Arimathea
took the body of Jesus,
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 guard at the tomb

The next day (that is, after the day of Preparation),
the chief priests and the Pharisees
gathered before Pilate, and said,
‘Sir, while that impostor was still alive,
he said that after three days
he would 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,
that 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 secure.’
So they went with the guard
and made the tomb secure
by sealing the stone.

The Passion of the Lord.

MAUNDY THURSDAY – Thursday 9 April

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Exodus 12.1-3,5a,6-8,11-14

A reading from the book of Exodus.

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.

Your lamb shall be without blemish,
a year-old male.

You shall keep it
until the fourteenth day of this month;
then the whole assembled congregation of Israel
shall slaughter the lamb at twilight.

They shall take some of the blood
and put it on the door-posts, 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.

This is how you shall eat it:
your belt fastened,
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 first-born
in the land of Egypt,
both people 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 become a day of remembrance for you.

You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord.

This law shall stand for ever,
through every generation that is to come.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 116.10-17

SECOND READING – Revelation 5.11-14

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I, John, looked,

and I heard the voice of many angels
surrounding the throne,
and the living creatures, and the elders.

There were thousands upon thousands,
even millions upon millions,
singing in full voice,

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
to receive all power and wealth,
all wisdom and might,
all honour and glory and blessing!’

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth
and under the earth, and in the sea, singing,

‘To the one seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb,
be blessing and honour
and glory and might
for ever and ever!’

And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’
And the elders fell down and worshipped.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 1.19,23,26b-27,29

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

This is the testimony
given by John the Baptist
when priests and Levites
came from Jerusalem
to ask him, ‘Who are you?’

He said,

‘I am the voice of the one
crying out in the wilderness,
“Make straight the way of the Lord,”
as the prophet Isaiah has said.

But among you now
there stands one whom you do not know,
the one who is coming after me.
I am not worthy
to untie the thong of his sandal.’

The next day,
John saw Jesus coming towards him,
and declared,

‘Here is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world!’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

GOOD FRIDAY – Friday 10 April

FIRST READING – Isaiah 53.3-5

(no introduction at the beginning or response at the end – just read the passage as it appears below)

He was despised and rejected by others;

a man of suffering,

and acquainted with infirmity.

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,

and crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the punishment that made us whole,

and by his bruises, we are healed.

SECOND READING – Hebrews 4.14-16; 5.7-9

(no introduction at the beginning or response at the end – just read the passage as it appears below)

Since we have a great high priest

who has passed through the heavens,

Jesus, the Son of God,

let us hold fast

to our faith and our proclamation.

For we do not have

a high priest

who is unable

to sympathise with our weaknesses,

but 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 trust in him.

GOOD FRIDAY PASSION READINGS

BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE

GOOD FRIDAY PASSION READING PART 1

John 18:1-27

(no introduction at the beginning or response at the end – just read the passage as it appears below)

Jesus 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 led to the place
a band of guards and officials,
from the high priests and the Pharisees,
and they arrived there
with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.
Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him,
came forward and asked them,
'Who is it
that you are 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,
'Who is it
that you are 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 others 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 servant,
cutting off his right ear.
The servant's name was Malchus.
Jesus said to Peter,
'Put your sword back in its sheath.
Am I not to drink the cup
that the Father has given me?'
Then the guards and the officials
arrested Jesus, bound him,
and took him first to Annas,
who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas,
the high priest that year.
Caiaphas was the one who had advised them
that it was better
to have one person
die for the people.

Simon Peter, and another disciple, followed Jesus.
The other disciple was known to the high priest,
and so was able to follow Jesus
into the courtyard of the high priest;
but Peter was left standing outside the gate,
until the other disciple
(the one who was known to the high priest)
went out
and spoke to the woman who guarded the gate,
and brought Peter in.
The woman said to Peter,
'Are you also
one of this man's disciples?'
Peter said,
'I am not.'
Now the servants and officials
had made a charcoal fire,
because it was cold,
and they were standing around it to keep warm;
and Peter stood with them.
Then the high priest questioned Jesus
about his disciples and his teaching.
Jesus answered,
'I have spoken openly to everyone.
I have always taught in the synagogue
and in the temple,
where the people gather.
I have said nothing in secret.
Why ask me,
when you can ask those who heard me.'
When Jesus had said this,
one of the temple police standing nearby
struck Jesus on the face, saying,
'Is that how you answer the high priest?'
Jesus answered,
'If what I have said is untrue, then say so;
but if what I have said is true,
why do you strike me?'
Annas sent Jesus, bound,
to Caiaphas the high priest.
Now Simon Peter
was still standing and warming himself;
and they asked him,
'Are you also one of his disciples?'
Peter denied it, and said, 'I am not.'
One of the servants of the high priest
(a relative of the man
whose ear Peter had cut off)
asked Peter,
'Did I not see you with him in the garden?'
Again Peter denied it;
and at that moment,
the cock crowed.

GOOD FRIDAY PASSION READING PART 2

John 18:28 - 19:16a

(no introduction at the beginning or response at the end – just read the passage as it appears below)

At first light,
they took Jesus from Caiaphas
to Pilate's headquarters.
They themselves did not enter the headquarters,
as that would have been a ritual defilement,
preventing them from eating 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 brought him to you.'
Pilate said to them,
'Take him yourselves
and judge him according to your law.'
They 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 say this about me?'
Pilate replied,
'I am a Roman, not a Jew.
Your own nation and your own chief priests
have handed you over to me.
What have you done?'
Jesus answered,
'My kingdom is not of this world.
If my kingdom were of this world,
my followers would be fighting to protect me.
But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.'
Pilate said,
'So you are a king!'
Jesus answered,
'Those are your words.
I was born,
and I came into the world,
to testify to the truth.
Everyone who belongs to the truth
listens to my voice.'
Pilate said to him,
'And what is truth?'
Pilate went again
to those who were outside,
and said to 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
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 those outside,
'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,
'Behold the man!'
When the chief priests and the temple 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.'
They answered,
'According to our law,
he must die,
because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'
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 no answer.
Pilate therefore said to him,
'Do you refuse to speak to me?
Do you not know
that I have the power to release you,
and the power to crucify you?'
Jesus said,
'You would have no power over me
had it not been given to you.
The one who handed me over to you
is guilty of a greater sin.'
On hearing this, Pilate sought to release Jesus,
but the chief priests and the temple police urged him,
saying,
'If you release this man,
you are no friend of the emperor,
for everyone who claims to be a king
sets himself against the emperor.'
Pilate brought Jesus outside,
and sat on the judge's bench,
at a place called The Stone Pavement.
It was the day of Preparation for the Passover,
close to midday.
He said to them,
'Behold 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 Caesar.'
Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them
to be crucified.

GOOD FRIDAY PASSION READING PART 3

John 19:16b-end

(no introduction at the beginning or response at the end – just read the passage as it appears below)

With Jesus carrying his own cross,
they led him out to 'The Place of the Skull',
which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.
There they crucified him,
and two others with him,
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 people 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.
The chief priests said to Pilate,
'It should not say, "The King of the Jews;"
but, "This man claimed to be 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.
But his 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 garments among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'
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, standing beside her,
the disciple whom he loved,
he said to his mother,
'Woman, here is your son.'
Then he said to the disciple,
'Here is your mother.'
And from that time on,
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 leaders of the people
did not want the bodies left on the cross
during the sabbath
(especially as 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.
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 they 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.
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 upon the one
whom they have pierced.'
(This account is given
by the one who witnessed these things,
so that you may know it to be true.)
Now Joseph of Arimathea
was a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly,
because of his fear
of the religious authorities.
After these things had taken place,
Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate
to let him take away the body of Jesus.
Pilate gave him permission;
so he came and removed Jesus's body.
Nicodemus,
who had 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 their burial customs.
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 day of Preparation,
and the tomb was nearby,
they laid Jesus there.

EASTER DAY – Sunday 12 April

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 2.22-32,36

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said,

‘People of Israel, hear these words.

You know that the true nature
of Jesus of Nazareth
was made known to you by God,
by the deeds of power, and wonders and signs,
that God did through him amongst you.

This Jesus, whom you crucified,
by the hands of those outside the law,
(all by God’s plan and foreknowledge),
God has now raised up,
having freed him from death,
because it was impossible for him
to be held in death’s power.

King David wrote,

“I see the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices,
and 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 fill me with gladness at your presence.”

People of Israel, I can say to you confidently,
that our ancestor David both died, and was buried,
and that his tomb is with us to this day.

But as a prophet, King David knew
that God had promised
to put one of his descendants on his throne.

Trusting in this promise,
he was speaking of the Messiah,
and the resurrection of the Messiah,
when he said
that he would not be abandoned to Hades,
nor would his flesh experience corruption.

This Jesus, God has now raised up;
and of this, we are all witnesses.

Therefore,
let the entire people of Israel know, with certainty,
that God has made him both Lord and Messiah,
this Jesus, whom you crucified.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 118.15-25

SECOND READING – Colossians 3.1-4

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Now that you have been raised up with Christ,
seek the things which are above,
where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on the things that are above,
not on the things of earth,
for you have died,
and your new life now is lived in God, with Christ.

When Christ, who is your life, is revealed,
then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 20.1-18

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

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.’

So Peter, and the other disciple, set out,
and went towards 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.

