



LECTIONARY

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

The Lectionary

This lectionary is based on the international ecumenical three year cycle of readings, which originated as the Roman Catholic Lectionary for Mass (RC), and which was adapted to become first the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), and then, with further adaptations, the Church of England Principal Service Lectionary (CE). It is then adapted locally to incorporate the three Patronal Festivals of Arkholme Saint John the Baptist (on the last Sunday in June), Whittington Saint Michael the Archangel (on the last Sunday in September), and Gressingham Saint John the Evangelist (on the first Sunday after Christmas) - plus Harvest on the first Sunday in October.

Selections have been made where the lectionaries differ from each other, or where there are options. In particular, 'ordinary time', during which the gospel for the year is read in sequence, is not interrupted for saints days (other than patronal festivals), or for Candlemas, All Saints Day, Transfiguration Sunday (in some places the Last Sunday before Lent), or Creation Sunday (in some places the Second Sunday before Lent). The Candlemas gospel is used on Epiphany 1C, All Saints Sunday is kept on the Fourth Sunday before Advent, the Transfiguration gospel is read on the Second Sunday in Lent (following RC), and creation themes are included in the Harvest Festival readings.

Despite these differences between the lectionaries (RC/RCL/CE), and local variations, there are very few occasions where the gospel readings vary between the lectionaries (apart from minor differences in the selection of verses).

In line with the original version of CE, the Epiphany can be anticipated but not delayed, ie is kept on any Sunday falling between 2 and 6 January inclusive.

To accommodate the Patronal Festival of Saint John the Evangelist, readings from the Sunday after Christmas and the first four Sundays after Epiphany are juggled, prioritising the reading of each synoptic gospel in order in its own year, with Saint John in Year B.

For other New Testament readings, the various lectionaries are often found to be out of sync, although the same books are being read at the same time in each lectionary. The CE venture into Revelation in place of Corinthians in January of Year B is not used. And Eastertide readings from Acts are here arranged by theme: accounts from the early days in Jerusalem in Year A, the emerging inclusion of the Gentiles in Year B, and the ministry of Saint Paul in Year C. This includes the account of Saint Paul in Antioch on Easter 4C, in honour of Saint Margaret of Antioch, patron of Hornby.

Year A, B or C?

Add together the four digits of the year, eg for the year 2029, $2 + 0 + 2 + 9 = 13$

The year letter changes on Advent Sunday, so if it is between 27 November and 31 December, add 1.

If there are two digits in the answer so far, add those two digits together, eg for 13, $1 + 3 = 4$

If you now have 1, 4, or 7, it is Year A.

If you have 2, 5, or 8, it is Year B.

If you have 3, 6, or 9, it is Year C.

...or just use this chart

2021 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2022 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2023 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2024 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2025 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2026 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2027 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2028 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2029 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2030 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2031 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2032 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2033 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2034 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2035 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2036 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2037 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2038 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2039 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2040 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2041 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2042 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2043 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2044 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2045 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2046 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2047 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)
2048 is Year B (becoming Year C on Advent Sunday)
2049 is Year C (becoming Year A on Advent Sunday)
2050 is Year A (becoming Year B on Advent Sunday)

ADVENT 1

Sunday between 27 November and 3 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 or drunkenness,

indecent, 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 taken,

and the other sent away.

Of two people grinding grain together;

one will be taken,

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 between 4 and 10 December

Readings for *Year A*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 11.1-5, 10a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

A new son of David will appear,
and the spirit of the Lord will be with him:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of authority and strength,
the spirit of knowledge
and of honouring the Lord;
and his delight will be
in serving the Lord.

He will not judge by appearances,
but with righteousness
he will declare justice
for the poor;
the power of his words
will shake the earth
and strike down the wicked.

Righteousness and faithfulness
will be his strength,
and all the nations
will turn to him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 72.1-7, 18-19

SECOND READING – *Romans 15.4-9a*

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, and endurance,
and the encouragement of the scriptures,
we might have confidence in God.

So may the God of patience,
endurance, and encouragement,
grant you to live in harmony with one another
in Christ Jesus,
with one mind and one voice
to give glory to God,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another,
just as Christ has welcomed you.

Christ became a servant
to the descendants of Abraham
to fulfil the promises
God made long ago.

And Christ also became a servant
to all peoples, and all nations,
so that they also
might give glory to God
for God's mercy.

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."'

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

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

When John saw
that many religious leaders
were coming 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 imagine
that it is enough
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 shoes.

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 between 11 and 17 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 sing for joy.

The desert will be green,

like the fields, the forests

and the mountains,

revealing the glory of the Lord,

the majesty of our God.

So encourage the weak,

and any who are afraid.

Say to them,

'Be strong, do not fear!

God is surely coming,

with justice,

to save you.

The eyes of the blind shall see,

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.

Psalms 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.

As the farmer waits patiently

for the crops from the earth,

while they receive

both the autumn and the spring rains,

so you also must be patient.

Be confident in your hearts,

trusting that the coming of the Lord is near.

Do not complain against one another,

for you also will be judged.

See, the Judge is standing at the door!

As an example for you,

of patience in 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 the Baptist (in prison)

heard what the Messiah was doing,

he sent his disciples to ask Jesus,

'Are you the one

who was foretold by the prophets,

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;

and 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.

'You did not go into the wilderness

to see a reed blowing in the wind,

or to see someone dressed

in fine royal robes.

No, you went to see a prophet.

And more than a prophet,

for John fulfils the scripture:

"I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

to prepare your way before you."

John the Baptist

is indeed

the greatest of all

who have ever been born.

And everyone

in the kingdom of heaven

will be greater still!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 4

Sunday between 18 and 24 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.

I write to you
as a servant of Jesus Christ,
called to be an apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God,
which 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 -
for the Lord is near.

Let your gentleness
be known to everyone.

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 between 26 December and 1 January

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 amongst 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 between 2 and 6 January only

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 has covered the earth,

and thick darkness has covered the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you,

and the glory of the Lord

will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,

and kings shall come

to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around:

they gather together, they come to you.

Your sons shall come from far away,

and your youngest daughters shall be carried here

on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see,

and be radiant.

Your heart shall thrill and rejoice;

for the abundance of the sea

shall be brought to you,

the wealth of the nations

shall come to you.

Camels, from Egypt, and Arabia,

will fill the land.

They will bring gold and frankincense,

and they will 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 been commissioned

to make known

a glorious truth

that was unknown to former generations.

But now, by the Holy Spirit,

this glorious truth has been revealed

to God's apostles and prophets

through the gospel:

that the Gentiles

are our brothers and sisters

in Christ -

members of the same body,

and inheritors of the same promise.

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 the chief priests and the scribes,

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

amongst 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 between 7 and 13 January

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says:

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 by God's grace,

being reconciled with God,

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 between 14 and 20 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 Naftali,

(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,
all the power of your oppressor,
will be broken.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 27

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,
and called to be saints,
alongside all
who call on the name
of our Lord Jesus Christ
in every place.

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.

In Christ,
you have been enriched
in every way,
in speech and knowledge of every kind,
growing in confidence
in the message Christ,
with every 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 – Matthew 4.12-17

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

When he heard

that John the Baptist had been arrested,
Jesus 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 Naftali,

fulfilling the words

of the prophet Isaiah:

'Hear, O Land of Zebulun and Naftali,
(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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 3

Sunday between 21 and 27 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 1.10-13, 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
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 4.18-25*

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

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.
Jesus said to them,
'Come, follow me,
and I will send you out to fish for people!'
Immediately, they left their nets
and followed him.
As he went from there,
he saw two other brothers,
James and John,
in the boat with their father,
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
amongst the people.
His fame spread throughout all Syria,
and they brought to him
all the sick,
and all those who were afflicted
with various diseases and pains,
and he cured them.
And great crowds followed him,
from Galilee,
from the Ten Towns,
from Jerusalem and Judea,
and from beyond the Jordan.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 4

Sunday between 28 January and 3 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 between 4 and 10 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

Readings for *Year A*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 58.1, 3b-9a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Shout out, says the Lord,
and do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people
that I see their rebellion.
Tell the house of Jacob
that I know their transgressions.
For 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.
You deny yourself,
bow your head,
and spread sackcloth and ashes,
just for one day.
But this is not the fast that I honour,
says the Lord.
The fast that I honour
is to remove the bonds of injustice,
and let the oppressed go free.
The fast that I honour
is to share your bread with the hungry,
to bring the homeless poor into your house,
and not to hide from the needs of others.
When this becomes your fast,
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 amongst 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 between 11 and 17 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

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 follow Paul',
and another saying 'I follow 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 being built together
on that foundation
as God's temple.

So let no one harm God's temple,

for God's temple is holy,
with God's Spirit dwelling within.

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 any man
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.

Psalm 119.1-8

EPIPHANY 7

Sunday between 18 and 24 February

(if before Ash Wednesday)

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
amongst 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.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 3.18-22*

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 in Christ -
not just Paul, Apollos, and Peter,
but the whole world,
even life and death,
and the present and the future.

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.

Psalm 119.33-40

EPIPHANY 8

Sunday between 25 February and 3 March

[not Sunday 3 March in a leap year]

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Isaiah 49.8-10,13-15

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says:

I declare freedom to the captives.

I call those who are in darkness
to walk in the light.

They shall have food along the way,
and find pasture on the barren heights.

They will neither hunger nor thirst,
and they will not be struck down
by the desert heat,

for I shall have compassion on them,
and I shall lead them by springs of water.

So let the heavens sing for joy,

let the earth rejoice,

and let the mountains burst into song,

for the Lord has comforted his people,
and will attend to all their needs.

And yet Jerusalem continues to say,

‘the Lord has forsaken me,’

and ‘my Lord has forgotten me.’

But can a woman forget her nursing-child,

or show no compassion

to the child of her womb?

Even if this were possible,

I will never forget you,

says the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 131

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 4.1-5

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

We have sought to be servants of Christ,
and stewards of God’s mysteries.

The question is

whether we have been trustworthy stewards.

But this question

is not for you or me to answer,

or any human court.

I am not aware of anything against myself,

but that does not mean I am acquitted:

it is the Lord who will judge.

So do not rush to judgement,

for when the Lord comes,

the Lord will bring everything to light,

and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 6.24-34

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

Jesus taught his disciples, saying.

‘You cannot serve two masters;

for you will either hate the one and love the other,
or be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and wealth.

So do not worry about your life,

what you will eat, or what you will drink,

or about your body, what you will wear;

for life is more than food,

and the body is more than clothing.

Look at the birds of the air;

they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns,

and yet your heavenly Father feeds them;

and you are much more valuable

than the birds of the air.

Or consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;

they neither toil nor spin,

yet even Solomon, in all his glory,

was not adorned like one of these.

If God so clothes the grass of the field,

(which is alive today, and dried up tomorrow),

how much more will God clothe you,

O you of little faith!

None of you, by worrying,

can add a single hour to your span of life;

so do not worry,

saying, “What will we eat?”

or “What will we drink?”

or “What will we wear?”

The Gentiles strive for these things,

but your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Work instead for the kingdom of God

and for righteousness,

and all these other things will be given to you as well.

Do not worry about tomorrow;

for today has concerns enough of its own.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 9

Sunday between 4 and 7 March

[plus Sunday 3 March in a leap year]

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for *Year A*

FIRST READING – Deuteronomy 11.18-20, 26-28

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

The Lord says:

You shall treasure these words of mine
in your heart and in your soul.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand,
and fix them as an emblem on your forehead.

Teach them to your children,

when you are at home
and when you are away,
when you lie down
and when you rise.

Write them on the doorposts of your house,
and on your gates.

See, I set before you today
a blessing and a curse:

a blessing,

if you obey the commandments
of the Lord your God
that I am commanding you today;

and a curse,

if you do not obey the commandments
of the Lord your God -
if you reject the way
that I am commanding you today,
to follow other gods
that you have not known.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 31.1-5, 19-24

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, this gospel,

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;
and 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 7.21-29

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

Jesus taught his disciples, saying.

'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord",
will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but only those who do the will
of my Father in heaven.

On that day many will say to me,

"Lord, Lord,
in your name
we prophesied,
and cast out demons,
doing many deeds of power."

And I will say to them,

"I never knew you;
depart from me,
you lawless ones!"

For everyone

who hears these words of mine
and acts on them
is like a wise person
who builds a house on rock.

When the rains fall, and the floods rise,
and the winds blow and beat against that house,
it does not fall,
because it has been built on rock.

But everyone

who hears these words of mine
and does not act on them
is like a foolish person
who builds a house on sand.

When the rains fall, and the floods rise,
and the winds blow and beat against that house,
it collapses,
and is swept away.'

When Jesus had finished speaking,

the crowds continued to give their full attention
to his every word,
for his teaching was powerful,
in contrast to the teaching of their scribes.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Joel 2.1-20*

A reading from the book of the prophet Joel.
Blow the trumpet in Zion,
and raise the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all who dwell in the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near:
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
For a great and mighty army approaches,
the like of which
has never been seen,
and will never be seen again.
Fire devours everything before them,
and behind them the embers burn.
Before them, the land is like the garden of Eden,
but after them, a desolate wilderness;
nothing escapes them.
They appear like charging horses,
with the rumbling of chariots,
leaping on the tops of the mountains,
like flames devouring stubble,
like a powerful army drawn up for battle.
Before them, the nations are in anguish;
their faces grow pale.
Like warriors they charge.
Like soldiers they scale the wall.
They burst through the defences.
They leap upon the city walls.
The earth quakes before them.
The heavens tremble.
The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars do not shine.
The Lord thunders at the head of his army,
How vast is his battalion!
Numberless, those who are ready at his command!
Truly the day of the Lord
is great and terrible indeed,
and none can endure it!
Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.
Rend your hearts, and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,
for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
Even now the Lord may relent
from sending calamity,
and leave instead a blessing -
the grain and the wine for making offerings
to the Lord your God.
So blow the trumpet in Zion;
declare a day of fasting and prayer;
call a solemn assembly; gather all the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged, and the children,
even infants at the breast,
even the bride and the groom
on the morning of their wedding day.

Between the temple doors and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord,
weep, and say,
'Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword amongst the nations.
Why should it be said amongst the nations,
"Where is their God?"'
Then surely the Lord will become jealous for this land,
and will have mercy on its people;
and in response to their prayers, will say,
'I am sending you grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no longer make you
a mockery amongst the nations.
I will remove the army far from you,
driving it into a parched and desolate land,
and into the sea.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 8.2-11*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.
Early in the morning,
Jesus came again to the temple.
All the people came to him,
and he sat down, and began to teach them.
The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman
who had been caught in adultery;
and making her stand before all the people,
they said to Jesus,
'Teacher, this woman was caught
in the very act of committing adultery.
In the law,
Moses commanded us to stone such a woman.
What do you say?'
They said this to test Jesus,
so that they might have some charge
to bring against him.
Jesus bent down,
and wrote with his finger on the ground.
When they kept on questioning him,
he straightened up and said to them,
'Let the one amongst you
who is without sin
cast the first stone.'
And once again he bent down
and wrote on the ground.
When they heard it,
they went away, one by one,
beginning with the eldest;
and Jesus was left alone,
with the woman standing before him.
Jesus straightened up and said to her,
'Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?'
She said, 'No one, sir.'
And Jesus said,
'Neither do I condemn you.
Go your way,
and do not sin again.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 1

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

So there was sin in the world
from the time of Adam -
long before the law was given to Moses.

Sin was leading to death,
even before there was any law
by which to measure it.

But now the power of death,
that resulted from the trespass of Adam,
is swept away
by the far greater power
of the gift of God's grace
in Jesus Christ.

The trespass of Adam
led to condemnation for sin,
but the gift of God's grace
in Jesus Christ
brings the forgiveness of sin.
The trespass of Adam led to death,
but now there is life
for those who receive forgiveness
by the gift of God's grace
in Jesus Christ.

Adam's trespass led
to condemnation for all,
but Christ's work 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

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.

I will make your name great,

so that you will be a blessing to many.

I will bless those who bless you,

and I will rebuke those who dishonour you.

And in you,

all the peoples of the earth

will be blessed.’

And Abram went,

as the Lord had told him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 121

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 1.8b-10*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

When we suffer for the sake of the gospel,

we can rely on the power of God.

God saved us, and called us,

not because of anything we had done,

but by God’s grace,

and for God’s purpose.

This grace was given to us

in Christ Jesus

before the the beginning of time.

It has now been revealed

in our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who has abolished death,

and shown the way

to eternal life.

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 Peter,

and the brothers James and John,

and 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 a voice spoke from the cloud, saying,

‘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

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 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 carry with you
the same stick that you used
to strike the river Nile.

I will stand before you
on the rock at Mount Sinai,
and you will strike the rock,
and water will come out of it
for the people to drink.'

Moses did as the Lord commanded,
in the sight of the elders of Israel.

And he called the place Quarrel, and Testing,
because there, 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.

Having been reconciled to God by faith,
we now have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access
to the grace
in which we stand.

We have a joyful confidence
that we will one day share
in the glory of God,

and this confidence
will not be disappointed,

because God's love
has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit
that has been given to us.

It is rare for anyone to die for another -
even for one who is good -
so the proof of God's great love for us is this:
that while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.

While we were still weak,
Christ died for us, the ungodly.
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

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

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

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 foal to Jesus, throwing their cloaks across it.

As Jesus set off, riding the foal down the Mount of Olives, people spread their cloaks on the road in front of him.

As they approached Jerusalem, the whole crowd of disciples was praising God joyfully for all the deeds of power that they had seen, shouting out,

‘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 said,

‘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 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
is 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.
Amongst 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

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 amongst 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 – first two readings

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 amongst 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

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Acts 2.22-32,36

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said,

'People of Israel,

the true nature of Jesus of Nazareth
was made known to you by God,
by the deeds of power,
and the 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,
and by my side, to keep me in safety.

Therefore my heart and my voice sing praise,
and I live with confident trust in the Lord,
for the Lord will not abandon my soul to death,
or let his chosen one decay.

You lead me in the ways of life.

You will fill me with joy at your presence."

People of Israel, you know

that our ancestor David died, and was buried -
indeed his tomb is with us, to this day.

But as a prophet,

King David knew that God had promised
to put one of David's own descendants on his throne.

Trusting in that promise,

David was speaking of the Messiah,
and the resurrection of the Messiah,
when he said

that he would not be abandoned to death or decay.

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 on heaven,

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, appears,

you also will appear 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

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

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

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

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

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.

ASCENSION DAY

Readings for *Year A*

FIRST READING – *Acts 1.1-11*

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.

While he was going,

and they were gazing up towards heaven,
there appeared two men in white robes,
standing by them,
who said to them,
‘Men of Galilee,
why do you stand looking up towards heaven?
This Jesus,
who has been taken up from you into heaven,
will return
in the same way
you saw him go.’

This is the word of the Lord.

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 – *Luke 24.44-53*

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

Jesus said to the disciples,

‘Everything that is written about me,
in the law of Moses, in the prophets,
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled.’

And he opened their minds

to understand the scriptures, saying:

‘It is written

that the Messiah is to suffer,
and to rise from the dead on the third day;

and that repentance

and forgiveness of sins

will then be proclaimed, in his name,
to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses to these things.

And now I am sending upon you

what my Father promised;

so stay here in the city

until you have been clothed with power
from on high.’

Then he led them out

as far as Bethany,

and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.

While he was blessing them,

he withdrew from them

and was carried up into heaven.

And they worshipped him,

and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;

and they were continually in the temple,
praising God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 7

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.

Psalms 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,
for the honour of your name,
that you entrusted to me.

May they may be one, as we are one.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PENTECOST

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 amongst 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

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 BETWEEN 24 AND 28 MAY
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 49.8-10, 13-15*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says:

I declare freedom to the captives.
I call those who are in darkness
to walk in the light.
They shall have food along the way,
and find pasture on the barren heights.
They will neither hunger nor thirst,
and they will not be struck down
by the desert heat,
for I shall have compassion on them,
and I shall lead them by springs of water.
So let the heavens sing for joy,
let the earth rejoice,
and let the mountains burst into song,
for the Lord has comforted his people,
and will attend to all their needs.
And yet Jerusalem continues to say,
'the Lord has forsaken me,'
and 'my Lord has forgotten me.'
But can a woman forget her nursing-child,
or show no compassion
to the child of her womb?
Even if this were possible,
I will never forget you,
says the Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 131

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 4.1-5*

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

We have sought to be servants of Christ,
and stewards of God's mysteries.

The question is

whether we have been trustworthy stewards.

But this question

is not for you or me to answer,
or any human court.

I am not aware of anything against myself,
but that does not mean I am acquitted:

it is the Lord who will judge.

So do not rush to judgement,

for when the Lord comes,
the Lord will bring everything to light,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 6.24-34*

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

Jesus taught his disciples, saying.

'You cannot serve two masters;

for you will either hate the one and love the other,
or be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and wealth.

So do not worry about your life,
what you will eat, or what you will drink,
or about your body, what you will wear;
for life is more than food,
and the body is more than clothing.

Look at the birds of the air;
they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them;
and you are much more valuable
than the birds of the air.

Or consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;
they neither toil nor spin,
yet even Solomon, in all his glory,
was not adorned like one of these.

If God so clothes the grass of the field,
(which is alive today, and dried up tomorrow),
how much more will God clothe you,
O you of little faith!

None of you, by worrying,
can add a single hour to your span of life;

so do not worry,
saying, "What will we eat?"
or "What will we drink?"
or "What will we wear?"

The Gentiles strive for these things,
but your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Work instead for the kingdom of God
and for righteousness,
and all these other things will be given to you as well.

Do not worry about tomorrow;
for today has concerns enough of its own.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 29 MAY AND 4 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Deuteronomy 11.18-20, 26-28*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

The Lord says:

You shall treasure these words of mine
in your heart and in your soul.
You shall bind them as a sign on your hand,
and fix them as an emblem on your forehead.
Teach them to your children,
when you are at home
and when you are away,
when you lie down
and when you rise.

Write them on the doorposts of your house,
and on your gates.

See, I set before you today
a blessing and a curse:

a blessing,
if you obey the commandments
of the Lord your God
that I am commanding you today;

and a curse,
if you do not obey the commandments
of the Lord your God -
if you reject the way
that I am commanding you today,
to follow other gods
that you have not known.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 31.1-5, 19-24

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, this gospel,
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;
and 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 7.21-29*

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

Jesus taught his disciples, saying.

'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord",
will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but only those who do the will
of my Father in heaven.

On that day many will say to me,
"Lord, Lord,
in your name
we prophesied,
and cast out demons,
doing many deeds of power."

And I will say to them,

"I never knew you;
depart from me,
you lawless ones!"

For everyone

who hears these words of mine
and acts on them
is like a wise person
who builds a house on rock.

When the rains fall, and the floods rise,
and the winds blow and beat against that house,
it does not fall,
because it has been built on rock.

But everyone

who hears these words of mine
and does not act on them
is like a foolish person
who builds a house on sand.

When the rains fall, and the floods rise,
and the winds blow and beat against that house,
it collapses,
and is swept away.'

When Jesus had finished speaking,
the crowds continued to give their full attention
to his every word,
for his teaching was powerful,
in contrast to the teaching of their scribes.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 5 AND 11 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – *Hosea 6.3-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Hosea.

Let us press on

to know the Lord.

His appearing

is as sure as the dawn.

He will come to us

like the spring rains

that water the earth.

‘What shall I do with you, O tribes of Israel?’

says the Lord;

‘What shall I do with you, O Judah?’

Your love is like the morning mist,

like the dew, that is soon gone.

I send you my words, by the prophets,

to cut you to the heart.

I send you my judgements,

blazing like the sun.

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice;

and the knowledge of God,

not your burnt-offerings.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 50.7-15

SECOND READING – *Romans 2.13-16*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

It is not by hearing what is in the law

that we are made right with God,

but by doing it.

When the Gentiles,

who do not possess the law,

do instinctively

what the law requires,

they show that they have the law

within themselves.

They show that what the law requires

is written on their hearts,

with their own thoughts,

and their own conscience,

working together,

both challenging and defending them,

until the day when God,

through Jesus Christ,

will judge the secret thoughts of all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 9.9-13, 18-26*

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

As Jesus was walking along,

he saw a man called Matthew

sitting at the tax booth.

Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me.’

And Matthew got up and followed him.

As Jesus sat at dinner in the house,

many tax-collectors and sinners came

and were sitting with Jesus and his disciples.

When the Pharisees saw this,

they said to the disciples,

‘Why does your teacher

eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’

When Jesus heard this, he said,

‘Those who are well

have no need of a physician,

but those who are sick.

Go and learn what this means:

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

For I have come to call

not the righteous,

but sinners.’

While Jesus was still saying these things,

a leader of the synagogue came in,

and knelt before him, saying,

‘My daughter has just died;

but come and lay your hand on her,

and she will live.’

Jesus and the disciples

got up and followed him.

Then a woman

who had been suffering from haemorrhages

for twelve years

came up behind Jesus,

and touched the fringe of his cloak,

saying to herself,

‘If I only touch his cloak,

I will be healed.’

Jesus turned, and seeing her, he said,

‘Take heart, daughter;

your faith has made you well.’

And from that very moment,

she was healed.

When Jesus came to the leader’s house,

and saw the flute-players,

and the crowd,

making a commotion,

he said,

‘Go away;

for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.’

And they laughed at him.

But when the crowd had been put outside,

Jesus went in,

and took her by the hand,

and the girl got up.

And the report of this spread

throughout that district.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 12 AND 18 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

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 came to the wilderness of Sinai,
and camped there
at the foot of the mountain.

Moses went up the mountain
to meet with God;
and the Lord gave Moses this message
for the house of Jacob,
the descendants of Israel.

‘You have seen what I 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.

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 Law and the Prophets
testify to the righteousness
that comes from God -
but this righteousness
has now been made known
even to those outside
the structures of the law.

This righteousness is now given -
through faith in Jesus Christ -
to all who believe.

There is no longer any difference
between Hebrew and Gentile.

All have sinned,
and fallen short of the glory of God.

And all are now set free from sin,
and reconciled with God,
freely, by God’s grace,
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 through all the cities and villages,
curing every disease and sickness,
teaching in the synagogues,
and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.