Simon Peter 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 had reached the tomb first,
also went in; and he saw, and he believed;
(for until this point,
they had not understood the scripture,
that he must rise from the dead).

Then the two 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?
Who is it, that you are 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!’

Mary 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 tell them that
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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 2 – Sunday 19 April

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 2.36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said,

‘Let everyone in Israel know, for certain,
that this Jesus, whom you crucified,
God has made to be both Lord and Messiah.’
When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart,
and they said to Peter, and to the other apostles,
‘Brothers, what should we do?’

Peter said to them,

‘Repent, and be baptised, 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.

This promise is for you, and for your children,
and for all who are far away,
all now called by the Lord our God.’

With these and many other words,

Peter urged them, saying,
‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’

Those who welcomed Peter’s message were baptised,
and that day, three thousand
were added to their number.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 116.1-3,10-17

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 1.3-9

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By his great mercy, he has given us new birth,
through the resurrection of his son Jesus Christ
from the dead -

new birth into a living hope,
and into an inheritance, kept for us in heaven,
that will never perish, spoil, or fade.

You are being protected,
by the power of God,
through faith,
for the salvation
that will be fully revealed
at the end of the age.

In this you rejoice,
even though, now, for a little while,
you suffer many trials.

Even gold is tested, by fire;
and your faith is more precious than gold.

Your trials demonstrate that your faith is genuine,
which will be to your praise and honour
when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Although you have not seen him, you love him.

Even though you do not see him now,
you believe in him,
and you are filled
with an inexpressible and glorious joy,
as you receive the salvation
which is the outcome of your faith.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 20.19-31

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

It was evening, on the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house
where the disciples had met
were locked,
because they were afraid.

Jesus came and stood amongst them,
and said, ‘Peace be with you.’

Then he showed them his hands, and his side;
and the disciples rejoiced
when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them,

‘Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’

Then he breathed on them,

and said to them,
‘Receive the Holy Spirit.

Now, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven;
but if you cling on to those sins, they are retained.’

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 Thomas 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 put my hand in his side,
I will not believe.’

A week later,

the disciples were again inside,
with the doors locked,
and Thomas was with them.

Jesus came and stood amongst them, and said,

‘Peace be with you.’

Then Jesus 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 do not see, and yet believe.’

Now Jesus did many other signs
in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.

But these are written

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 3 – Sunday 26 April

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 2.42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

All those who were baptised devoted themselves
to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
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, they spent time together in the temple.

They broke bread at home,
and ate with glad and generous hearts, praising God,
and they had the goodwill of all the people.

And day by day, the Lord added to their number
those who were being saved.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 150

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 1.17-23

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

The one we name as Father
is the one who judges all people, impartially,
according to their deeds;

so live a life that honours our Father,
during this time of your exile.

You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways
that you inherited from your ancestors;
ransomed not with perishable things,
like silver or gold,
but with the precious blood of Christ,
who was like a sacrificial lamb,
without defect or blemish.

This was all destined before the foundation of the world,
but has been revealed in these last days
for your sake.

Through Christ, you have come to trust in God,
who raised Christ from the dead, and gave him glory;
and now your faith and hope are set on God.

You have purified your souls
by your faithfulness to the truth,
and you have sincere love for one another;
so love one another deeply, from the heart.

You have been born anew, not of anything perishable,
but through the imperishable, living and enduring
word of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.13-35

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

That same day, two of the disciples
were walking to a village called Emmaus
(about seven miles from Jerusalem),
talking with each other
about everything that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing,
Jesus himself came near, and walked with them,
but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

He said to them,

'What are you discussing with each other
as you walk along?'

They stood still, looking downcast.

One of them (whose name was Cleopas)
answered him,

'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem
who does not know
the things that have happened there in these days?'

Jesus asked them, 'What things?'

They replied, 'Concerning 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.

We had hoped that he was the one to deliver Israel.

It is now the third day since these things took place,
and some women of our group astounded us.

They were at the tomb early this morning,
and they did not find his body there,
but came back and told us
that they had 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.'

Then Jesus said to them,

'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe
all that the prophets have declared!

For it was necessary
that the Messiah should suffer these things,
and only then enter into his glory.'

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
Jesus 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;
the day is nearly over.'

So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, Jesus took bread,
blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him;
and he disappeared from their sight.

They said to each other,

'Were not our hearts burning within us,
while he was talking to us on the road,
and opening the scriptures to us?'

That same hour, they returned to Jerusalem,
and found the eleven and their companions,
gathered together.

They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed,
and has appeared to Simon!'

Then the two disciples

told what had happened on the road,
and how the Lord had been made known to them
in the breaking of the bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 4 – Sunday 3 May

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 4.32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

All the believers
were of one heart and mind.
No one claimed
any of their possessions
as their own.
They shared
all that they had.
With great power,
the apostles spoke
of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus;
and God's great blessing was upon them all.
None of them was left in need,
for those who owned plots of land, or houses,
sold them, and brought the proceeds
to the apostles
to distribute to those in need.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 23

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 2.20-24

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Brothers and sisters:
If you endure
when you are beaten
for doing wrong,
what credit is that?
But if you endure
when you suffer for doing right,
it is a worthy offering.
And to this you have been called,
for Christ also suffered, for you,
setting you an example that you should follow.
He committed no sin, and spoke no deceit.
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 all things justly.
He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
so that, free from sin,
we might live for righteousness.
It is by his wounds
that we have been healed.
Like sheep, you were going astray;
but now you have returned
to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 10.1-10

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

'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 allows him in,
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 they follow him,
because they know his voice.
They will not follow a stranger,
but will run from him,
because they do not know his voice.'
Jesus used this figure of speech with them,
but they did not understand
what he was saying to them.
So Jesus said to them,
'Very truly, I tell you,
I am the gate for the sheep.
All who came before me
were 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 life abundant.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 5 – Sunday 10 May

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 6.1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The disciples were increasing rapidly in number,
and the Greek disciples
complained against the Hebrews,
because their widows were being neglected
in the daily distribution of food.

So the twelve apostles called together
the whole community of the disciples, and said,
'We must not allow our acts of service
to distract us from our devotion to prayer
and to proclaiming the word of God;
so let us select seven believers of good standing,
full of the Spirit and of wisdom,
and appoint them to oversee these tasks.'

This proposal from the apostles
found favour with the whole community,
and they chose Stephen
(a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit),
together with Philip, Prokoros, Nikanor,
Timon, Parmenas,
and Nicholas (who was a convert from Antioch).

The seven of them stood before the apostles,
and the apostles laid their hands on them
and prayed for them.

The word of God continued to spread.

The number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem,
and many of the priests
became obedient to the faith as well.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 33.1-5,18-19

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 2.4-9

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Come to the one who is the living stone,
rejected by mortals,
but chosen by God as the foundation stone;
and like living stones yourselves,
be built into a spiritual house,
to become a holy priesthood,
offering spiritual sacrifices,
acceptable to God,
through Jesus Christ.

For the scripture says:

'See, I am laying in Zion
a cornerstone, chosen and true;
and whoever relies on it
will never be put to shame.'

To you then, who believe,
this stone has become your sure foundation;
but for those who do not believe,

the scripture also says:
'The stone that was rejected
has become the very head of the corner,'
and also 'a stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall';
and so indeed they stumble and fall
when they reject the word of God.

But you are a chosen race,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
a people redeemed,
declaring the praises
of the one who called you
out of the darkness and into the light.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.1-14

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God.

Trust also in me.

There is room for many
in my Father's house,
and I go to prepare a place for you;
and I will come again,
and take you to myself,
so that where I am,
there you may be also.

And you already 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,

'I am the way,
and the truth, and the life.

Everyone who comes to the Father
comes through me.

If you know me,
you know my Father also;
indeed you do know him,
and have seen him.'

Philip said,

'Lord, show us the Father,
and we will be satisfied.'

Jesus said,

'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,
and you still do not know me?'

Whoever has seen me
has seen the Father.

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;
they are the words of the Father
who dwells in me.

And now,

those who believe in me
will do all that I have done,
and more,
because I am returning to the Father;
and I myself will do
whatever you ask in my name,
that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 6 – Sunday 17 May

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 7.55-60

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Concluding his address

to the high priest and the council,
Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit,
gazed into heaven,
and saw the glory of God,
and Jesus, standing at the right hand of God.

Stephen said,

‘Look, I see the heavens opened,
and I see the Son of Man,
standing at the right hand of God!’

But they covered their ears,

and with a loud shout,
they all rushed at him.

They dragged him out of the city,

and began to stone him,
laying their coats
at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning him,

Stephen prayed,
‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’

Then Stephen fell to his knees,

and as he died,
he cried out, in a loud voice,

‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 31.1-5

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 3.15-18a

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Honour Christ as Lord

with all your heart.

Always be ready

to explain the hope that is in you
to any who may ask.

Do so with gentleness, and respect,

and with a clear conscience,
so that those who speak against you
may be put to shame

by your good conduct in Christ;

for it is better, if it is God’s will,

to suffer for doing good
than for doing wrong;

as Christ also suffered for sins, once for all -

the righteous for the unrighteous -
to bring us back to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.15-21

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me,

you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father,

and he will send you another advocate,
to be alongside you for ever,

the Spirit of truth,

whom the world does not know,

and so cannot receive;

but whom you do know,

and who is with you,

and who will dwell within you.

I will not leave you as orphans;

I am coming to you.

In a little while,

the world will see me no longer,

but you will see me;

and because I live,

you also will live.

On that day,

you will know

that I am in my Father,

and you will know

that you are in me,

and that I am in you.

Those who know 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.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 7 – Sunday 24 May

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 1.1-9,12-14

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

I wrote previously

about all that Jesus did and taught
from the beginning,
until the day when he was taken up to heaven,
after he had given instructions,
through the Holy Spirit,
to the apostles whom he had chosen.

After his suffering,

he presented himself alive to the apostles,
by many convincing proofs,
appearing to them during forty days,
and speaking about the kingdom of God.

During this time,

he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem,
but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

He said to the apostles,

‘John baptised with water,
but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit
not many days from now.’

The apostles asked him,

‘Lord, is this the time
when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’

Jesus replied,

‘It is not for you to know the times or seasons
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.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem

from the Mount of Olives,
which is about a sabbath-day’s journey away.

When they had entered the city,

they went to the upper room
where they were staying:

Peter and John,
James and Andrew,
Philip and Thomas,
Bartholomew and Matthew,
James (son of Alphaeus) and Simon (the Zealot),
and Judas (the son of James).

They committed themselves

to praying together continually,
along with the women,
(including Mary, the mother of Jesus)
and also his brothers.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 68.1-10, 33-36

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 5.6-11

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Be humble

in the presence
of the mighty power of God,
that God may exalt you at the right time.

Let God, who cares for you, bear all your anxieties.

Be wise, and alert,

for your adversary, the devil,
prowls around, like a lion,
seeking someone to devour.

Resist him,

steadfast in your faith,
knowing that your brothers and sisters
throughout the world
suffer the same afflictions.

And after you have suffered a little while,

the God of all grace,
who has called you to eternal glory in Christ,
will restore, support, and strengthen you.

To God be the power and the glory for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 17.1-11

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Jesus looked up to heaven and said,

‘Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you.

You have given the Son the authority

to give eternal life
to all those you have given him.

And this is eternal life:

that they may know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Father,

I have glorified you on earth
by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

Now glorify me in your own presence once again,
with the glory that I had in your presence
before the world began.

I have made your name known

to those you gave me from the world.

They were yours, and you gave them to me,
and they have trusted your word.

They know that everything I have
comes from you.

I have passed on to them

the words that you gave to me,
and they have received them.

And they know that I myself came from you.

I pray for them now;

praying not for the whole world,
but for those you have given to me,
because they are yours,
and I have been glorified in them.

Now I am departing from the world, to return to you;
but they will remain in the world.

Holy Father, protect them in your name,
(the name that you have given to me),
that they may be one, as we are one.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PENTECOST – Sunday 31 May

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 2.1-21

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When the day of Pentecost came,
the disciples were all together in one place.
Suddenly from the sky there came a sound
like the rush of a violent wind,
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
Flames, or tongues of fire, appeared among them,
and rested upon each of them,
and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit,
and began to speak in other languages,
as the Spirit enabled them.
Now there were devout Jews,
from every nation under heaven,
staying in Jerusalem,
and at this sound, a crowd gathered,
and was bewildered,
because each one heard their own language
being spoken.
Amazed and astonished, they said,
'Surely all these who are speaking are Galileans.
How is it that we hear them
speaking about God's deeds of power
in our own native languages?'
Those who heard their own languages being spoken
were from Asia and Arabia,
Egypt and North Africa,
Judea, Syria, Turkey, Greece,
and the Balkans, Crete and Rome,
both Jews and converts.
All were amazed and perplexed,
saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'
Others sneered and said,
'They are filled with new wine.'
But Peter, standing with the eleven,
raised his voice and addressed them, saying:
'People of Judea, and all who are here in Jerusalem,
I tell you that 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 those days, God declares,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh:
your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
the young will see visions,
and your elders will dream dreams.
Upon my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
I will show wonders in the heavens above,
and signs on the earth below:
blood, and fire, and clouds of smoke;
the sun will be turned to darkness,
and the moon to blood,
before the coming
of the Lord's great and glorious day;
and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
shall be saved."
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 104.1-2, 29-36

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

All who name Jesus as Lord
do so by the Holy Spirit.
There are many different gifts,
but they are all given
by the same Holy Spirit.
There are different kinds of ministry,
but they are all given
by the same Lord.
And there are different ways of working,
but it is the same God at work
in all of them, in everyone.
Now the work of the Spirit in each individual
is given for the good of all.
Through the Spirit,
one receives the gift of wisdom;
another, through the same Spirit,
receives the gift of knowledge.
By the same Spirit,
another receives the gift of faith,
another receives the gift of healing,
and another receives the gift of working miracles.
Another receives the gift of prophecy,
another, the gift of discernment,
another, the gift of languages,
and another, the gift of interpretation.
All these are the work of the one Holy Spirit,
who distributes these gifts to each individual
as the Holy Spirit determines.
Just as the body is one body with many parts,
so we, though many, are one body, in Christ.
For in the one Spirit
we were all baptised into one body,
whether Hebrews or Greeks, slaves or free,
and we all receive the same Holy Spirit.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 20.19-23

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.
It was evening, on the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house
where the disciples had met
were locked,
because they were afraid.
Jesus came and stood amongst them,
and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then he showed them his hands, and his side;
and the disciples rejoiced
when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them,
'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'
Then he breathed on them,
and said to them,
'Receive the Holy Spirit.
Now, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven;
but if you cling on to those sins, they are retained.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

TRINITY SUNDAY – Sunday 7 June

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 40.27-31*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

How can you say,

O Jacob and Israel,

that the Lord does not know of your troubles,

or that God is neglecting

the injustice you suffer?

Have you not known?

Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary.

His understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint,

and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and grow weary,

and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who trust in the Lord

shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary,

they shall walk and not faint.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 8

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 13.11-13*

A reading from the second letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.

Finally, my brothers and sisters,

be of good heart.

Grow in the faith,

encourage one another,

agree together;

and the God of love and peace

will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the saints here send their greetings.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 28.16-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

The eleven disciples

went to the mountain in Galilee,

as Jesus had directed them.

When the disciples saw Jesus,

they worshipped him.

But some doubted.

Jesus came to them, and said,

'All authority in heaven and on earth

has been given to me.

Go therefore,

and make disciples of all nations,

baptising them

in the name of the Father

and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit,

and teaching them to obey everything

that I have commanded you.

And remember,

I am with you always,

to the end of the age.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 14 JUNE

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Exodus 19.1-6a*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Two months (to the day)

after leaving Egypt,

the Israelites entered the wilderness of Sinai,

and camped there

in front of the mountain.

Moses went up to meet with God;

and the Lord spoke to Moses

from the mountain, saying,

‘Tell the house of Jacob,

and the descendants of Israel:

You have seen what I, the Lord,

did to the Egyptians,

how I carried you on eagles’ wings,

and brought you to myself.

Now therefore,

if you will hear my voice,

and keep my covenant,

you will be my treasured possession

out of all the nations.

Indeed, the whole earth is mine,

but you shall be for me

a priestly kingdom

and a holy nation.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 100

SECOND READING – *Romans 3.21-24*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The righteousness that comes from God -

to which the Law and the Prophets testify -

has now been made known

even outside the structures of the law.

This righteousness is given,

through faith in Jesus Christ,

to all who believe.

There is no longer any difference

between Jew and Gentile,

for all have sinned,

and fallen short of the glory of God;

and all are now reconciled with God,

freely, by God’s grace,

by the redemption

that has come

through Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 9.35 - 10.8*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages,

teaching in their synagogues,

proclaiming the good news of the kingdom,

and curing every disease and every sickness.

When Jesus saw the crowds,

he had compassion on them,

because they were harassed and helpless,

like sheep without a shepherd.

He said to his disciples,

‘The harvest is plentiful,

but the labourers are few;

so ask the Lord of the harvest

to send more labourers into the harvest.’

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples

and gave them authority over unclean spirits,

to cast them out,

and to cure every disease

and every sickness.

These are the names of the twelve

he appointed apostles:

first, Simon, also known as Peter,

and his brother Andrew;

then James son of Zebedee,

and his brother John;

Philip, and Bartholomew;

Thomas, and Matthew the tax-collector;

James (son of Alphaeus), and Thaddeus;

Simon (the Zealot),

and Judas Iscariot, (the one who betrayed him).

These twelve, Jesus sent out

with the following instructions:

‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles,

and enter no town of the Samaritans,

but go rather to the lost sheep

of the house of Israel.

As you go,

proclaim the good news,

“The kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Cure the sick, raise the dead,

cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.

Freely you have received;

now freely give.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 21 JUNE

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 20.9-11a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

If I say,

‘I will no longer proclaim the Lord,
or speak in his name,’

then within me

there is something like a burning fire
in my very bones,
and I am powerless to hold it in.

All around me they say,

‘Denounce him!

Let us denounce him!’

They watch for a moment

when they can take their revenge.

But the Lord is with me like a warrior;

therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 69.14-20

SECOND READING – *Romans 6.3-4,9-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

All who are baptised into Christ Jesus

are baptised into his death.

We have been buried with him,

by baptism into his death,

so that,

just as Christ was raised from the dead,
by the glory of the Father,

we also might rise

to newness of life.

Having been raised from the dead,

Christ will never die again;

death has no more dominion over him.