Whenever Jesus saw the crowds,
he had compassion on them,
because they were harassed and helpless,
like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus 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 as apostles:

Simon Peter
and his brother Andrew,
James and John
(the sons of Zebedee),
Philip and Bartholomew,
Thomas and Matthew (the tax-collector),
James (the son of Alpheus) and Thaddeus,
Simon (the Zealot),
and Judas Iscariot (the one who betrayed him).

These twelve, Jesus sent out,
with the following instructions:
‘Go nowhere amongst 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 BETWEEN 19 AND 23 JUNE ONLY
(if after Trinity Sunday)**

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**when celebrated on 24 or 25 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 6.3-4,9-11

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 – 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.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

when celebrated between 26 and 30 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 1 JULY or 2 JULY only

Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Jeremiah 28.5-9, 14a

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The prophet Jeremiah
addressed the prophet Hananiah
in the house of the Lord
in the presence of the priests and the people, saying:

‘Amen! May the Lord fulfil
the words that you have spoken,
and bring back to this place from Babylon
the vessels of the house of the Lord,
and all the exiles.

But listen now to this word
that I speak in your hearing
and in the hearing of all the people.

The prophets who came before us,
from ancient times,
spoke prophecies of war, famine, and pestilence,
against many countries,
and against great kingdoms.

But as for the prophet who brings prophecies of peace,
only when the word of that prophet comes true
will it be known
that the Lord has truly sent a prophet.

For this is what the Lord Almighty,
the God of Israel, says:

All these nations will be in chains,
serving the King of Babylon,
who will rule the nations
with a rod of iron.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 89.1-4, 15-18

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 – Matthew 10.34-42

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

Jesus said to the twelve:

‘Do not think
that I have come to bring peace to the earth;
I have not come to bring peace,
but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and your enemies

will be members of your own household.
Whoever loves father or mother more than me
is not worthy of me;

whoever loves son or daughter more than me
is not worthy of me;

and whoever does not take up their cross
and follow me
is not worthy of me.

Those who cling to their life will lose it,
but those who lose their life for my sake
will find it.

Whoever welcomes you
welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet
will receive a prophet’s reward.

Whoever welcomes a righteous person
as a righteous person
will receive the reward of the righteous.

And whoever gives a cup of water
to even the least of my disciples -
truly I tell you,
all these will receive their reward.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 3 AND 9 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 BETWEEN 10 AND 16 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 amongst 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 amongst 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 BETWEEN 17 AND 23 JULY

Readings for Year A

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

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says:

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 amongst 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 BETWEEN 24 AND 30 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.

Psalm 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 all that we are.
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 BETWEEN 31 JULY AND 6 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 BETWEEN 7 AND 13 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, in the storm,
they were terrified,
and they cried out in fear.

But immediately,
Jesus spoke to them, and said,
'I am with you. Do not be afraid.'

Peter said,
'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,
to walk 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 BETWEEN 14 AND 20 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,

these also I will bring

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

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 pets in the house.'

She said,

'Yes, Lord,

but even the pets

eat the crumbs

that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her,

'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 BETWEEN 21 AND 27 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 BETWEEN 28 AUGUST AND
3 SEPTEMBER**

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.

Psalms 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;

bles 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.

What you say

comes not from God

but from thinking only in human terms.'

And Jesus turned to the disciples and said,

'If any of you wants to 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?

Nothing in this world

can match the value of your soul.

For the Son of Man will come,

with his angels,

in the glory of the Father,

to reward everyone

according to their deeds.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 4 AND 10 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 12.19-21*

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 wherever two or three

are gathered together in my name,

I am with them.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 11 AND 17 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 BETWEEN 18 AND 23 SEPTEMBER only
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.

Psalms 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

when celebrated on 24 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 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

when celebrated between 25 and 30 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.

HARVEST FESTIVAL
when celebrated on 1 October
Readings for Year A

FIRST READING – Genesis 2.4b-8, 15

A reading from the book of Genesis
When the Lord God first made
the heavens and the earth,
there were no bushes or trees or plants in the ground,
and no grasses or wild-flowers had yet sprung up.
The Lord God had not yet caused it
to rain upon the earth,
and though a stream would rise from a spring,
and water the whole surface of the ground,
there was no one to till the ground;
so the Lord God formed Adam
from the dust of the earth,
and breathed into Adam's nostrils
the breath of life;
and Adam became a living being.
And the Lord God planted a garden
in Eden, in the east;
and the Lord God took Adam,
whom the Lord God had formed,
and placed Adam in the garden of Eden,
to till it, and to keep it.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 8

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 BETWEEN 2 AND 8 OCTOBER
(includes HARVEST FESTIVAL
when falling between 2 and 7 October)

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.

Psalms 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 BETWEEN 9 AND 15 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 needy

in their distress,

a shelter from the rainstorm,

and protection from the scorching heat.

Now hear, O Israel:

on this mountain

the Lord of hosts

will prepare 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 BETWEEN 16 AND 22 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 BETWEEN 23 AND 29 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 amongst 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 between 30 October and 5 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 between 6 and 12 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,
and Jerusalem, even the Temple Mount,
shall be an overgrown heap of ruins.

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 between 13 and 19 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 between 20 and 26 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.

ADVENT 1

Sunday between 27 November and 3 December

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 64.1-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

O that you would tear open the heavens,
and come down like a raging fire.

The mountains will quake,
and the nations will tremble at your presence.

All your enemies will know your name
when they witness your wondrous deeds.

From ancient times, no eye has seen,
and no ear has heard,
any God but you.

You rescue those who trust in you.

You welcome those
who gladly do what is right,
observing your ways.

But now our sin has aroused your anger,
how can we be saved?

Even our most righteous deeds
are like a filthy garment before you.

We fade like a fallen leaf,
and our iniquities
sweep us away
like the wind.

There is no one left who calls on your name,
or pleads with you for mercy;
so you have turned your face away from us,
and abandoned us to our iniquity.

And yet, O Lord, you are our Father.
You are the potter, and we are the clay.
You made us;
we are the work of your hands.

We are your people, O Lord.
Do not be angry with us
beyond measure,
or remember our iniquity for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 80.1-7, 16-18

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.3-9*

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

Grace to you, and peace,
from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to God
for all that God is doing amongst you;
for in Christ,
you have been enriched in every way,
growing in confidence in the message of Christ,
and in every spiritual gift,
as you look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has called you into the fellowship
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and will surely continue to give you strength,
to keep you in holiness
for the day of our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 13.24-37*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Finally,
after all this persecution and suffering,
the day will come
when the sun and the moon will give no light,
and the stars will be shaken from the sky.

Then you will see the Son of Man
coming in the clouds
with great power and glory,
and he will send angels
to gather his chosen
from the four winds,
from the ends of the earth.

When buds and leaves
appear on the fig tree,
you know that summer is near.

In the same way,
when you see these things taking place,
you will know that the time is near.

All these things will take place
before this generation is destroyed;
then even the heavens and the earth will be destroyed -
but my words will remain for ever.

No one knows the day or the hour
at which these things will take place,
not the angels in heaven,
nor even the Son,
but only the Father;

so be on guard,
keep alert,
for you do not know when that day will come.

If the master of the household went on a journey,
leaving the servants in charge,
each with their own task,
they would keep watch,
for the master could return
in the evening, or at midnight, or at dawn,
and must not find them sleeping
when he returns.

So I say to you, and to everyone:
stay alert.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 2

Sunday between 4 and 10 December

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 40.1-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort,

O comfort my people,
says your God;
speak tenderly to Jerusalem.

Let her know

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has already received
from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

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 the glory of the Lord

will be revealed,
and all who live
shall see it together;
for the Lord has spoken.

Declare to the people

they they are like grass,
and their faithfulness
is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers,

and the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord
blows upon it;
but the word of our God
will stand for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13

SECOND READING – *2 Peter 3.8-15a*

A reading from the second letter of Peter.

Remember, beloved,

that with the Lord,
a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like a day.

The Lord is not slow about his promise,

but is patient with you,
longing that none shall perish,
but that all may come to repentance.

And yet, the day of the Lord will come,
unexpected, like a thief in the night.

With thunder and fire,

the heavens will pass away,
and the earth,
and everything upon it,
will be destroyed.

Wait in eager expectation

for the coming of that day,
and for the establishment
of the new heavens, and the new earth,
where righteousness shall dwell,
in accordance with God's promises.

Let us live holy and godly lives,
that we may be found by God
blameless and at peace.

And regard the patience of our Lord

as a gracious opportunity for salvation.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 1.1-8*

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

Here begins the good news,

the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in the book

of the prophet Isaiah,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you

to prepare your way,

the voice of one

crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord."

And so indeed it came about

that John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins.

And people from the whole Judean countryside,

and all the people of Jerusalem,
were going out to him,
and were baptised by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair,

with a leather belt around his waist,
and he ate locusts and wild honey.

He proclaimed,

'After me comes one

who is more powerful than me.

I am not worthy

even to be his servant.

I have baptised you with water;

but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 3

Sunday between 11 and 17 December

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 61.1-2, 10-11*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord God
is upon me,
for the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news
to the poor and the oppressed,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to comfort all who mourn,
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of justice of our God.
I will rejoice and sing praise
to the Lord my God;
for as a bridegroom wears a garland,
and a bride her jewels,
so the Lord has clothed me
with the garments of salvation,
and covered me
with the robe of righteousness;
and the Lord God will cause
righteousness and praise
to flourish in all nations
like a garden in the spring-time.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 126

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 5.16-24*

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

My brothers and sisters:
rejoice always,
pray without ceasing,
and give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God for you
in Christ Jesus.
Do not quench the Spirit,
and do not treat prophecies with contempt,
but test everything,
hold fast to what is good,
and keep away from every form of evil.
And the God of peace, who calls you,
will sanctify you, and keep you holy,
in body, spirit, and soul,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 1.6-8, 19-28*

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

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.
Priests and Levites
travelled from Jerusalem
to ask John,
'Who are you?'
John stated plainly,
'I am not the Messiah.'
So they asked him,
'What then?
Are you Elijah?
Are you the prophet?'
And John said
'No'.
So they said to him,
'Who are you?
Let us have an answer
for those who sent us.
What do you say
about yourself?'
And John said
(using the words of the prophet Isaiah),
'I am the voice
crying out
in the wilderness,
"Make straight the way of the Lord."
So they asked him,
'Why then are you baptising,
if you are neither the Messiah,
nor Elijah,
nor the prophet?'
John answered them,
'I baptise with water,
but amongst you
stands one you do not know,
the one who is coming after me.
I am not worthy
even to be his servant.'
All this took place in Bethany,
across the Jordan,
where John was baptising.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 4

Sunday between 18 and 24 December

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

David, the king, was settled in his house,
and the Lord had given him rest
from all his enemies around him;
so he said, to the prophet Nathan,
'I am now living in a house built from cedar,
but the ark of God still lives in a tent.'

Nathan replied,

'Go and do whatever you have in mind;
for the Lord is with you.'

But that same night,
the word of the Lord
came to the prophet Nathan,
that he should instead
give to David, the king,
this word from the Lord:

I have not lived in a house
from the day
I brought the people of Israel
out from Egypt,
to this day,
but I have travelled with my people,
with a tent as my only dwelling.

I have commanded the leaders
of the tribes of Israel
to shepherd my people,
but in all this time,
never have I asked any one of them
to build me a house of cedar.

I took you from the pasture,
from following the sheep,
to be the leader of my people Israel.

I have been with you
wherever you went.

I have cut off all your enemies
from before you.

And now I will make your name known
amongst the greatest names on earth.

I will determine a place for my people Israel,
and plant them there,
so that they may live
in a land of their own
in peace.

They shall no longer be afflicted by violence,
as they have been for so long.

I shall give you rest from all your enemies.

And the Lord declares to you, David,
that you will not make a house
for the Lord to live in,
but the Lord will make you a house.

The Lord will make
your house and your kingdom secure,
and establish your throne for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

Magnificat

SECOND READING – Romans 16.25-27

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Glory to God
who can strengthen you
to stand firm
in the good news that we proclaim!

Glory to God
for the good news of Jesus Christ
that has now been revealed!

Glory to God,
at whose command
the good news of Jesus Christ
has been revealed,
first through the writings of the prophets,
and now by proclamation to all nations,
so that all might come to believe and trust
in Jesus Christ!

To the one eternal God of all wisdom
be glory for ever! Amen!

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 1.26-38

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

The angel Gabriel was sent by God
to a town called Nazareth, in Galilee,
to a virgin, whose name was Mary,
who was engaged to a man called Joseph,
who was descended from the line of king David.

The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said,
'Greetings, O favoured one! The Lord is with you!'

Mary was overcome at hearing these words,
and wondered what this greeting might mean.

The angel said,
'Mary, do not be afraid,
for you have found favour with God.

And now,
you will conceive, and bear a son,
and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great,
and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give to him
the throne of his ancestor David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom, there will be no end.'

Mary said to the angel,
'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'

The angel said to her,
'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be holy;
and will be called the Son of God.

And your relative Elizabeth, in her old age,
has also conceived a son;
and this is the sixth month
for her who was said to be barren;
for nothing will be impossible with God.'

Then Mary said,
'Here I am, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'

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 -
for the Lord is near.

Let your gentleness
be known to everyone.

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.

As Joseph was a descendant of king David,
he went from Nazareth, in Galilee,
to the ancient city of king David,
called Bethlehem, in Judea.

He travelled with Mary,
who was pledged to be married to him,
and who was soon to give birth.

While they were in Bethlehem,
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 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 the 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
now 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,

the one 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:
without him

not one thing
came into being.

In him was life,
and that life

was the light of all people,
a light that 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 to all who did receive him,
who believed in his name,
he gave the power
to become children of God.

And 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 between 26 December and 1 January

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

FIRST READING – Exodus 33.7–11a

A reading from the book of Exodus.

There was a tent
which Moses called
the Tent of Meeting.
Moses would set up
the Tent of Meeting
far outside the camp,
and anyone who sought the Lord
would go to it.
Whenever Moses himself
went out
to the Tent of Meeting,
all the people would stand by their tents,
and watch,
until Moses had gone into the Tent of Meeting.
Then the pillar of cloud would descend,
and would stand at the entrance
of the Tent of Meeting,
and the Lord would speak with Moses there.
When they saw
the pillar of cloud,
standing at the entrance
of the Tent of Meeting,
all the people would bow down,
each of them at the entrance of their tent.
And in this way,
the Lord would speak to Moses
face to face,
as someone might speak
to a friend.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 John 3.1-2

A reading from the first letter of John.

So great is the Father's love for us,
that we are adopted
as children of God.
The world,
that does not know the Father,
neither sees
nor understands this.
My brothers and sisters,
we are already adopted
as children of God.
What we are still to become
has not yet been revealed!
What we do know
is this:
that when Christ
appears in glory,
we shall become like him,
for we shall see him
face to face.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 21.19b–25

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

Jesus said to Peter,
'Follow me.'
Peter turned
and saw 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'
approaching them.
(This is the disciple
who reclined next to Jesus
at the supper,
and had said,
'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?')
When Peter saw this disciple approaching,
Peter said to Jesus,
'Lord, what about him?'
Jesus said to Peter,
'If it is my will
that he remains
until I come,
what is that to you?
Follow me!'
So the rumour spread in the community
that this disciple
would not die.
Yet Jesus did not say
that he would not die;
Jesus said,
'If it is my will
that he remains
until I come,
what is that to you?'
This is the very disciple
now testifying
to these things,
and writing them;
so we know
that his testimony is true.
There are also
many other things
that Jesus did.
If every one of them
were written down,
the whole world
could not contain
the books that would be written.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

THE EPIPHANY

Sunday between 2 and 6 January only

Readings for *Year B*

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 has covered the earth,

and thick darkness has covered the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you,

and the glory of the Lord

will appear over you.

Then nations shall come to your light,

and kings shall come

to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes

and look around:

they gather together,

they come to you.

Your sons shall come from far away,

and your youngest daughters

shall be carried here

on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see,

and be radiant.

Your heart shall thrill and rejoice;

for the abundance of the sea

shall be brought to you,

the wealth of the nations

shall come to you.

Camels, from Egypt, and Arabia,

will fill the land.

They will bring gold and frankincense,

and they will 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 been commissioned

to make known

a glorious truth

that was unknown to former generations.

But now, by the Holy Spirit,

this glorious truth

has been revealed

to God's apostles and prophets

through the gospel:

that the Gentiles

are our brothers and sisters

in Christ -

members of the same body,

and inheritors of the same promise.

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 the chief priests and the scribes,

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

amongst 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;

and they were overwhelmed with joy.

On entering the place,

they saw the child,

with Mary his mother,

and they knelt down before the child,

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 between 7 and 13 January

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Isaiah 55.6-9

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Seek the Lord

while he may be found.

Call upon him

while he is near.

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

Let them return to the Lord,

that the Lord

may have mercy upon them;

to our God,

who will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts

are not your thoughts,

says the Lord;

neither are my ways

your ways;

for as the heavens are high above 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 29

SECOND READING – Ephesians 1.9-14

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

God's purpose

(which has now been revealed to us)

is to bring

to unity in Christ

all things in heaven

and on earth.

God chose us -

the first to set our hope on Christ -

to live to the praise of God's glory.

And now you also

can live

to the praise of God's glory,

for you also have heard

the same message of truth -

the gospel of salvation -

and you have been marked

with the seal

of the promised Holy Spirit,

which is God's pledge to us

that we are God's own people.

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.

I now know

that I came baptising with water

so that he might be revealed to Israel,

for I have seen the Spirit

descending from heaven like a dove,

and resting upon 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 will baptise

with the Holy Spirit."

This I have seen,

and so I declare

that this is the Son of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 1.35-42

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

John the Baptist

was standing with some of his disciples.

When Jesus passed by,

John said to his disciples,

'Look, here is the Lamb of God!'

On hearing this,

Andrew,

and another of John's disciples,

followed Jesus.

When Jesus turned

and saw them following,

he said to them,

'What is it

that are you looking for?'

They said to Jesus,

'Teacher,

where are you staying?'

Jesus said to them,

'Come and see.'

And they remained with Jesus that day.

Andrew went to find his brother Simon,

and said to him,

'We have found the Messiah, the Christ'.

Simon went with Andrew

to the place where Jesus was staying.

Jesus looked at Simon, and said,

'You are Simon, son of John,

but you will be called Peter, the Rock.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 2

Sunday between 14 and 20 January

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – 1 Samuel 3.1-10

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

The boy Samuel

was ministering to the Lord
under the guidance
of Eli the high priest.

The word of the Lord

was rare in those days,
and visions from the Lord
were few.

Eli's eyesight had begun to grow dim,
so that he could not see.

One evening,

when the lamp of God
had not yet gone out,
and Eli was lying down in his room,

Samuel was lying down

in the temple of the Lord,
near the ark of God,

and the Lord called:

'Samuel! Samuel!'

Samuel said, 'Here I am!'

and ran to Eli, and said,

'Here I am, for you called me.'

But Eli said,

'I did not call;
lie down again.'

So Samuel went and lay down.

The Lord called again,

'Samuel!'

Again, Samuel got up,

and went to Eli, and said,

'Here I am, for you called me.'

But Eli said,

'I did not call, my son;
lie down again.'

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord,

and the word of the Lord

had not yet been revealed to him.

The Lord called Samuel again, a third time.

Again, Samuel got up,

and went to Eli, and said,

'Here I am, for you called me.'

Then Eli understood

that the Lord was calling the boy,

so Eli said to Samuel,

'Go, lie down;

and if you hear the call again, you shall say,

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

So Samuel went

and lay down in his place,

and the Lord came, and stood there,

calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

And Samuel said,

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 6.12,19-20

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

All things may be lawful -

but not all things

are beneficial.

All things may be lawful -

but you should take care

not to become

a slave to anything.

Your body is now a temple of the Holy Spirit,

given by God, and dwelling within you.

You are no longer your own,

for you were bought with a price,

to be a servant of God.

Therefore glorify God

in your body.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 1.43,45-51

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to John.

The next day,

Jesus was in Galilee.

Jesus found Philip,

and said to him, 'Follow me.'

Philip found Nathaniel,

and said to him,

'We have found the one

written about

by Moses and the prophets -

Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.'

Nathaniel replied,

'Can anything good

come out of Nazareth?'

Philip said,

'Come and see.'

When Jesus saw Nathaniel

coming towards him, he said,

'Here is a good Israelite,

honest and true!'

Nathaniel asked Jesus,

'How do you know me?'

Jesus answered,

'I saw you under the fig tree,

before Philip called you.'

Nathaniel replied,

'Teacher, you are the Son of God!

You are the King of Israel!'

Jesus answered,

'Do you believe

because I told you

that I saw you under the fig tree?

You will see greater things than this!

Truly, I tell you,

you will see the heavens opened,

and the angels of God

going up and coming down

between heaven

and the Son of Man.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Psalm 139.1-5, 12-17

EPIPHANY 3

Sunday between 21 and 27 January

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 62.1-4*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says this:

For the sake of Zion

I will not keep silent,
and for the sake of Jerusalem
I will not rest,

until her righteousness
shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation
like a burning torch.

All nations shall see your righteousness,
and all kings shall see your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the Lord shall give to you.

You shall be a crown of beauty
in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem
in the hand of your God.

You will no longer be called 'forsaken',
and your land
shall no longer be called 'desolate';
but you shall be called 'my delight',
and your land
shall be called 'beloved bride';
for the Lord delights in you.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 36.5-10

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 9.20-23*

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

I am free,

and yet I have made myself
a servant to everyone,
that I might lead
as many as possible
to salvation.

To those who live under the law,
I became like one
who lives under the law,
so that I might win those
who live under the law.

To those who live outside the law,
I became like one
who lives outside the law
so that I might win those
who live outside the law
(although always subject, myself,
to the law of Christ).

And to the weak, I became weak,
so that I might win the weak.

I have become all things to all people;
and all this for the sake of the gospel,
that by all possible means
I might lead some to salvation.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 2.1-11*

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

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.

Jesus and his disciples
were also guests
at the wedding.

The wine ran out,
the mother of Jesus said to him,
'They have no wine.'

Jesus said to his mother,
'What concern is that to you, or to me?
My hour has not yet come.'

His mother said to the servants,
'Do whatever he tells you.'

Standing there
were six stone water-jars -
as used
for the Jewish rites of purification.

Each held twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to them,
'Fill the jars with water.'

And they filled them up to the brim.

He said to them,
'Now draw some out,
and take it to the chief steward.'

So they took the water
(which had now become wine)
to the steward,
and he tasted it.

The steward did not know where it came from
(though the servants who brought it knew).

When he tasted it,
he called the bridegroom,
and said to him,

'Everyone serves the good wine first,
and then the inferior wine later,
when the guests have become drunk.
But you have kept the good wine until now.'

Jesus did this,
the first of his signs,
revealing his glory,
at Cana in Galilee;
and his disciples believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 4

Sunday between 28 January and 3 February

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Jonah 3.1-5,8,10*

A reading from the book of Jonah.

The word of the Lord

came to Jonah,

saying,

'Get up,

and go to Nineveh,

that great city,

and declare to it

the message

that I shall tell you.'

So Jonah set out

and went to Nineveh,

as the Lord had spoken.

Nineveh was such a large city

that it would take three days

to walk across it.

Jonah entered the city,

going a day's walk,

announcing,

'Forty days more,

and Nineveh will be overthrown!'

And the people of Nineveh

received the word of God.

They declared a fast,

and everyone,

great and small,

put on sackcloth,

as the king commanded

that they turn from their evil ways

and from violence.

When God saw all that they did -

how they turned from their evil ways -

God resolved to save them

from the calamity

that had been declared against them.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 25.3-9

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 9.24-27*

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

You know that,

in a race,

all the runners compete,

but only one receives the prize.

So run this race as if to win!

Athletes work with discipline

for an earthly reward -

but we work for an eternal reward!

So run, and work,

with direction, and purpose.

Indeed I myself,

while teaching others,

work with discipline, like an athlete,

so that I myself

should not be left disqualified.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 1.14-28*

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

After John the Baptist was arrested,

Jesus came to Galilee,

proclaiming the good news of God,

and saying,

'The time is fulfilled,

and the kingdom of God has come near;

repent, and believe the good news.'

As Jesus walked

by the Sea of Galilee,

he saw Simon, and his brother Andrew,

casting a net into the lake,

for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them,

'Come, follow me,

and I will send you out

to fish for people.'

Immediately, they left their nets,

and followed him.

As Jesus went a little further,

he saw James and John,

the sons of Zebedee,

in their boat,

mending the nets.

Immediately, Jesus called them;

and they left their father Zebedee in the boat

with the hired men,

and followed Jesus.

They went to Capernaum,

and when the sabbath came,

Jesus entered the synagogue, and taught.

All were amazed at his teaching,

for unlike their scribes,

he taught with authority

While they were there in the synagogue,

a man with an unclean spirit

came and cried out,

'What are you doing here,

Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are - the Holy One of God!'

But Jesus rebuked him, saying,

'Be silent, and come out of him!'

The unclean spirit,

throwing him into convulsions,

and crying with a loud voice,

came out of him.

They were all astounded,

and asked one another,

'What is this new teaching,

with such authority?

He commands even the unclean spirits,

and they obey him.'

And his fame spread

throughout the region of Galilee.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 5

**Sunday between 4 and 10 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 40.28-31*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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.

Psalms 147.1-12, 20c

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 10.13, 10.31-11.1*

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

Be reassured
that any temptation or adversity
that comes upon you
has been suffered by others before.
God is faithful,
and will not let you be tested
beyond your strength,
but with the testing,
will also provide the way out,
so that you are able to endure it.
Now let everything you do
be for the glory of God.
Give no offence to others,
whether Hebrews or Greeks,
or the church of God itself;
but follow my example,
as I seek to follow the example of Christ,
aiming to please everyone
in everything I do;
not seeking my own advantage,
but the advantage of others,
so that many may be saved.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 1.29-39*

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

When Jesus left the synagogue,
he went with James and John
to the home of Simon and Andrew.
Simon's mother-in-law
was in bed there
with a fever.
They told Jesus,
and Jesus went to her,
and took her hand.
She awoke,
and immediately
the fever left her,
and she began to serve them.
That evening,
around sunset,
the whole city came out,
gathering around the door,
bringing to Jesus
all who were sick
or possessed with demons.
He cured many who were sick
with various diseases,
and cast out many demons;
and he would not permit the demons to speak,
because they knew him.
In the morning,
while it was still fully dark,
he went out to a deserted place, alone,
and there he prayed.
Simon and some others
went searching for him.
When they found him, they said to him,
'Everyone is looking for you.'
Jesus said,
'Let us go on
to the neighbouring towns,
so that I may preach there also;
for that is what I came to do.'
And he went throughout Galilee,
speaking in their synagogues,
and casting out demons.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 6

**Sunday between 11 and 17 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Leviticus 13.2-3,45-46; 14.2-4,8,10*

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

Any person with blemishes on the skin
must be brought to the priest.