The death he died,

he died to sin,

once for all;

and the life he now lives,

he lives to God.

So you also

must consider yourselves

dead to sin,

and alive to God

in Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 10.16,28-31*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said to the twelve,

‘See, I am sending you out
like sheep amongst wolves;
so be wise as serpents
and innocent as doves.

Do not fear those who kill the body
but cannot kill the soul.

Rather, let them fear the one who has power
over both the body and the soul.

Two sparrows are sold for a penny,
yet not even a sparrow
will fall to the ground
without your Father knowing it.

Do not be afraid;

you are worth more than many sparrows;
even the hairs of your head are all counted.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Sunday 28 June

Arkholme Patronal Festival of Saint John the Baptist is celebrated with a United Benefice Service on the last Sunday in June
Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Zephaniah 3.14-19

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.
Sing aloud, O Zion;
shout out, O Israel;
be glad, and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem;
for the Lord has taken away
the judgements made against you.
The Lord has turned away your enemies.
The Lord, the king of Israel, is with you,
and you shall fear disaster no more.
Today the Lord says to you, Jerusalem:
'Tremble in fear, no more, O Zion;
for I am the Lord, your God,
and I am with you.
I will save you and protect you.
I will delight in you with gladness.
With love, I will calm all your fears.
With joy, I will sing for you.
I will save you from disaster and disgrace,
and save you from all your oppressors.
I will save the lame,
and gather the outcast.
I will change your shame
into praise and honour
in all the earth.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 6.13-16,23

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.
Do not present yourself to sin,
to be used for wickedness,
but present yourself to God,
to be used for righteousness;
for it is God who has brought you
from death to life.
Sin can no longer rule over you,
now that you are no longer under the law,
but under grace.
But this does not mean
that you are free to sin.
You become like a servant
to the one that you obey.
If you obey sin, you will die,
but if you serve God,
you will find righteousness.
For the wage paid by sin is death,
but the free gift of God
is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 3.1-6

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius,
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
and Herod was ruler of Galilee,
during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,
the word of God came to John (the son of Zechariah)
in the wilderness.
John went out
into all the region
around the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins,
as it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:
'A voice cries out in the wilderness,
"Prepare the way of the Lord!
Fill the valleys, level the hills,
straighten the paths,
and make the rough ways smooth;
for all who live shall see
the saving power of God."
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 5 JULY

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Zechariah 9.9-10*

A reading from the book of the prophet Zechariah.

Rejoice, O daughter Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Your king comes to you,

triumphant and victorious,

humble and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will take away the war chariots from Israel,

and the war horses from Jerusalem;

and the weapons of war will be broken,

for he shall command peace to the nations.

He shall reign from sea to sea,

and from the river to the ends of the earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 145.8-15

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.1-4*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

There is now no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus,

for the law of the Spirit of life

in Christ Jesus

has set you free

from the law of sin and death.

God has done what the law,

in the weakness of our human flesh,

could not do.

By sending his own Son,

in the likeness of our sinful human flesh,

to deal with sin,

he condemned sin in the flesh,

so that the requirements of the law

might be fulfilled for us,

as we walk now,

not according to the flesh,

but according to the Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 11.18-19, 25-30*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Jesus said,

‘John the Baptist came,

neither eating nor drinking,

and they said,

“He has a demon”.

The Son of Man comes,

eating and drinking,

and they say,

“Look, a glutton and a drunkard -

and a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!”

But wisdom will be known by her deeds.’

Then Jesus said,

‘I thank you, Father,

Lord of heaven and earth,

because what you have hidden

from the wise and from the scholar,

you have revealed to your children,

for such was your gracious will.

All things have been entrusted to me

by my Father.

No one fully knows the Son

except the Father,

and no one fully knows the Father

except the Son,

and those to whom the Son reveals him.

So come to me,

all you that are weary

and are carrying heavy burdens,

and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you,

and learn from me;

for I am gentle

and humble in heart,

and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy,

and my burden is light.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 12 JULY

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.10-11*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return there
until they have watered the earth,
making the earth bring forth a harvest,
giving bread to eat,
and seed to sow.

So shall it be
with the word that I speak,
says the Lord.
It shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish
that which I intend,
and succeed
in the purpose for which I sent it.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 65.3-13

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.5-13*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Those who live according to the flesh
set their minds on the things of the flesh,
while those who live according to the Spirit
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
To set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit
is life and peace.

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,
with the Spirit of God dwelling within you.
Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to Christ -
but if Christ is in you,
though your body is dead in sin,
your spirit is alive
in the righteousness of Christ.

If the Spirit of the one
who raised Jesus from the dead
dwells in you,
the one who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal body also,
through the Spirit dwelling within you.

Brothers and sisters,
we have no obligation to the flesh,
to live according to its ways.

The ways of the flesh lead to death -
but if we live by the Spirit,
we put to death the deeds of the body,
and live.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 13.1-8, 18-23*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus sat beside the lake.

Great crowds gathered around him,
so he got into a boat, and sat there,
while the whole crowd stood on the beach,
and he told them many things in parables.

Jesus said:

'Listen!

A sower went out to sow.

As he sowed,
some of the seeds fell on the path,
and the birds came and ate them up.

Other seeds fell on rocky ground,
where they did not have much soil.

Because they were in shallow soil,
they sprang up quickly,

but when the sun rose,
they were scorched,
because they had no root,
and they withered away.

Other seeds fell among thorns,
and the thorns grew up and choked them.

But other seeds fell on good soil,
and produced a crop of grain -
thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold,

In the same way,
when anyone hears the word of the kingdom,
and does not understand it,
the evil one comes,
and snatches away
what was sown in the heart.

This is the seed that was sown on the path.

As for the seed that was sown on rocky ground,
this is the one who hears the word
and immediately receives it with joy,
yet has no root,
and endures only for a while.

When trouble or persecution arises
on account of the word,
that person falls away.

As for what was sown among thorns,
this is the one who hears the word,
but the cares of the world
and the lure of wealth
choke the word,
and it yields nothing.

But as for what was sown on good soil,
this is the one who hears the word
and understands it,
who indeed bears fruit -
thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold,

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 19 JULY

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 44.6-8, 21-22*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord,
the King of Israel,
Israel's Redeemer,
the Lord of hosts:
I am the first and I am the last;
and there is no other god.
No other has established a people, long ago,
or revealed what is to come.
So do not fear, or be afraid,
for I declared it long ago.
You are my witnesses!
There is no other god, no other rock.
Remember these things,
O Jacob and Israel,
for you are my servant.
I formed you,
I will not forget you.
I have swept away your transgressions, like a cloud,
and your sins, like the mist,
so return to me,
for I have redeemed you.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 86.11-17

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.14-17*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

All who are led
by the Spirit of God
are children of God.
You did not receive
a spirit of slavery,
to fall back into fear,
but you have received
a spirit of adoption,
that allows us to cry,
'Abba! Father!'
That same spirit
bears witness
with our spirit
that we are children of God;
and being adopted as children of God,
we also inherit all things,
alongside Christ himself,
both sharing in his suffering,
and sharing in his glory.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 13.24-30*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said:

'The kingdom of heaven may be compared
to someone who sowed good seed in his field;
but while everyone was sleeping,
an enemy came,
and sowed weeds among the wheat,
then went away.

So when the wheat came up,
bearing grain,
the weeds appeared as well.

The servants of the householder said,
"Master, you sowed good seed in your field,
so where did these weeds come from?"

And the master said,
"An enemy has done this."

The servants said,
"Do you want us to go and gather the weeds?"

But the master replied,
"In gathering the weeds,
you would uproot the wheat;
so let them grow together until the harvest,
and at harvest time,
I will tell the reapers
to gather the weeds first
(and bind the weeds in bundles to be burned),
and then to gather the wheat
into my barn."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 26 JULY
Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 3.5-12*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The Lord appeared to Solomon
in a dream, by night, and said,
'Make your request for something
that I might give to you.'
And Solomon said,
'You have shown great and steadfast love
to your servant, my father David,
because he walked before you in faithfulness,
in righteousness,
and in uprightness of heart towards you;
and you have continued
in your great and steadfast love for him,
and have given him a son
to sit on his throne today.

And now,
O Lord my God,
you have made me, your humble servant, to be king,
in place of my father David,
even though I am only a child,
and I do not yet know
how to go out
or how to come in.

And your servant
is in the midst
of the people you have chosen,
a great people,
so numerous
that they cannot be counted.

My humble request, therefore,
is that you give your servant
an understanding mind,
to govern your people,
able to discern between good and evil;
for who can govern
this your great people?'

It pleased the Lord
that this was Solomon's request,
so God said to Solomon,
'Because you have not asked for yourself
long life or riches,
or the death of your enemies,
but have asked for understanding,
to discern what is right,
I will grant to you what you have asked.