The priest will examine the skin,
and if the blemishes
are found to be leprosy,
that person will be declared unclean,
and must go to live alone,
in a dwelling outside the camp,
and must wear torn clothes,
and leave their hair dishevelled,
and covering their mouth,
must cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.'

If the person is brought again to the priest,
and the priest finds the disease to be healed,
the person who has been found to be healed
shall make an offering of two turtle-doves,
with cedar-wood, and crimson, and hyssop,
and shall bathe, and cut their hair,
and wear clean clothes, and shall be clean;
and a week later,
shall offer a lamb, with flour and oil.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 30

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 3.1b-6*

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

We do not need
letters of recommendation,
for you are our letter,
written in our hearts,
to be seen and read by all.

You are a letter from Christ,
commending our ministry,
written not with ink,
but with the Spirit of the living God;
and not on stone tablets,
but on human hearts.

In the same way,
we are confident before God, through Christ,
not because of any competence of our own,
but because God has called us, and equipped us,
to be ministers of a new covenant,
not of the written law, that kills,
but of the Spirit, that gives life.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 1.40-45*

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

A man with leprosy
knelt before Jesus,
and begged him,
'If you choose,
you can make me clean.'

Moved with compassion,
Jesus reached out his hand,
and touched him;
and said to him,
'I do choose.

Be made clean!'

And immediately the leprosy left him,
and he was clean.

Jesus said to him,
'Say nothing to anyone;
but go, show yourself to the priest,
and make the offering, for your cleansing,
that Moses commanded.'

But instead,
the man who had been healed
went out and spoke openly
about what had happened,
and word spread,
so that Jesus could no longer
go into any town openly,
but stayed out in the country;
and people came to him
from every town and city.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 7

Sunday between 18 and 24 February

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Isaiah 43.18-25, 44.3

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Do not dwell

on all that went before,
or focus on times past,

for I am about to do a new thing,
says the Lord;
indeed, it is already begun.

I will make rivers in the desert,
and a safe route
through the wilderness,
with streams of water.

Even the wild animals will honour me,
when I put springs in the desert
to give drink to my chosen people;
and on that day
the people I formed for myself
will declare my praise!

And still, you have not called upon me, O Jacob!

And you act as though you are weary of me, O Israel!

You have not brought me burnt-offerings,
or honoured me with sacrifices.

And indeed

I have not burdened you
with demands for grain,
or wearied you
with demands for herbs and incense -

but still you have burdened me with your sins,
and wearied me with your iniquities!

And yet I am the one who,
for my own sake,
will blot out your transgressions,
and remember your sins no more.

I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and make streams on the dry ground;

and I will pour out my spirit
upon your descendants,
and my blessing upon your offspring.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 41

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 3.7-9

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

The ministry of the law,
chiselled in letters, on stone tablets,
came in such glory
that the people of Israel
could not look at Moses' face
because of the glory that shone out of it.

And yet that glory faded,
and the ministry of the law
became a ministry
of condemnation by the law,
that led to death.

If there was glory then,
in the ministry
of condemnation
by the written law,
how much more glory will there be now,
in the ministry
of reconciliation with God
by the Spirit!

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 2.1-12

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

When Jesus returned to Capernaum,
and people heard where he was staying,
so many gathered around to hear him
that there was no longer room for them,
even around the door.

While Jesus was speaking,
four people came
carrying a paralysed man.

And when they could not bring him to Jesus
because of the crowd,
they made an opening
in the roof above Jesus,
and lowered the mat
on which the paralysed man lay.

When Jesus saw their faith,
he said to the paralysed man,
'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

Some scribes were sitting there,
and Jesus knew, in his spirit,
that they were wondering
whether his words
to the paralysed man
might even be blasphemy,
(for they would say
that only God can forgive sins);

so Jesus said to the scribes,
'Which is easier to say?
"Your sins are forgiven,"
or "Stand up, take your mat, and walk"?'
But I will show you
that the Son of Man
has authority on earth
to forgive sins.'

Jesus then turned
to the paralysed man,
and said,
'Stand up, take your mat,
and go back to your home.'

And immediately
the man stood up,
picked up the mat,
and walked out,
in full sight of them all;
and they were all amazed,
and praised God, saying,
'We have never seen anything like this!'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 8

Sunday between 25 February and 3 March

[not Sunday 3 March in a leap year]

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Hosea 2.14-15,19-23*

A reading from the book of the prophet Hosea.

Even though my people have been unfaithful,
says the Lord,

I will lead them out into the wilderness once again,
and speak to them tenderly.

I will give them new vineyards,
a new beginning, and new hope.

And they will respond
as in the days of their youth,
when I freed them
from the land of Egypt.

I will renew my covenant with them,
in steadfast love, in mercy,
and in faithfulness.

I will say to them,
'You are my people',
and the heavens, and the earth, and the harvest,
will rejoice together,
as the people say,
'You are our God'.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 103.1-13, 22

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 4.5-7*

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

We do not proclaim ourselves.

We proclaim only
the Lord Jesus Christ,
and ourselves
as your servants
in him.

God said,
'Let light shine out of darkness,'
and any light
that shines out
from our hearts
is from God,
and its purpose
is to make known
the glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ.

We have this treasure
in earthen jars -
making clear
that this extraordinary power
comes from God,
and not from us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 2.13-22*

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

Jesus went out to the lakeside.

A large crowd gathered around him,
and he taught them.

Later, as Jesus was walking along,
he saw Levi, the tax collector,
sitting at the collecting booth.

Jesus said to him, 'Follow me' -
and Levi got up, and followed him.

Levi later invited Jesus and the disciples
to dine at his house.

Amongst the many disciples who gathered
were more tax collectors,
and others
who were regarded
by the Pharisees
as sinners.

When the Pharisees saw this,
they asked some of the disciples,
'Why does he eat with such people?'

Jesus heard this,
and said to them,
'It is not the healthy
who need a doctor,
but the sick.

I have not come
to call the righteous,
but sinners.'

Now John's disciples,
and the disciples of the Pharisees,
were fasting;
so people asked
why Jesus's disciples
were not fasting.

Jesus said to them,
'The wedding-guests
do not fast
while the bridegroom is with them.

But the days will come
when the bridegroom
is taken away from them,
and then they will fast.

You do not use new cloth
to patch up an old garment,
because the new cloth will pull away,
and cause more damage
than the damage
you were trying to repair.

And you cannot put new wine
into old wineskins,
because they will burst,
and both old and new will be lost.
New wine needs fresh wineskins.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 9

Sunday between 4 and 7 March

[plus Sunday 3 March in a leap year]

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – Deuteronomy 5.12-15

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Observe the sabbath day

and keep it holy,

as the Lord your God commanded you.

For 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

on the sabbath day,

and neither shall your son,

or your daughter,

or your male or female servant,

or the foreigner living in your towns,

or your ox, or your donkey,

or any of your livestock,

for all of these shall rest,

as well as you.

Remember that you were a slave

in the land of Egypt,

and the Lord your God

brought you out from there

with a mighty hand

and an outstretched arm;

therefore the Lord your God commanded you

to keep the sabbath day.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 81.1-10

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 4.8-12

A reading from the second letter of Paul

to the Corinthians.

We are afflicted in every way,

but not crushed.

We face many challenges,

but we are not driven to despair.

We are persecuted,

but we know that we are not forsaken.

We are struck down,

but we are not destroyed.

We risk death, in Jesus' service -

so that, through our mortal bodies,

the life of Jesus

might be made known to you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 2.23 - 3.6

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

Jesus was walking through a cornfield

on the sabbath day;

and as they walked along,

his disciples plucked some heads of grain.

The Pharisees said to him,

'What they are doing

is not lawful

on the sabbath.'

Jesus said to the Pharisees,

'Have you not read what David did,

when he and his companions were hungry

and in need of food?

He entered the house of God,

and ate the sacred bread,

which is reserved for the priests -

and he gave some to his companions!

The sabbath was made for the people,

not the people for the sabbath!

The Son of Man is Lord

even of the sabbath.'

The same day,

Jesus entered the synagogue,

and a man was there

who had a paralysed hand.

They watched Jesus,

to see whether he would cure the man

on the sabbath,

so that they might accuse him.

Jesus said to the man with the paralysed hand,

'Come forward.'

Then he said to the Pharisees,

'Which is lawful on the Sabbath:

to do good, or to do evil?

To save life, or to kill?'

They had no reply,

and remained silent.

Jesus looked around at them in anger,

grieved at their hardness of heart.

He said to the man,

'Stretch out your hand.'

The man stretched out his hand,

and it was restored.

The Pharisees went out,

and immediately

went to meet with

some of Herod's officials,

to conspire with them

against Jesus,

about how to destroy him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 58.1,3b-9a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Shout out, says the Lord,
and do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people
that I see their rebellion.

Tell the house of Jacob
that I know their transgressions.

For 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.

You deny yourself,
bow your head,
and spread sackcloth and ashes,
just for one day.

But this is not the fast that I honour,
says the Lord.

The fast that I honour
is to remove the bonds of injustice,
and let the oppressed go free.

The fast that I honour
is to share your bread with the hungry,
to bring the homeless poor into your house,
and not to hide from the needs of others.

When this becomes your fast,
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.

GOSPEL – *John 8.2-11*

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

Early in the morning,

Jesus came again to the temple.

All the people came to him,
and he sat down,
and began to teach them.

The scribes and the Pharisees
brought a woman
who had been caught in adultery;
and making her stand before all the people,
they said to Jesus,
'Teacher, this woman was caught
in the very act of committing adultery.

In the law,
Moses commanded us to stone such women.
What do you say?'

They said this
to test Jesus,
so that they might have some charge
to bring against him.

Jesus bent down,
and wrote with his finger on the ground.

When they kept on questioning him,
he straightened up
and said to them,

'Let the one who is
without sin
cast the first stone.'

And once again,
he bent down
and wrote on the ground.

When they heard it,
they went away,
one by one,
beginning with the eldest.

And Jesus was left alone,
with the woman standing there.

Jesus straightened up and said to her,
'Where are they?
Has no one condemned you?'

She said,
'No one, sir.'

And Jesus said,
'Neither do I condemn you.
Go your way,
and do not sin again.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 1

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 9.8-17*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

God said to Noah,

‘I am making a covenant with you,
and with all your descendants,
and with the animals, and the birds,
and every living creature that came out of the ark.

And this is the covenant

that I make with you:
that never again
will all life be destroyed
by the waters of a flood.

And now I set the rainbow in the clouds,

as a sign of the covenant
that I make with you this day,
the covenant that I make
with you, and all the earth,
and with every living creature,
for all generations.

And whenever the rainbow

appears in the clouds,
I will remember the covenant
that I make with you this day.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 25.1-10

SECOND READING – *1 Peter 3.18-22*

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Christ suffered for our sins -

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

Put to death in the body,

but alive in the spirit,
Christ proclaimed freedom

even to those
who had rebelled against God
long ago.

In the days of Noah,

God showed great patience,
that some might be saved,
“through the waters,”
by the building of an ark.

In the same way,

you are now saved
through the waters of baptism,
not as a removal of dirt from the body,
but as an appeal to God
for cleansing from sin,

and as an appeal to God

for salvation
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
ascended now into heaven,
and at the right hand of God,
high above all angels, authorities, and powers.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 1.9-15*

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

In those days,

Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee,
and was baptised by John
in the river Jordan.

As Jesus was coming up out of the water,

he saw the heavens torn apart,
and the Spirit
descending on him like a dove;

and a voice came from heaven:

‘You are my Son, the Beloved;
with you I am well pleased.’

And the Spirit

immediately drove him out
into the wilderness.

He was in the wilderness forty days,

tempted by Satan;
and he was with the wild beasts;
and the angels waited on him.

After John was arrested,

Jesus came to Galilee,
proclaiming the good news of God,
and saying,

‘The time is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe the good news.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 2

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 15.1,5-6*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

‘Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your protector,
and your reward will be great.

Look to the sky.

Your descendants
will outnumber the stars.’

Abram trusted

in this word from the Lord,
and this made him righteous
in the eyes of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 33.6-12

SECOND READING – *Romans 4.1-3,13,16*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

If our ancestor Abraham

had been made righteous
in the eyes of the Lord
by what he did,
he would have had something
to boast about.

But the scripture says

that it was Abraham’s trust in God
that made him righteous
in the eyes of the Lord.

And so we see

that the promise God made
to Abraham and his descendants
did not come
from fulfilling the demands of the law,
but from trusting in God.