I will give to you
such a wise and discerning mind;
that there will have been
none like you before,
and there will be none like you again.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 119.129-136

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.18-27*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The sufferings
of this present time
are not worth comparing
with the glory
that will be revealed to us
as children of God.
Indeed, the whole creation waits,
with eager longing,
for the revealing of this glory,
longing to be set free
from its bondage to decay,
into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
The whole creation is groaning,
as if in labour pains;
and we ourselves,
who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly,
as we await our final adoption
as children of God -
the redemption of our bodies.
In this hope we were saved,
and though we do not yet see it,
we wait for it with patience and confidence.
And the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
for we do not know
how to pray as we ought,
but the Spirit intercedes for us,
with sighs too deep for words.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 13.31-33, 44-46*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said,
'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed
that someone takes, and sows in a field.
It is the smallest of all the seeds,
but when it grows,
it is the largest of all the garden plants,
and then it becomes a tree,
and the birds of the air come
to build their nests in its branches.
Or the kingdom of heaven
is like a measure of yeast,
that a woman takes
and mixes into an entire sack of flour,
until every part of it is leavened.
Or the kingdom of heaven
is like treasure hidden in a field,
which someone finds, and hides;
then in his joy,
he goes and sells all that he has
and buys that field.

Or again,
the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant,
in search of fine pearls;
on finding one pearl of great value,
to secure it,
he goes and sells all that he has.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 2 AUGUST

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.1-3a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Everyone who is thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk,
without money, and without price.
Why do you spend your money
for that which is not bread,
and your labour
for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to my words,
and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 145.8-9, 15-22

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.28-30*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

We know that all things
work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called
according to God's purpose;
indeed God knew long ago
who was destined
to become like his Son,
and now they have been called,
reconciled with God,
and even glorified,
so that Christ
might be the firstborn
amongst many
brothers and sisters.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 14.13-21*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When Jesus heard
that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist,
he withdrew in a boat
to a deserted place
by himself.

But when the crowds heard it,
they followed him on foot from the towns,
so that when Jesus went ashore,
he saw a great crowd;
and having compassion for them,
he cured their sick.

When it was evening,
the disciples came to him and said,
'This is a deserted place,
and the hour is now late;
send the crowds away,
so that they may go into the villages,
and buy food for themselves.'

Jesus said to them,
'They need not go away;
you give them something to eat.'

They replied,
'We have nothing here
but five loaves and two fish.'

And he said,
'Bring them here to me.'

Then he ordered the crowds
to sit down on the grass.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish,
he looked up to heaven,
and blessed and broke the loaves,
and gave them to the disciples,
and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

They all ate, and were filled;
and they took up what was left over
of the broken pieces -
twelve baskets full.

And those who ate
were about five thousand men,
in addition to women and children.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 9 AUGUST

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 19.9a, 11-13a*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

When Elijah reached Horeb,
the mountain of God,
he came to a cave,
and spent the night there.
Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying,
'Go out, and stand on the mountain, before the Lord,
for the Lord is about to pass by.'

Now there was a great wind,
so strong that it was splitting mountains,
and breaking rocks in pieces, before the Lord;
but the Lord was not in the wind.

And after the wind, an earthquake;
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake, a fire;
but the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire,
a sound of sheer silence.

When Elijah heard it,
he wrapped his face in his cloak,
and went out,
and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Then came the voice of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 85.8-13

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.31-39*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

If God is for us,
who can be against us?
Will God not give us
all that we could need, and more,
being the same God who did not withhold
even his own Son,
but gave him up for us all?
Who can bring any charge against God's chosen,
when it is God who redeems us?
Who can condemn,
when it is Christ Jesus who intercedes for us
(who died, was raised,
and is at the right hand of God)?
What can separate us
from the love of Christ?
Can hardship, or distress,
or persecution, or famine,
or destitution, or danger, or the sword?
As it says in the Psalm,
'For your sake,
we are being killed all day long,
like sheep to be slaughtered' -
yet in all these things,
we are more than conquerors
through the one who loves us.

For I am convinced
that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers,
nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us
from the love of God
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 14.22-33*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat,
and go on ahead
to the other side,
while he dismissed the crowds.

After he had dismissed the crowds,
he went up the mountain, by himself, to pray.

When evening came,
he was there alone.

Meanwhile,
the boat was being battered by the waves,
and was still far from land,
for the wind was against them.

Early in the morning,
Jesus came walking towards the disciples
on the lake.

When the disciples saw him,
walking on the lake,
they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!'
And they cried out in fear.

But immediately,
Jesus spoke to them, and said,
'Do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him,
'Lord, if it is you,
command me to come to you
on the water.'

Jesus said, 'Come.'
So Peter stepped out of the boat
down on to the water,
walking towards Jesus.

But suddenly aware
of the strength of the wind,
Peter became frightened,
and beginning to sink,
crying out, 'Lord, save me!'

Jesus immediately reached out his hand
and caught Peter,
saying to him,
'O you of little faith,
why did you doubt?'

When they got into the boat,
the wind dropped,
and the disciples worshipped Jesus, saying,
'Truly you are the Son of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 16 AUGUST

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 56.6-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The foreigners

who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to the Lord,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to serve the Lord,

who keep the sabbath

and hold to my covenant,
(says the Lord),

these also I will bring

to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful
in my house of prayer.

Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices

will be accepted on my altar,

for my house shall be called

a house of prayer
for all nations.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 67

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.1-2*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

I appeal to you, therefore,

brothers and sisters,
in response to God's great mercy,

to present your bodies

as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God.

Do not be conformed to this world,

but be transformed
by the renewing of your minds,

so that you may discern what is
the good, acceptable, and perfect
will of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 15.21-28*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus withdrew from Galilee

to the northern coastal area
of Tyre and Sidon.

A gentile woman (from that region)

approached Jesus, crying out,
'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David,
for my daughter is tormented by a demon.'

But Jesus did not answer,

and his disciples said to him,
'Send her away,
for she keeps shouting after us.'

So Jesus answered her, saying,

'I was sent only
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

But she came

and knelt before him, saying,
'Lord, help me.'

Jesus said,

'It is not fair
to take the children's food
and throw it to the dogs.'

She said,

'Yes, Lord,
but even the dogs
eat the crumbs
that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her,

'Woman, great is your faith!
Let it be done for you as you wish.'

And at that very moment,

her daughter was healed.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 23 AUGUST

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 51.1-4*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Listen to me,
all who pursue righteousness,
all who seek the Lord.
Look to the rock from which you were cut,
the quarry from which you were dug.
Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for I blessed them
and made them a great nation.
And now I, the Lord, will comfort Zion,
looking with compassion on her ruins,
making her wilderness like Eden,
and her desert like the garden of the Lord.
She will be filled with joy and gladness,
with thanksgiving and song.
Listen to me, my nation,
and give heed to me, my people;
for my instruction and my justice
will go forth from here
to enlighten all the world.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 138

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.4-8*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

As in one body
there are many members,
and not all the members
have the same function,
so we, though many,
are one body in Christ,
and by God's grace,
we have received
a great diversity of gifts:
prophecy (for the building up of faith);
good works, and acts of service;
teaching, encouragement,
practical generosity,
leadership, and gracious compassion.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 16.13-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus travelled north again
to the district of Caesarea Philippi.
He asked his disciples,
'Who do people say
that the Son of Man is?'
The disciples replied,
'Some say John the Baptist;
others say Elijah, or Jeremiah,
or one of the prophets.'
Jesus asked them,
'But who do you say that I am?'
Simon Peter answered,
'You are the Messiah,
the Son of the living God.'
And Jesus said to him,
'Blessed are you,
Simon, son of Jonah,
for this was revealed to you
not by flesh and blood,
but by my Father in heaven.
And I say to you,
you are Peter (the rock),
and on this rock,
I will build my church,
and the powers of hell
will not prevail against it.
I will give you the keys
of the kingdom of heaven,
and whatever you bind on earth
will be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth
will be loosed in heaven.'
Then Jesus asked the disciples
not to say to anyone
that he was the Messiah.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 30 AUGUST

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 15.16b-21*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Your words have become a joy to me,
and the delight of my heart;

and I am called by your name,

O Lord God of hosts.

For I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,
nor did I rejoice;

under the weight of your hand I sat alone,

for you had filled me with indignation.

My pain was unceasing,

my wound incurable,

refusing to be healed.

You had become to me

like a spring that had run dry.

But then, O Lord, you spoke to me, and said:

'If you turn back, I will take you back,

and you shall stand before me.

If you speak what is precious,

and not what is worthless,

you shall serve as my voice,

and they will turn to you -

not you to them.

And I will make you, to this people,

like a fortified wall, made of bronze.

They will fight against you,

but they shall not prevail over you,

for I am with you,

to save and deliver you.

I will deliver you

out of the hand of the wicked,

and redeem you

from the grasp of the ruthless.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 26.1-8

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.9-18*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Let love be genuine.

Hate what is evil.

Hold fast to what is good.

Love one another with mutual affection.

Outdo one another in showing honour.

Do not lag in zeal.

Be ardent in spirit.

Serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope.

Be patient in suffering.

Persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the saints.

Extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you;

bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice;

weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be haughty,

but associate with the lowly.

Do not claim to be wiser than you are.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil,

but take thought for what is noble

in the sight of all.

If it is possible,

so far as it depends on you,

live peaceably with all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 16.21-27*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

From that time on,

Jesus began to explain to his disciples

that he must go to Jerusalem,

and suffer many things

from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes;

and be put to death,

and on the third day, be raised.

Peter took Jesus aside,

and began to rebuke him, saying,

'Let it not be so, Lord;

this must never happen to you.'

But Jesus turned and said to Peter,

'Get behind me, Satan!

You are a stumbling-block to me,

for your mind is still set on the human,

not the divine.'

Then Jesus said to his disciples,

'If any of you would be my disciple,

you must deny yourself,

take up your cross,

and follow me;

for those who aim

to save their life

will lose it,

while those

who lose their life

for my sake

will find it.