And the promise applies

to all the descendants of Abraham:
both those who follow the demands of the law,
and those who share the faith of Abraham
trusting in God
without the law.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 9.2-9*

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

Jesus took with him

Peter, and James, and John,
and led them up a high mountain.

And there he was transfigured before them.

His clothes became dazzling white.

And there, talking with Jesus,
appeared Elijah, and Moses.

Peter said to Jesus,

‘Teacher, it is good for us to be here.

Let us build shelters,
for you, for Moses, and for Elijah.’

He did not know what to say,

for they were overwhelmed.

Then a cloud appeared,

and covered them,

and a voice spoke from the cloud:

‘This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!’

And suddenly,

they saw no one with them any more,
but only Jesus.

As they were

coming down the mountain,

Jesus ordered them

to tell no one

about what they had seen,

until the Son of Man

had risen from the dead.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 3

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Exodus 20.1-17*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

God gave these commandments, saying,
'I am the Lord your God.

I 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,
in the form of anything
that is in the sky above,
or the earth below,
or the waters under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them
or worship them,
for I am the Lord your God,
grieving at the rebellion
of those who reject me
to the third and fourth generation;
and showing steadfast love
to a thousand generations
of those who honour me
and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name
of the Lord your 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.

On the sabbath day,
you shall do no work.

You, your son, your daughter, your servants,
your livestock,
and the foreigners living amongst you -
all shall rest on the sabbath day,

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 to 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.

Psalm 19

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.18-25*

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

The message about the cross

is foolishness to those who are perishing,

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

The scripture says, 'Their wisdom will perish,
and their understanding will fail.'

And indeed God has made foolish
the wisdom
of the scholars and debaters
of this world.

God's wisdom dictated

that the world would not come to know God
through its own human wisdom,
but that God would save those who believe
through the foolishness of our proclamation.

Hebrews look for miracles, and Greeks look for wisdom,
but we proclaim Christ crucified.

This is a stumbling-block to Hebrews,
and foolishness to Gentiles,
but to those who are being called -
both Hebrews 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,
just as God's weakness
is stronger than human strength.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 2.13-22*

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

The Passover festival was near,
and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple,

he found traders selling cattle, sheep, and doves,
and money-changers, seated at tables.

Making a whip of cords,

he drove them all out of the temple,
and the sheep and the cattle with them.

He scattered the coins of the money-changers,
and overturned their tables.

He said to those who were selling doves,
'Get those out of here -
for you are making my Father's house
into a market-place!'

And his disciples remembered the scripture that says,
'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

The temple authorities said to Jesus,
'What sign can you show us,
that gives you the authority to do this?'

Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple,
and in three days I will raise it up.'

They said, 'This temple has been under construction
for forty-six years, and will you raise it in three days?'

But he was speaking of the temple of his body;
and after he was raised from the dead,
his disciples remembered these words,
and they believed the scripture,
and the word that Jesus had spoken.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 4

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *2 Chronicles 36.14-21a*

A reading from the Second Book of Chronicles.

The priests and the people,
at that time,
were unfaithful,
following the evil ways of other nations,
even in the house of the Lord, in Jerusalem.

So the Lord, the God of their ancestors,
sent messengers, repeatedly,
out of compassion
for his people
and his dwelling-place.

But the people mocked
the messengers of God,
despising their words,
and scoffing at the prophets,
until the displeasure of the Lord
was so great
that the Lord brought up against them
the army of the king of Babylon.

The invading army
killed their youths with the sword,
even in the temple,
and had no compassion
even on the weak or the elderly.

Both the temple and the palace
were burned to the ground,
and their treasures
were taken away to Babylon;
and the city walls were broken down.

Those who escaped from the sword
were taken as prisoners to Babylon.

There they became servants
to the king of Babylon and his successors,
until the establishment
of the new kingdom of Persia,
to fulfil the word of the Lord
(by the prophet Jeremiah).

And Judea lay desolate
for seventy years.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 137.1-6

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 2.1-10*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

When we lived by the rules of this present world,
filled with the spirit of disobedience,
following the desires only
of the body and the senses,
we were dead
in trespass and sin.

But God,
who is rich in mercy,
loved us with great love,
and raised us up
to new life in Christ.

And so we have been saved
by the grace of God,
who raises us up,
with Christ and in Christ,
to heaven itself,
so that all may recognise,
now and for all time,
the infinite riches of God's grace towards us
in Jesus Christ.

It is by God's grace
that we have been saved,
through faith.

Your salvation is not your own doing,
as if it were some achievement,
of which you might boast.

No, your salvation is the gift of God,
who has re-made us,
in Christ Jesus,
for the good works
that have been prepared for us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 3.14-21*

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

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
that whoever believes in him
may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
will not perish
but will have eternal life.

God did not send the Son into the world
to condemn the world,
but in order that the world might be saved
through him.

Those who believe in him
are no longer condemned;
but those who do not believe
are suffering condemnation already,
because they have not believed
in the name
of the only Son of God.

The light has come into the world,
but some have loved darkness
rather than light,
because their deeds are evil.

All who do evil
hate the light,
and they hide from the light,
out of fear
that their evil deeds
will be exposed.

But those who do what is true
come to the light,
and all can see
that their deeds
are from God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 5

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 31.31-34*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel,
and the house of Judah.

It will not be like
the covenant that I made
with their ancestors,
when I led them out of Egypt -
a covenant that they broke,
says the Lord.

But this is the covenant that I will make
with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

All shall know me,
from the greatest to the least,
and I will forgive their iniquity,
and remember their sin no more.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 119.9-16

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 5.7-9*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications,
with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard
because of his reverent submission.

Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience
through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation
for all who obey him.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 12.23-28a,31-32*

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

Jesus said,

‘The hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Very truly, I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat
falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain;
but if it dies,
it bears much fruit.

Those who love their life
will lose it,
while those who hate their life in this world
will keep it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me,
and whoever serves me,
the Father will honour.

And now my soul is troubled,
and I would long to pray,
“Father, save me from this hour,”
but instead, I pray,
“Father, glorify your name.”

Now is the judgement of this world;
now the ruler of this world will be driven out.

And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I will draw all people to myself.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PALM SUNDAY

Readings for Year B

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 foal to Jesus, throwing their cloaks across it.

As Jesus set off, riding the foal down the Mount of Olives, people spread their cloaks on the road in front of him.

As they approached Jerusalem, the whole crowd of disciples was praising God joyfully for all the deeds of power that they had seen, shouting out,

‘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 said,

‘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 wakens 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 – Mark 14.1 - 15.47

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

The plot to kill Jesus

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth, and kill him; but saying, ‘Not during the festival, or there may be a riot amongst the people.’

The anointing at Bethany

While Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came, with an alabaster jar of valuable perfumed ointment, and she broke open the jar, and poured out the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, ‘Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than a year’s wages, and the money given to the poor.’ And they scolded her.

But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.’

She has done what she could;
she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.
And now, I tell you,
wherever the good news is proclaimed,
throughout the world,
what she has done
will be told in remembrance of her.'

Judas agrees to betray Jesus

Then Judas Iscariot,
who was one of the twelve,
went to the chief priests,
to betray Jesus to them.
When Judas spoke to the chief priests,
they were greatly pleased,
and promised to give him money.
So Judas began to look for an opportunity
to betray Jesus.

The Passover prepared

On the first day of Unleavened Bread,
when the Passover lamb is sacrificed,
the disciples said to Jesus,
'Where do you want us to make the preparations
for you to eat the Passover?'
Jesus sent two of the disciples, saying to them,
'Go into the city,
and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you;
follow him, and wherever he enters,
say to the owner of the house,
"The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room,
that I may eat the Passover there
with my disciples?"
He will show you a large room upstairs,
furnished and ready.
Make preparations for us there.'
So the disciples set out, and went to the city,
and found everything as Jesus had told them;
and they prepared the Passover meal.

The betrayal foretold

When it was evening,
and Jesus and the twelve had taken their places,
and were eating, Jesus said,
'Truly I tell you,
one of you will betray me,
one who is eating with me.'
They began to be distressed,
and to say to him, one after another,
'Surely, not I?'
Jesus said to them,
'It is one of the twelve,
one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.
For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him;
but woe to that one
by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!
It would have been better for that one
not to have been born.'

Institution of The Lord's Supper

While they were eating, Jesus took bread,
and after blessing it,
he broke it, gave it to them, and said,
'Take; this is my body.'
Then he took a cup,
and after giving thanks,
he gave it to them,
and they all drank from it.
He said to them,
'This is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for many.
Truly I tell you,
I will never drink again
of the fruit of the vine
until that day
when I drink it anew
in the kingdom of God.'

Peter's denial foretold

When they had sung the hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.
And Jesus said to them,
'You will all desert me; for it is written,
"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered."
But after I am raised up,
I will go before you to Galilee.'
Peter said to him,
'Even if all others desert you, I will not.'
Jesus said to him,
'Truly I tell you,
this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice,
you will deny me three times.'
But Peter said vehemently,
'Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.'
And all of them said the same.

Jesus prays in Gethsemane

They went to a place called Gethsemane;
and Jesus said to his disciples,
'Sit here while I pray.'
Jesus took with him Peter and James and John,
and began to be distressed and agitated,
saying to them,
'My soul is consumed with grief, to the point of death;
remain here, and keep watch with me.'
And going a little farther,
he threw himself on the ground, and prayed that,
if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.
He said,
'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible;
remove this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'
Jesus came
and found Peter, James and John sleeping;
and he said to Peter,
'Simon, are you asleep?
Could you not keep awake one hour?
Keep awake,
and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.
The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Again, Jesus went away, and prayed,
saying the same words.
And again he came, and found them sleeping,
for their eyes were heavy;
and they did not know what to say to him.
He came a third time and said to them,
'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
Enough! The hour has come;
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

Immediately, while he was still speaking,
Judas, one of the twelve, arrived;
and with him there was a crowd,
with swords and clubs,
from the chief priests,
the scribes, and the elders.
Now Judas, the betrayer,
had given them a sign, saying,
'The one I will greet with a kiss is the man;
arrest him, and lead him away under guard.'
So when Judas came,
he went up to Jesus at once, and said, 'Rabbi!
and greeted him with a kiss.
Then they took hold of him, and arrested him.
But one of those who stood near
drew his sword,
and struck
one of the servants of the high priest,
cutting off his ear.
Jesus said to them,
'Have you come out with swords and clubs,
to arrest me, as though I were a bandit?
Day after day I was with you in the temple, teaching,
and you did not arrest me.
But let the scriptures be fulfilled.'

The disciples flee

All of the disciples deserted Jesus, and fled.
A certain young man amongst them
was wearing a single garment of linen cloth.
Those who had arrested Jesus
caught hold of it as he fled,
but he left it, and ran off naked.

Jesus before the council

Those who had arrested Jesus
took him to the high priest;
and all the chief priests,
the elders, and the scribes were assembled.
Peter had followed at a distance,
into the courtyard of the high priest;
and he was sitting with the guards,
warming himself at the fire.
Now the chief priests and the whole council
were looking for testimony against Jesus
to put him to death;
but they found none;
for many gave false testimony against Jesus,
but their testimony did not agree.

Some stood up,
and gave false testimony against him, saying,
'We heard him say,
"I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands,
and in three days I will build another,
not made with hands."
But even on this point, their testimony did not agree.
Then the high priest stood up before them,
and asked Jesus,
'Have you no answer?
What is it that they testify against you?'
But Jesus was silent and did not answer.
Again, the high priest asked him,
'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?'
Jesus said, 'I am;
and you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of power,
and coming with the clouds of heaven.'
Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,
'Why do we still need witnesses?
You have heard his blasphemy!
What is your decision?'
And they all condemned him, as deserving death.
Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him,
and to strike him, saying 'Prophesy!'
And the guards took him and beat him.

Peter denies Jesus

While Peter was below in the courtyard,
one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by.
When she saw Peter warming himself,
she stared at him and said,
'You also were with Jesus,
the man from Nazareth.'
But Peter denied it, saying,
'I do not know or understand
what you are talking about.'
And he went out into the forecourt.
Then the cock crowed.
And the servant-girl, on seeing him,
said to those who were standing there,
'This man is one of them.'
But again Peter denied it.
Then, after a little while,
those who were standing there
said to Peter,
'Surely you are with him,
for you are a Galilean.'
But Peter began to curse, and swore an oath, saying,
'I do not know this man you are talking about.'
At that moment, the cock crowed a second time.
Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him,
'Before the cock crows twice,
you will deny me three times.'
And Peter broke down and wept.

Jesus before Pilate

As soon as it was morning,
the chief priests consulted
with the elders and scribes, and the whole council;
after which they bound Jesus, led him away,
and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate asked Jesus,
'Are you the King of the Jews?'
Jesus answered him,
'You say so.'
Then the chief priests accused Jesus of many things.
Pilate asked Jesus,
'Have you no answer?'
See how many charges they bring against you.'
But Jesus made no further reply.

Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified

Now it had become a custom
that at the festival
Pilate would release a prisoner for them,
whichever one they demanded.
Amongst the prisoners was a man called Barabbas,
a rebel, who had committed murder
during an insurrection.
A crowd gathered,
and began to ask Pilate to release a prisoner,
according to his custom.
Realising now
that it was out of self-interest
that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him,
Pilate said to the crowd,
'Do you want me to release for you
the King of the Jews?'
But the chief priests stirred up the crowd
to ask Pilate to release Barabbas instead.
Pilate addressed the crowd again, saying,
'What then shall I do
with the man you call the King of the Jews?'
They shouted back, 'Crucify him!'
Pilate asked them,
'Why, what evil has he done?'
But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!'
So Pilate, to appease the crowd,
released Barabbas for them;
and after flogging Jesus,
handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers mock Jesus

The soldiers led Jesus into the courtyard,
and they called together the whole guard.
They twisted some thorns into a crown,
and put it on him.
They put him in a purple cloak,
and began to salute him, saying,
'Hail, King of the Jews!'
They struck his head with a stick,
spat upon him,
and knelt down in homage to him.
After mocking him,
they stripped him of the purple cloak
and put his own clothes on him.
Then they led him out to crucify him.

The crucifixion of Jesus

They compelled a passer-by,
who was coming in from the country,
to carry his cross;
it was Simon of Cyrene,
the father of Alexander and Rufus.
Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha
(which means the place of the skull);
and they offered him wine, mixed with myrrh;
but he did not take it.
And they crucified him.
And they divided his clothes amongst them,
casting lots to decide what each should take.
It was nine o'clock in the morning
when they crucified him.
The inscription of the charge against him read,
'The King of the Jews.'
And with him, they crucified two bandits,
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, and come down from the cross!'
In the same way,
the chief priests and the scribes
were also mocking him
amongst themselves,
and saying,
'He saved others; he cannot save himself!
Let the Messiah, the King of Israel,
come down from the cross now,
so that we may see and believe!'
Those who were crucified with him
also taunted him.

The death of Jesus

When it was noon,
darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon.
At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?'
which means,
'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'
When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,
'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.'
Someone brought a sponge, filled with sour wine,
put it on a stick,
and gave it to him to drink, saying,
'Wait, let us see
whether Elijah will come to take him down.'
Then Jesus gave a loud cry, and breathed his last.
And the curtain of the temple was torn in two,
from top to bottom.
Now when the centurion, who stood facing him,
saw that, in this way, he breathed his last, he said,
'Truly this man was the Son of God.'

The women at the cross

There were also women looking on from a distance.

Amongst them were Mary Magdalene,
and Salome,
and the Mary who was the mother
of Joseph and the younger James.
They had followed and supported Jesus
in Galilee.

And many other women
who had come with him to Jerusalem
were also there.

The burial of Jesus

It was the day of Preparation,
that is, the day before the sabbath.

When evening came,
Joseph of Arimathea,
who was a respected member of the council,
who was himself waiting expectantly
for the kingdom of God,
went boldly to Pilate,
and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate had not expected
that Jesus would already be dead,
and summoned a centurion to ask
whether Jesus had indeed been dead for some time.

When Pilate learned from the centurion
that this was indeed the case,
Pilate granted the body to Joseph, as requested.

Then Joseph bought some linen cloth,
took down the body,
wrapped it in the cloth,
and laid it in a tomb
that had been carved out from the rock.

Then he rolled a stone
against the entrance to the tomb.

Mary Magdalene,
and Mary the mother of Joseph,
saw where the body was laid.

The Passion of the Lord.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Micah 6.6-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

What will you offer to the Lord,
as you bow down
before God most high?

Will you bring
burnt-offerings
and year-old calves?

Will the Lord be pleased
if you bring a thousand rams,
or rivers of oil,
or even your firstborn
offered for your transgression -
the fruit of your body
for the sins of your soul?

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

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 15

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.1-2,9-21*

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.

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;

bles 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.

Never take revenge.

Leave room, instead, for the judgement 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 – *John 13.4-9,12-15, 34-35*

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

Jesus left the table,

took off his outer robe,

and tied a towel around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin,
and began to wash the disciples' feet,
and to wipe them with the towel
that was tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
'Lord, you cannot wash my feet.'

Jesus answered,

'You do not know now

what I am doing,

but later you will understand

that unless I wash you,

you have no part in me.'

Simon Peter said to him,

'Then Lord, not only my feet,

but my hands and my head also!'

After Jesus had washed their feet,

he put on his robe,

returned to the table,

and said to them,

'Do you know what I have done for you?

You call me Lord and Teacher -

and you are right, for that is what I am.

So if I, your Lord and Teacher,

have washed your feet,

you also

ought to wash

one another's feet.

For I have set you an example,

that you also should do

as I have done to you.

And I give you a new commandment:

that you love one another,

as I have loved you.

By this, everyone will know

that you are my disciples,

if you have love for one another.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

GOOD FRIDAY – first two readings

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 confession.

For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses,
but we have one who
in every respect
has been tested as we are,
yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy,
and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications,
with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard
because of his reverent submission.

Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation
for all who 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 a band of guards and officials,
from the high priests and the Pharisees,
to the place, 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,
and cut off his right ear.
The servant's name was Malchus.
Jesus said to Peter,
'Put your sword back into its sheath.
Am I not to drink the cup
that the Father has given me?'
Then the guards and the officials,
arrested Jesus, and bound him.
After arresting Jesus,
they 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.
That 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
and warming themselves.
Peter also was standing with them
and warming himself.
Then the high priest questioned Jesus
about his disciples and his teaching.
Jesus answered,
'I have spoken openly to the world.
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 handed him over 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 tell you about me?'
Pilate replied,
'I am a Roman, not a Jew.
Your own nation and 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 asked him,
'So you are a king?'
Jesus answered,
'You are saying that I am a king.
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,
'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 them,
'Look, I am bringing him out to you
to let you know that I find no case against him.'
So Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns
and the purple robe.
Pilate said to them,
'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 him,
'We have a law,
and according to that law, he ought to die,
because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'
Now when Pilate heard this,
he was more afraid than ever.
He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus,
'Where are you from?'
But Jesus gave him no answer.
Pilate therefore said to him,
'Do you refuse to speak to me?
Do you not know
that I have the power to release you,
and the power to crucify you?'
Jesus answered him,
'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 people cried out,
'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,
(or in Hebrew Gabbatha).
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.
Then the chief priests said to Pilate,
'Do not write, "The King of the Jews,"
but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."
Pilate answered,
'What I have written, I have written.'
When the soldiers had crucified Jesus,
they took his clothes
and divided them into four parts,
one for each soldier.
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 clothes amongst 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 the disciple whom he loved standing beside her,
he said to his mother,
'Woman, here is your son.'
Then he said to the disciple,
'Here is your mother.'
And from that 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.
(He who saw this has testified,
so that you also may believe.
His testimony is true,
and he knows that he tells the truth.)
These things occurred
so that the scripture might be fulfilled:
'None of his bones shall be broken.'
And again, another passage of scripture says,
'They will look upon the one
whom they have pierced.'
Now Joseph of Arimathea
was a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly,
because of his fear
of the religious leaders.
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

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 25.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

On this holy 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.

And the people will say,
'This is the day
of the Lord our God.
Let us be glad and rejoice,
for we trusted in God,
and the day of our salvation
has come.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 118.15-25

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 15.1-10a*

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

Let me remind you again, my brothers and sisters,
of the good news that I proclaimed to you,
which you received,
in which you now stand,
and in which are saved:
that Christ died for our sins, and was buried;
and that he was raised on the third day -
and all this in fulfilment of the scriptures.

After he was raised from the dead,
he appeared to Peter,
then to the twelve,
then to more than five hundred brothers and sisters
at one time,
most of whom are still alive.

Then he appeared to James,
and to all the apostles.

Last of all,
as to one untimely born,
he appeared also to me.

For I am the least of the apostles,
unfit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God,
I am what I am,
and God's grace towards me
has not been in vain.

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

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Acts 8.26-38*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

An angel of the Lord said to Philip,
'Get up and go toward the south,
to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'
(This is a wilderness road.)

So Philip got up and went.

Now there was an Ethiopian,
a eunuch, who was the court official
of the queen of the Ethiopians
who was in charge of her entire treasury.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship,
and was returning home.

Seated in his chariot,
he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit said to Philip,
'Go over to the chariot and join it.'

So Philip ran up to it
and heard the court official
reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Philip asked,
'Do you understand what you are reading?'

He replied,
'How shall I understand,
unless someone guides me?'

And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.
Now the passage from Isaiah that he was reading
was this:

'Like a sheep, he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb, silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.
In his humiliation, justice was denied him.
Who can speak of his posterity?
For his life is taken away from the earth.'

He asked Philip,
'Is the prophet saying this about himself,
or about someone else?'

And starting with this scripture,
Philip made known to him
the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road,
they came to some water;
and the court official said, 'Look, here is water!
What is to prevent me from being baptised?'

He commanded the chariot to stop,
and both of them went down into the water,
and Philip baptised him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 133

SECOND READING – *1 John 1.1-5*

A reading from the first letter of John.

We write to you, with great joy,
concerning the eternal Word of Life,
which existed from the beginning,
and which now, we have not only heard,
but have seen with our eyes,
and touched with our hands.

This eternal life, that was with the Father,
has been revealed, and we have seen it,
and declare it now to you.

We declare to you what we have seen and heard,
so that you may be in fellowship
not only with us,
but with the Father,
and with his Son Jesus Christ.

This is the message that we have received,
and now proclaim to you: that God is light,
and in God, there is no darkness at all.

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
as they looked upon the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

And he breathed on them,
and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven;
but if you retain 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 gathered again,
and Thomas was with them.

And though the doors were locked,
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 have not seen,
and yet have come to believe.'

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

But these are written
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

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Acts 10.9-23

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

At about midday,

Peter went up on the roof to pray.

He became hungry, and wanted something to eat;
and while it was being prepared,
he fell into a trance.

He saw the heaven opened,
and something like a large sheet coming down,
being lowered to the ground by its four corners.

In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures,
and reptiles, and birds of the air.

Then he heard a voice saying,

‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’

But Peter said,

‘By no means, Lord;
for I have never eaten anything
that is profane or unclean.’

The voice said to him again, a second time,

‘What God has made clean,
you must not call profane.’

This happened three times,
then the vision was suddenly taken
back up into heaven.

Now while Peter was greatly puzzled
about what to make of the vision that he had seen,
three men arrived,
having been sent by Cornelius of Caesarea.

They were standing by the gate, calling out,
asking whether Simon Peter was staying there.

While Peter was still thinking about the vision,
the Spirit said to him,

‘These three men are searching for you.

Now get up, go down,
and go with them without hesitation;
for I have sent them.’

So Peter went down to meet them, and said,

‘I am the one you are looking for;
what is the reason for your journey?’

They answered,

‘The centurion Cornelius
is an upright man, who honours God,
and is respected by the whole Hebrew nation.
He was directed, by a vision of an angel,
to send for you, to come to his house,
and to hear what you have to say.’

Peter invited them in, and gave them lodging;
and the next day,

Peter, and a small group of believers,
set off with them, towards the house of Cornelius.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 148

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,
we have fellowship with God and one another,
and the blood of Jesus
cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;
indeed we make God a liar,
and God’s word 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.

I will always warn you away from sin -

and yet if anyone does sin,
we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous;

and he is the atoning sacrifice for sin,
for us and for all the world.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.36-48

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

While the eleven, and their companions,
were talking about what they had heard,
Jesus himself stood amongst them, and said,
‘Peace be with you.’

They were astonished,
and feared that they were seeing a ghost.

Jesus said to them,
‘Why are you afraid,
and why is there doubt in your hearts?

Look at my hands and my feet -
touch, and see -
for a ghost does not have flesh and bones
as you see that I have.’

And he showed them his hands and his feet.

Even now, in their joy,
they were doubting, and still wondering.

He said to them,
‘Do you have anything here to eat?’

They gave him a piece of cooked fish,
and he took it, and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them,
‘Everything that is written about me,
in the law of Moses, and in the prophets,
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled.’