What does it profit anyone

to gain the whole world

but forfeit their very soul?

No one can give you anything

that would match the value of your soul.

And the Son of Man will come,

with his angels, in the glory of his Father,

to reward everyone

according to their deeds.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 33.7-11*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The word of the Lord came to me:

I have set you up

to serve the house of Israel,

like the one

who walks the city walls

watching for approaching danger;

so when you hear my word,

you must give warning to the house of Israel.

If you fail to warn the wicked

to turn from their ways,

in accordance with my word,

they will die in their iniquity -

but their blood will be on your hands.

But if you warn the wicked

to turn from their ways,

and they do not turn from their wicked ways,

they will die in their iniquity,

but your own life will be saved.

I have heard the house of Israel say:

'Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us,

and we waste away because of them;

how then can we live?'

So say to them now,

'As surely as I live (says the Lord God),

I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,

but rather,

that they turn from their wickedness and live;

so turn back, turn back, from your evil ways,

O house of Israel.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 119.33-40

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.19-20*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves,

but leave room for the wrath of God;

for it is written,

'Vengeance is mine,

I will repay, says the Lord.'

No, 'if your enemies are hungry,

feed them;

if they are thirsty,

give them something to drink;

for by doing this

you will heap burning coals on their heads.'

Do not be overcome by evil,

but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 18.15-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus spoke to his disciples.

'If a brother or sister sins against you,

go and point out the fault

when the two of you are alone.

If they listen to you,

you have won them back.

But if they will not listen,

take one or two others along with you,

so that every matter may be confirmed

by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

If they still refuse to listen,

tell it to the church;

and if they refuse to listen

even to the church,

treat them as you would treat

a gentile or a tax-collector.

Truly I tell you,

whatever you bind on earth

will be bound in heaven,

and whatever you loose on earth

will be loosed in heaven.

In the same way,

if two of you agree on earth

about anything you ask,

it will be done for you

by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three

are gathered in my name,

I am there with them.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Genesis 50.15-21*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Joseph's brothers said to each other,
'What if Joseph

still bears a grudge against us?

What if he is planning now

to pay us back in full

for all the wrong that we did to him?'

So they approached Joseph, saying,

'Before he died,

your father gave us this message

to pass on to you:

"I beg you, forgive the crimes of your brothers,

and the wrong that your brothers did to you."

We come to you now as humble servants

of the God of your father,

and we beg you to forgive us

for all the wrongs

that we have done to you.'

Joseph was moved to tears

when he heard these words.

His brothers also wept,

and fell down before him, saying,

'We are your servants.'

But Joseph said to them,

'Do not be afraid!

You thought you had a plan for harm,

but God had a plan for good,

to save many lives, as you see today.'

And Joseph reassured them,

and comforted them, saying,

'Have no fear.

I will provide for you

and for your children.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 103.1-13

SECOND READING – *Romans 13.8-10*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Owe no one anything,

except to love one another;

for the one who loves another

has fulfilled the law.

The commandments,

'You shall not commit adultery;

You shall not murder;

You shall not steal;

You shall not covet';

and any other commandment,

are summed up in this word:

'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Love does no wrong to a neighbour;

therefore,

love is the fulfilling of the law.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 18.21-35*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Peter came and said to Jesus,

'Lord, how many times

should I forgive someone

who sins against me?

As many as seven times?'

Jesus said to him,

'Not seven times, I tell you,

but seventy-seven times!'

And Jesus told this parable

to teach about the kingdom of heaven.

'There was a king

who wished to settle accounts

with his servants.

One of the servants owed the king

a thousand gold bars.

As he could not pay,

the master ordered him to be sold,

to pay the debt,

together with his wife and children,

and all his possessions.

The servant fell on his knees before his master,

and begged,

"Have patience with me,

and I will pay you everything."

And out of pity for him,

the master released the servant,

and forgave him the debt.

Now that same servant, as he went out,

came upon one of his fellow-servants,

who owed him a few copper coins;

and seizing him by the throat, he said,

"Pay me what you owe."

The fellow-servant fell down

and pleaded with him,

"Have patience with me, and I will pay you."

But he refused;

and he had his fellow-servant thrown into prison

until the debt could be paid.

When the other servants saw this,

they were greatly distressed,

and they went and reported to their master

all that had happened.

The master summoned the servant,

and said to him,

"You wicked servant!

I forgave you all that debt

because you pleaded with me.

Should you not have had mercy

on your fellow-servant,

as I had mercy on you?"

And in exasperation,

the master handed that servant over to be punished

until the debt could be paid.

Surely this is how my heavenly Father

should treat each of you,

if you do not forgive each other

from your heart.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
and call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake their deeds,
and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them return to the Lord our God,
who will have mercy on them,
and abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
says the Lord;

neither are my ways your ways,
for as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways
higher than your ways

and my thoughts
higher than your thoughts.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 145.1-8

SECOND READING – *Philippians 1.21-27*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

For me,

to live is Christ,
and to die is gain.

I do not know which I prefer;
I am hard pressed between the two.

To live in the flesh
means fruitful labour;

but my desire is to depart,
and to be with Christ,

for that is far better;
and yet to remain in the flesh
is more necessary for you.

Since I am convinced of this,
I know that I will remain,

and continue with all of you,
for the sake of your progress

and your joy in the faith;
and I will share with you
in your confidence and joy in Christ Jesus
when I come to you again.

So live your life in a manner
that is worthy

of the gospel of Christ,
so that,
whether I come to see you myself,
or whether I hear about you from afar,
I will know that you are standing firm,

in one spirit,
working side by side
with one mind
for the faith of the gospel.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 20.1-16*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus told this parable
to teach about the kingdom of heaven.
'A landowner went out early in the morning
to hire labourers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with the labourers
for the usual daily wage,
he set them to work in the vineyard.

When he went out again
at about nine o'clock,

he saw others
standing idle in the market-place;

and he said to them,
"Join the others working in the vineyard,
and I will pay you whatever is right."

When he went out again at about noon,
and again at about three o'clock,

he did the same.

And at about five o'clock, he went out
and found others, standing around;

and he said to them,
"Why are you standing here idle all day?"

They said to him,

"Because no one has hired us."

He said to them,

"Join the others working in the vineyard."

When evening came,
the owner of the vineyard

said to his manager,
"Call the labourers,
and give them their pay,
beginning with the last,
and then going to the first."

Those who were hired at about five o'clock
came in first,

and each of them received the full daily wage.

Now when the others came,
they thought they would receive more;

but each of them also received
the usual daily wage.

And when those who had worked all day received it,
they grumbled against the landowner, saying,

"These who were the last to arrive
worked only one hour,

but you have made them equal to us,
who have borne the burden of the day,
and the scorching heat."

But the landowner replied to them,

"Friends, I am doing you no wrong.
Did you not agree with me

for the usual daily wage?
Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give the last
the same as I give to you.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose
with what belongs to me?

Or are you envious, because I am generous?"

So the last will be first,
and the first will be last.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MICHAELMAS

Sunday 27 September

Whittington Patronal Festival
of Saint Michael the Archangel
is celebrated with a United Benefice Service
on the last Sunday in September
Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Revelation 12.7-12*

A reading from the book of Revelation.
War broke out in heaven.
Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.
The dragon and his angels fought back,
but they were defeated,
and there was no longer any place for them
in heaven.
The great dragon was thrown down -
that ancient serpent,
who is called the Devil and Satan,
the deceiver of the whole world.
He was thrown down to the earth,
and his angels were thrown down with him.
Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming,
'By the power of God, Salvation has been won.
The kingdom of our God is established,
and the authority of God's Messiah,
for the one who accused our brothers and sisters
night and day, before God, has been defeated.
They have defeated their accuser
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony -
for they offered up their lives, even unto death.
So let all the company of heaven rejoice.
But woe to the earth and the sea,
for the devil has come down to you with great wrath,
because he knows that his time is short!'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 2.1-13*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.
For the sake of encouragement in Christ,
for the sake of confidence in love
and sharing in the Spirit,
for the sake of compassion and sympathy,
and to make my joy complete,
I ask this one thing: be united,
in one purpose, one love, and one mind.
Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,
but in humility
regard others as better than yourselves.
Let each of you look not to your own interests,
but to the interests of others.
Let Christ Jesus be your example,
for he did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited, but emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.
Being born in human form,
he humbled himself, through obedience,
even to the point of death, even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted him,
and has given him the name
that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus,
every knee should bow,
in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,
and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Therefore, my beloved,
just as you have always respected my teaching,
not only in my presence,
but much more now in my absence,
ensure that you live out your salvation
to fully honour God,
who is at work in you,
enabling you
both to desire
and then to fulfil
God's good purposes.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 21.23-32*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.
When Jesus entered the temple,
the chief priests and the elders of the people
came to him, as he was teaching,
and said, 'By what authority
are you doing these things?'
Jesus said to them,
'Let me ask you a question.
Did John's message of baptism come from God,
or from John's own mind?'
And they argued with one another, saying,
'If we say, "from God", he will say,
"So why did you not believe in him?"
But if we say, "from John's own mind",
we are afraid of the crowd;
for they all regard John as a prophet.'
So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.'
And Jesus said to them,
'Neither will I tell you
by what authority I do these things.'
And he told them this parable.
'What do you think?
A man had two sons.
He told each of them to go and work in the vineyard.
The first one said, "I will not go";
but then later, he changed his mind, and went.
The second one said, "I will go, sir;" but he did not go.
Which of the two sons did the will of his father?'
They answered him, 'The first.'
Jesus said to them,
'Truly, I tell you,
the ones you condemn
are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you;
for when John came,
you rejected him,
but they followed him
into the way of righteousness;
and even when you saw this,
you did not change your minds
and believe in him.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER – HARVEST FESTIVAL

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 5.1-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Let me sing a love-song for my beloved vineyard,
planted on a fertile hill.

I dug the ground, and cleared the stones,
and planted the choicest vines.

I built a tower, and dug a wine-press,
and expected the finest grapes;
but when the fruit came, it was bitter.

So now, people of Judah,
and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could I have done for my vineyard?

And yet it yielded only bitterness.

So now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;

I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

I will make of it a waste-land:
no longer shall it be pruned or hoed;
it will be overgrown with brambles and thorns;
I will command the clouds to give it no rain.

And hear this:

my vineyard is the house of Israel, says the Lord;
and the people of Judah
are the vines that I planted and cherished.

And I looked for justice, but saw bloodshed;
I looked for righteousness,
but heard the cries
of those left in distress.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 80.9-16

SECOND READING – *Philippians 3.4b-14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh,
I have more.

I am a descendant of Israel, in the tribe of Benjamin,
a Hebrew born of Hebrews.

As to the law, I was a Pharisee;
as to zeal, I was a persecutor of the church;
as to righteousness under the law, I was blameless.

Yet whatever benefits I had,
these I now regard as worthless, because of Christ.

Indeed all things are worthless,
compared to the all-surpassing value
of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For the sake of Christ, I have lost everything,
and yet I regard this loss as nothing,

that I may gain Christ,
and be found in him,

not having a righteousness of my own,
that comes from the law,

but having a righteousness that comes from God,
through faith in Christ -

through knowing Christ,

and the power of his resurrection,
and a share in his sufferings;

perhaps even becoming like him in his death,
and attaining resurrection from the dead.

It is not that I have already fully attained
this righteousness,

but I press on to make it my own,
just as Christ Jesus has made me his own.

And so, my brothers and sisters, this one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind,

and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on towards the goal,

for this is God's high calling to us, in Christ Jesus.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 21.33-41,43,45-46*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said to the chief priests
and the elders of the people:

'Listen to another parable.

There was a landowner,
who planted a vineyard.
and put a fence around it.

Within the fence,

he dug a wine-press, and built a tower.

Then he leased the vineyard to tenants,
and went away to another country.

When the harvest-time came,
he sent his servants to the tenants
to collect his produce.

But the tenants seized his servants,
beating one, killing another, and stoning another.

So he sent more servants, and then still more,
but they treated them in the same way.

Finally he sent his son to them, saying,
"They will surely respect my son."

But when the tenants saw the son,
they said to themselves,

"This is the one who will inherit the vineyard;
come, let us kill him, and take it for ourselves."

So they seized him,
threw him out of the vineyard,
and killed him.

When the owner of the vineyard comes,
what will he do to those tenants?'

They answered him,

'He will put those wretches to a miserable death,
and lease the vineyard to other tenants,
who will give him the produce at the harvest-time.'

Jesus said, 'Therefore I tell you,
the kingdom of God will be taken away from you,
and given to a people
that produces the fruits of the kingdom.'

When the chief priests and the Pharisees
heard his parables,

they realised that Jesus was speaking about them.

They wanted to arrest him,
but they feared the crowds,

because the people regarded Jesus as a prophet.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 25.1,4a,6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

O Lord, you are my God;

I will exalt you,

I will praise your name;

for you have done wonderful deeds,

faithful and true to all that you planned

from long ago.

You have been a refuge to the poor,

and to the needy in their distress,

a shelter from the rainstorm,

and protection from the scorching heat.

Now on this mountain

the Lord of hosts

will make for all peoples

a feast of rich food

and fine wine.

The Lord will take away

the cloud of darkness

that hangs over peoples and nations.

The Lord will destroy the power of death for ever.

The Lord God will wipe away

the tears from all faces,

and will take away the disgrace of the people

from all the earth,

for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said, on that day,

‘Truly this is the Lord our God,

in whom we trusted.

Let us be glad and rejoice,

for the day of our salvation has come.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 23

SECOND READING – *Philippians 4.4-9*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again I say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness

be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything,

by prayer and supplication,

with thanksgiving,

let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God,

which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved,

whatever is true, whatever is honourable,

whatever is just, whatever is pure,

whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,

if there is any excellence,

and if there is anything worthy of praise,

think about these things.

Whatever you have learned and received

from all that I have said and done,

put this into practice also.

And the God of peace

will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 22.1-14*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Once more, Jesus spoke

to the chief priests and Pharisees

in parables, saying:

‘There was a king

who gave a wedding banquet for his son.

He sent his servants

to call those who had been invited

to the wedding banquet,

but they would not come.

Again he sent other servants, saying,

“Tell those who have been invited:

Look, I have prepared my dinner,

my oxen and my fattened calves

have been slaughtered,

and everything is ready;

come to the wedding banquet.”

But they made light of it, and went away,

one to his farm, another to his business.

Others even seized his servants,

maltreated them, and killed them.

The king was livid.

He sent his troops,

destroyed those murderers,

and burned their city;

then he said to his servants,

“The wedding is ready,

but those who were invited

are not worthy;

so go out into the streets,

and invite everyone you find

to come to the wedding banquet.”

The servants went out into the streets

and gathered everyone they found,

both good and bad;

so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Now when the king came in to see all the guests,

he challenged one

who had not put on the wedding robe;

and he was speechless;

so the king had him thrown out into the night.

For even when many are called,

not all are finally chosen.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 45.1,4-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says to Cyrus

(anointed by the Lord as King of Persia):

I have led you, and strengthened you,
to subdue all the nations around you,
so that every way is open to you
and no city gate is closed to you.

For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel, my chosen,
I have called you by your name,
and given you a title of honour,
even though you do not know me.

For I am the Lord,
and there is no other;
beside me there is no other god.

I arm you,
though you do not know me,
so that all may know,
from the rising of the sun
to its setting,
that there is none beside me.

I am the Lord,
and there is no other.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 96

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 1.1-10*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
to the church at Thessalonika,
in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you, and peace.

We always give thanks to God
for all of you,

and we name you in our prayers,
constantly remembering
before our God and Father
your work of faith, your labour of love,
and your steadfast hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers and sisters,
that God has indeed chosen you,
because the message of the gospel
came to you
not in word only,
but also in great power,
and in the Holy Spirit.

You saw our ministry amongst you,
and you became imitators of us, and of the Lord;
and in spite of persecution,
you received the word with joy,
inspired by the Holy Spirit,
so that you became an example
to all the believers
in Macedonia and beyond.

You have inspired people
wherever your faith in God has become known,
so that we have no need to speak about it,
for everyone knows of the welcome you gave us,
and how you turned from idols
to serve the true and living God,
and how you now trust
in the coming of the Son from heaven -
Jesus, raised by God from the dead,
who will rescue us
from the trials that are still to come.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 22.15-22*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When the chief priests and Pharisees
heard these parables,
they realised that Jesus was speaking about them;
so the Pharisees set about plotting
how to entrap Jesus in what he said.
The Pharisees sent their disciples to Jesus,
along with some of Herod's officers,
with this question:

'Teacher,
we know that you are sincere,
and that you teach the way of God
in accordance with the truth,
and that you show deference to no one.
Tell us, then, what you think.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?'
Jesus, aware of their malice, said,
'You hypocrites!

Why are you putting me to the test?
Show me the coin
that is used for the tax.'

They brought him a coin,
and he said to them,
'Whose head is this,
and whose title?'

They answered,
'The emperor's.'

He said to them,
'Give therefore to the emperor
the things that are the emperor's,
and to God
the things that are God's.'

They were confounded by his answer,
and they left him, and went away.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Leviticus 19.1-2, 15-18*

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

The Lord gave these words to Moses,
to speak to the entire assembly
of the people of Israel.

‘You shall be holy,
for I am holy,
says the Lord your God.

You shall render no injustice.

You shall neither favour the poor,
or defer to the great,
but with justice
you shall judge your neighbour.

You shall not spread slander
amongst your people,
and you shall not profit
from endangering the life of your neighbour;
I am the Lord.

You shall not hate
anyone of your kin
in your heart.

You shall challenge your neighbour’s wrong-doing,
for if you do not do so,
you will bear the guilt yourself.

You shall not take revenge,
or bear a grudge,
against any of your people,
but you shall love your neighbour as yourself:
I am the Lord.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 1

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 2.1,7b,12-13*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

You yourselves know,
my brothers and sisters,
that our coming to you
was not in vain.

We were gentle among you,
like a mother
with her own children,
urging and encouraging you
to lead lives
that are honouring to God,
who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

We constantly give thanks to God
that you received the word of God from us,
accepting it
not as a human word
but as God’s word (which indeed it is).

And we give thanks
that God’s word
is now at work
in you who believe.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 22.35-40*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

One of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer,
asked Jesus this question, to test him:

‘Teacher,
which commandment
in the law
is the greatest?’

Jesus said to him,

“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind.”

This is the greatest and first commandment.

And the second is like it:

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

On these two commandments
hang all the law and the prophets.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

4 BEFORE ADVENT – ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

Sunday 1 November

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Revelation 7.9-12, 14b-17*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

After this I looked,

and there was a great multitude,
that no one could count,
from every nation,
from all tribes, and peoples, and languages,
standing before the throne
and before the Lamb,
robed in white,

with palm branches in their hands.
They cried out in a loud voice, saying

‘Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!’

And all the angels standing around the throne
and around the elders

and the four living creatures,
fell on their faces before the throne
and worshipped God, singing,

‘Amen! Blessing and glory
and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honour and power and might
be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.’

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,
‘These, robed in white,

are the ones
who have come out of the great ordeal.

They have washed their robes
and made them white
in the blood of the Lamb,
and now they are before the throne of God,
worshipping God, day and night,
within God’s temple;

and the one who is seated on the throne
will shelter them.

They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

for the Lamb, at the centre of the throne,
will be their shepherd,
and will guide them to the springs
of the water of life;

and God will wipe away
every tear from their eyes.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 34.1-10

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 4.13-18*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

Concerning those who have died,
brothers and sisters,
we do want you to be fully informed,
so that you may not grieve,
as others do,
who have no hope.

For since we believe
that Jesus died and rose again,
we have full assurance
that God will also raise up
those who have died in him.

This we declare to you
as the Lord’s own word:

that we who remain alive on earth
until the coming of the Lord
will by no means go to meet the Lord
ahead of those who have died.

For the Lord himself,
with a cry of command,
with the archangel’s call,
and with the sound of God’s trumpet,
will come down from heaven,
and the dead in Christ will be raised up first.

Only then will we who are alive, who are left,
will be caught up in the clouds
together with them
to meet the Lord in the air.

And then we will be with the Lord for ever.
So encourage one another with these words.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.1-12*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

When Jesus saw the great crowds that followed him,
he went up on the mountainside, and sat down.

His disciples gathered around him,
and he began to teach 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.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

3 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday 8 November

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Micah 3.5-12*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

This is the word of the Lord

concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who declare peace
whenever they have something to eat,
but declare war
against those who give them nothing:
'It shall be night to you now, without vision,
and darkness, without revelation;
the sun shall go down on you,
and even the day shall be darkness to you.'

Indeed the prophets shall be disgraced,
and the diviners shall be put to shame;
they shall cover their lips,
for they have no word from God.

But as for me,

I am filled with power,
with the spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob their transgression
and to Israel their sin.

Hear this,

you rulers of the house of Jacob,
and chiefs of the house of Israel,
you who despise justice,
and distort all that is right,
who build Zion with bloodshed
and Jerusalem with wickedness!

Your rulers give judgement for a bribe,
your priests teach for a price,
your prophets give oracles for money;
and yet you lean upon the Lord and say,
'Surely the Lord is with us!
No harm shall come upon us.'

It is because of you

that Zion shall be ploughed like a field,
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the Temple Mount shall be overgrown.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 43

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 5.1-11*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

Concerning the times and the seasons,
brothers and sisters,
you do not need to have anything written to you.

For you yourselves know very well
that the day of the Lord will come
like a thief in the night.

When they say, 'There is peace and security,'
then sudden destruction will come upon them,
as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman,
and there will be no escape!

But you, beloved, are not in darkness,
for that day to surprise you like a thief;
for you are all children of light and children of the day;
we are not of the night or of darkness.
So then let us not fall asleep as others do,
but let us keep awake and be sober;
for those who sleep sleep at night,
and those who are drunk get drunk at night.
But since we belong to the day,
let us be sober,
and put on the breastplate of faith and love,
and for a helmet the hope of salvation.
For God has destined us not for wrath
but for obtaining salvation
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
so that whether we are awake or asleep
we may live with him.
Therefore encourage one another
and build up each other,
as indeed you are doing.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 23.1-12*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said to the crowds, and to his disciples,

'The scribes and the Pharisees
have the authority of Moses,
so do whatever they teach you, and follow it;
but do not follow them in what they do,
for they do not practise what they teach.
They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,
and lay them on the shoulders of others;
but they themselves
are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.
They do all their deeds to be seen by others.
They love the place of honour at banquets,
and the best seats in the synagogues,
to be greeted with respect in the market-place,
and to have people call them rabbi.

But you are not to be called rabbi,

for you have one teacher,
and you are all disciples together.

And call no one on earth your father,

for you have one Father - your Father in heaven.

Neither are you to be called teachers,

for you have one teacher, the Messiah.

The greatest amongst you will be the servant,
for all who exalt themselves will be humbled,
and all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

2 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday 15 November

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Zephaniah 1.12-16, 18*

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
says the Lord.

I will punish the people who rest complacently,
who say in their hearts,
'The Lord will not act.'

Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them.

Though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near,
near, and hastening fast.

The sound of that day is bitter with the warrior's cry.

That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and the highest towers.

Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath,
for in the fire of the Lord's passion,
the whole earth
and all its inhabitants
shall be consumed.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 90

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 5.12-15*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

We appeal to you, brothers and sisters,
to love and respect
those who minister amongst you
and challenge you
in the name of the Lord.

Be at peace with one another.

Challenge the idle,
encourage the faint-hearted,
support the weak,
and be patient with everyone.

See that none of you repays evil for evil,
but always seek to do good
to one another and to all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 25.14-29*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus told this parable to his disciples,
'A master summoned his servants,
and entrusted his property to them.

To one he gave five silver coins,
to another two, to another one,
to each according to their ability.

Then he went away.

The servant who had received five coins
went off at once and traded with them,
and made five more.

In the same way,
the servant who had two coins made two more.

But the servant who had received one coin
went off and dug a hole in the ground
and hid his master's money.

After a long time, the master of those servants came
to settle accounts with them.

The one who had received five coins
came forward, bringing five more, saying,
"Master, you gave me five silver coins;
see, I have made five more."

The master said to him,
"Well done, good and faithful servant;
you have been faithful in a few things,
I will put you in charge of many;
enter into the joy of your master."

Then the servant with the two coins came forward,
saying, "Master, you gave me two coins;
see, I have made two more."

The master said to him,
"Well done, good and faithful servant;
you have been faithful in a few things,
I will put you in charge of many;
enter into the joy of your master."

Then the servant who had received one coin
came forward, saying,

"Master, I knew that you were a harsh man,
reaping where you did not sow,
gathering the harvest

where you did not scatter the seed;
so I was afraid,

and I went and hid your coin in the ground.
Here it is. Have what is yours."

But the master replied,

"You wicked and lazy servant!

You knew, did you,
that I would reap where I did not sow,
and gather where I did not scatter?

Then you ought to have invested my money
with the bankers, and on my return
I would have received what was my own
with interest.

So take the coin from him,
and give it to the one with the ten coins.

For to all those who have,
more will be given, and they will have an abundance;
but from those who have nothing,
even what they have will be taken away."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CHRIST THE KING

Last Sunday before Advent

Sunday 22 November

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

I myself will search for my sheep,
and seek them out, like a shepherd,
says the Lord God.

In cloud and thick darkness they were scattered,
but now I shall rescue them,
and gather them together,
into their own land,

and feed them with good pasture
on the mountains of Israel,
by running streams,
where they will find rest.

I will seek the lost,
and bring back the strayed,
and bind up the injured,
and strengthen the weak;

but the full and the strong I shall feed with justice,
when I judge between the full and the hungry;
for it was the strong who drove the weak away,
and now I shall save my flock,
and judge between them.

I shall establish one shepherd,
my servant David,
to feed my sheep, and be their shepherd.

I, the Lord, will be their God,
and my servant David
shall be prince amongst them.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 100

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 1.17-23*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I pray that the God of glory,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
may give you the spirit of wisdom and insight
as you grow in the knowledge of God.

I pray that you may know in your hearts
the full glory of the hope
to which God has called you,
which is the inheritance of all the saints,
and the immeasurable greatness of God's power
for all who believe.

This is the very power of God
that raised Christ from the dead,
to be seated at God's right hand
in the heavenly places,
far above all rule and authority,
all power and dominion,
and any name that can be named,
in this world or the next;
the same power of God that made Christ
the head of the whole church
(which is the body of Christ,
filled with the presence of Christ).

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 25.31-46*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'When the Son of Man comes in glory,
and all the angels with him,
then he will sit as king on his royal throne.
All the nations will be gathered before him,
and he will separate people one from another,
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,
putting the sheep to his right hand
and the goats to the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand,
"Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you
from the foundation of the world;

for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was in rags and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
I was in prison and you visited me."

Then the righteous will answer him,
"Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry
and gave you food,
or thirsty and gave you something to drink?

And when was it that we saw you a stranger
and welcomed you,
or in rags and gave you clothing?

And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison
and visited you?"

And the king will answer them,
"Truly I tell you,
whenever you did it
for one of the least of these,
who are my brothers and sisters,
you did it for me."

Then he will say to those at his left hand,
"You that are accursed,
depart from me into the eternal fire
that has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
for I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,
in rags and you did not give me clothing,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

Then they also will answer,
"Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty
or a stranger or in rags or sick or in prison,
and did not take care of you?"

Then he will answer them,
"Truly I tell you,
whenever you did not do it
for one of the least of these,
you did not do it for me."

And these will go away for ever into punishment,
but the righteous into life.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.