And he opened their minds
to understand the scriptures,
where it is written that the Messiah is to suffer,
and to rise from the dead on the third day;
and that repentance, and the forgiveness of sins,
will be proclaimed, in his name,
to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

And he said to them,

‘You are witnesses to these things.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 4

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Acts 10.24-48a*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Two days after Peter's vision,
Peter, and the believers travelling with him,
arrived in Caesarea.
Cornelius was expecting them,
and had called together his relatives
and close friends.
When Peter arrived,
Cornelius knelt before him,
and worshipped him.
But Peter made him get up, saying,
'Stand up; I am only a mortal.'
When Peter and the other believers went inside,
they saw the small crowd
that Cornelius had assembled.
Peter addressed them, saying,
'You know that it is unlawful for Hebrews
to associate with Gentiles.
But God has shown me
that I should not regard anyone
as profane, or unclean;
so when I was invited here,
I accepted without hesitation,
for now I truly understand
that God shows no partiality,
but in every nation,
anyone who honours God,
and does what is right,
is acceptable to God.'
Peter continued,
'The gospel of peace
was revealed to the people of Israel
in Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.
The message has spread through all Judea.
It began in Galilee,
with the preaching of John the Baptist.
Then Jesus of Nazareth
was anointed by God
with the Holy Spirit and with power.
He went about doing good,
and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,
for God was with him.
We ourselves are witnesses to all that he did
in Judea and in Jerusalem.
They put him to death on the cross,
but God raised him on the third day,
and allowed him to appear,
not to all the people,
but to us, chosen by God as witnesses;
and indeed we ate and drank with him
after he rose from the dead.
He commissioned us
to continue the proclamation of the gospel,
and to testify that he is the one, ordained by God,
as judge of the living and the dead.
All the prophets declare
that everyone who believes in him
receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

While Peter was still speaking,
the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were gathered.
The Hebrew believers,
who had travelled with Peter from Joppa,
were amazed to see
that the gift of the Holy Spirit
was now being poured out on the Gentiles,
for they heard them speaking in tongues
and praising the greatness of God.
Peter said,
'Surely no one
can withhold the water
for baptising these people,
who have received the Holy Spirit,
just as we have.'
And he ordered that they should be baptised
in the name of Jesus Christ.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 23

SECOND READING – *1 John 3.1-2*

A reading from the first letter of John.
Such love the Father has given us,
to declare that we are children of God!
The world does not recognise this work of God in us,
even as it did not recognise Christ himself.
Beloved, we have indeed been made children of God;
and the even greater glory
of what we are yet to become
is still to be revealed.
What we do know is this:
that when he is revealed, we will be like him,
for we will see him as he is.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 10.11-18*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.
Jesus said to the Pharisees:
'I am the good shepherd,
who will lay down his life for the sheep.
The hired hand runs away
while the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep.
But I am the good shepherd.
I know my own sheep, and they know me;
just as the Father knows me,
and I know the Father.
And I lay down my life for the sheep.
I have other sheep,
that do not belong to this sheepfold;
they will also listen to my voice,
and come to me,
so that there will be one flock,
and one shepherd.
And now, in the love of the Father,
and as the Father has decreed,
I am ready to lay down my life,
and receive it back again.
No one takes my life from me:
I lay it down of my own accord.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.'

EASTER 5

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – Acts 11.1-4, 15-18

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Now the apostles

and the believers in Judea
heard that the Gentiles also
were accepting the word of God.

But when Peter returned to Jerusalem,

some of the Hebrew believers
criticised Peter,
demanding to know why

Peter had accepted hospitality from Gentiles,
and had even eaten with them.

Peter explained the whole sequence of events,

from his vision in Joppa,
to his arrival in Caesarea;
and then he explained,

‘As I began to speak,

the Holy Spirit fell upon them,
just as it had upon us, at the beginning.

And I remembered

that the Lord had said to us,
“John baptised with water,
but you will be baptised
with the Holy Spirit.”

I saw that God was giving them
the same gift that God gave us
when we came to believe
in the Lord Jesus Christ -
so who was I to hinder God?’

When they heard this,

they were silenced;
and they praised God, saying,
‘Then God has given,
even to the Gentiles,
the repentance that leads to life.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 98

SECOND READING – 1 John 3.16-24

A reading from the first letter of John.

This is how we know what love is:

that Christ laid down his life for us.

In the same way,

we should lay down our lives
for one another.

How can the love of God

be known in anyone,
if they are not moved to compassion
when they see
a brother or sister in need?

So let us love,

not only in words,
but also in deeds;

and then we will know

that we belong to the truth,
and in place of any troubled conscience,
we will have peace in our hearts,
in the presence of God,
without doubt or fear,
and the confidence and faith
to make our requests known to God,
trusting that God will hear our prayers
as we do God’s will.

And this is God’s commandment:

that we should believe
in the name
of his Son Jesus Christ,
and love one another.

All who keep this commandment

live in God,
and God lives in them.

And we know

that God lives in us
by the Spirit
that God has given to us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 15.1-8

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.

Every branch that does bear fruit,
he prunes, and cleans -
and you have been cleansed
by the words that I have spoken to you.

Now abide in me,
as I abide in you.

A branch cannot bear fruit by itself,
unless it abides in the vine,
and neither can you bear fruit,
unless you abide in me.

I am the vine,
you are the branches.

Those who abide in me, and I in them,
will bear much fruit,
but apart from me, you can do nothing:
whoever does not abide in me
is like a cut and withered branch
that is good only for firewood.

But if you abide in me,
and my words abide in you,
you may ask for whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you,
for there is glory for my Father in this:
that you bear much fruit
as my disciples.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 6

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – Acts 15.1-2, 4-6, 8-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

While Paul and Barnabas
were once again in Antioch, in Syria,
some disciples came down to Antioch from Judea,
and began teaching the believers
that unless they kept
the entire law of Moses,
they could not be saved.

After Paul and Barnabas
had argued and debated with them
for some time,
it was decided that Paul and Barnabas,
and some of the other believers,
would go up to Jerusalem
to discuss this question
with the apostles
and the elders.

When they arrived in Jerusalem,
they were welcomed
by the apostles and the elders,
and by the whole church,
and they reported
all that God was doing
amongst the believers in Antioch.

Now amongst the believers in Jerusalem
were some
who were also loyal
to the Pharisees,
and they insisted
that the believers in Antioch
should be ordered
to keep the entire law of Moses.

So the apostles and the elders
met to consider the matter.

After much debate,
Peter stood up, and said to them,
'It seems that God, who knows every human heart,
has poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles,
just as God poured out the Holy Spirit upon us.
And in cleansing their hearts by faith,
God has made no distinction between them and us.

Why would we now challenge
what God has done for them,
by placing upon them
a burden so great
that neither our ancestors
nor we ourselves
have been able to bear it?

We have come to believe
that we will be saved
through the grace of the Lord Jesus -
and surely
it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus
that the Gentiles also will be saved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 67

SECOND READING – 1 John 4.7-10

A reading from the first letter of John.

Beloved,
let us love one another,
because love is from God.

Everyone who loves
is born of God
and knows God.

Whoever does not love
does not know God,
for God is love.

God's love was revealed in this:
that God sent his only Son
into the world
that we might live through him.

In this is love:
not that we loved God,
but that God loved us,
and sent his Son
as the sacrifice for our sin.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 15.9-17

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

Jesus said to his 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.

This is my commandment -
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

There is no greater love
than for someone to give up their life for you.

And that is how I will be for you,
and that is how you will be for one another,
if you keep my commandment
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

I do not call you servants,
because the servant does not know
what the master is doing.

I call you friends,
and I have made known to you
everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me;
I chose you,
and I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
fruit that will last.

And now, whatever you ask in my name,
the Father will give you.

This is my commandment:
that you love one another.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ASCENSION DAY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – Acts 1.1-11

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 he had chosen.

After his suffering,

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

During this time,

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

He said to them,

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

When they were all together,

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

He replied,

‘It is not for you to know
the times or the 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,
in Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.’

When he had said this,

as they were watching,
he was lifted up,
and a cloud
took him out of their sight.

While he was going,

and they were gazing up towards heaven,
there appeared
two men in white robes,
standing by them,
who said to them,
‘Men of Galilee,
why do you stand
looking up towards heaven?

This Jesus,
who has been taken up from you into heaven,
will return
in the same way
you saw him go.’

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Ephesians 1.17-23a

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Father of glory,
may give you a spirit of wisdom, and revelation,
as you grow in your knowledge of God,

that with all the saints,

your hearts may be filled
with the glorious knowledge
of the hope and the inheritance
to which God has called you,
and the immeasurable greatness of his power
for all who believe.

This is the same power

that raised Christ from the dead
to be seated at God’s right hand
in the heavenly places,
above all other powers or authorities,
not only in this age,
but also in the age to come.

God has put all things under his feet,

and has made him the head, over all things,
for the sake of the church,
which is his body on earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.44-53

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

Jesus said to his disciples,

‘Everything that is written about me,
in the law of Moses, in the prophets,
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled.’

And he opened their minds

to understand the scriptures, saying:

‘It is written

that the Messiah is to suffer,
and to rise from the dead,
on the third day;

and that repentance

and forgiveness of sins
will be proclaimed in his name
to all nations,
beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things.

And see,

I will send to you
that gift that my Father has promised;
so stay here in the city
until you have been clothed
with power from on high.’

Then he led them out as far as Bethany,
and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.

While he was blessing them,

he withdrew from them
and was carried up into heaven.

And they worshipped him,

and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;
and they were continually in the temple,
praising God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 7

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – Acts 15.12-20,29

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The whole assembly kept silence,
listening to Barnabas and Paul,
as they told of all the signs and wonders
that God had done through them
amongst the Gentiles.

After Barnabas and Paul

finished speaking, James replied,

‘We have heard today
that God has looked favourably on the Gentiles,
to take from amongst the Gentiles
a people to be known by God’s name.

In the scriptures, God declares:

“I will return
to rebuild the city of David
from its ruins;
and I will set it up,
so that all may seek the Lord,
including all the Gentiles
I shall call by my name.”

This we now see being fulfilled
in what we have heard.

Therefore I have reached the decision
that we should not place burdens
on these Gentiles, who are turning to God,
but should write to them, telling them only
to abstain from association with idolatry,
to abstain from sexual immorality,
and to abstain from meat with the blood still in it;
and that if they keep themselves from these,
they will do well.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 150

SECOND READING – 1 John 4.11-12,16b,18-21

A reading from the first letter of John.

Beloved,

since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God,
but if we love one another,
God lives in us,
and God’s love is perfected in us.

God is love,
and those who live in love
live in God,
and God lives in them.

There is no fear in love,
for perfect love
casts out all fear.

Where love is perfected,
no one suffers the burden of fear.

And we love
because God first loved us.

No one can rightly claim
to love the God we cannot see
if they hate the brother or sister they can see.

The commandment we have from God is this:
those who love God
must love their brothers and sisters also.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 17.6-19

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

Jesus looked up to heaven, and prayed:
‘Father,

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 they have honoured me.

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

Holy Father, protect them,
for the honour of your name
that you entrusted to me.
May they may be one,
as we are one.

While I have been with them,
I have protected them,
and none has been lost
(except the one who was destined to be lost,
as the scriptures foretold).

And now,
as I am coming to you,
my prayer
is that they may have within them
a profound and sustaining joy.

The world has hated them
because they do not belong to the world,
(just as I do not belong to the world).

I am not asking you
to take them out of the world,
but I ask you to protect them
from all evil and harm.

You sent me into the world,
and now I send them into the world.

Father, make them holy
in the truth of your word.

It is for their sakes
that I offer myself up
entirely to you.

May they also be entirely yours.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PENTECOST

Readings for *Year B*

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 amongst 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, the 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 all hear them
speaking about God's deeds of power
in our own native languages,
from Asia and Arabia,
from Egypt and North Africa,
from Judea, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans,
from Crete and from 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:
'Men 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 – Romans 8.22-26

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

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,
and the redemption
of our whole being.
In this hope we were saved,
and although for now
we see only
the first fruits of the Spirit,
we await
with patience and confidence
our final adoption
as children of God.
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 – John 15.26, 16.12-15

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'From the Father,
I will send to you
the Spirit of truth,
to be with you,
and to speak for me.

I have so many things still to say to you;
more than you can know.

The Spirit of truth will come to you,
and guide you into all truth.

All that the Father has is mine,
and the Spirit of truth
will take what is mine
and declare it to you.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 6.1-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

It was in the year that King Uzziah died

that I saw the Lord,
sitting on a throne, on high;
and his robe filled the temple.

Seraphs were in attendance above him,

each with six wings,
and they called out to one another, saying:
'Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'

Their voices shook the foundations of the temple,
and the temple was filled with smoke.

And I said:

'Now surely I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live amongst 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.

The seraph touched my lips with it, saying:

'Now your guilt is taken away.
Your sins are forgiven.'

Then I heard

the voice of the Lord, saying,
'Is there any that I may send?
Who will go for us?'

And I said,

'Here I am; send me.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 29

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;

for we have received

a spirit of adoption,
not a spirit of slavery and fear.

The spirit of adoption

that we have received
unites with our spirit
to make us children of God,
crying out, 'Abba! Father!'

As children of God,

we are truly brothers and sisters of Christ,
inheriting, with him,
both suffering and glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 3.1-17*

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

The Pharisee Nicodemus

came to Jesus by night, saying,
'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher
who has come from God;
for no one can do the signs
that we see you do
apart from the presence of God.'

Jesus answered him,

'No one can see the kingdom of God
without being reborn, from above.'

Nicodemus said to him,

'How can anyone be born a second time?'

Jesus answered,

'No one can enter the kingdom of God
without being born
of both water and spirit.

What is born of the flesh is flesh,

and what is born of the spirit is spirit,
so do not be taken aback when I say
"You must be reborn, from above."

The wind blows where it chooses,

and you hear the sound of it,
but you do not know where it comes from
or where it goes.

So it is with everyone

who is born of the Spirit.'

Nicodemus said to Jesus,

'How can this be?'

Jesus answered him,

'You are a teacher of Israel,
and yet you do not understand?

If you do not believe

when I speak of these earthly things,
how can you believe
when I speak of heavenly things?

No one has ascended into heaven -

but the Son of Man came down from heaven.

And the Son of Man must be lifted up

(as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness),
so that whoever believes in the Son of Man
may have eternal life.

God so loved the world

that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish
but have eternal life.

And God did not send the Son into the world
to condemn the world,

but in order that the world might be saved
through him.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 24 AND 28 MAY
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Hosea 2.14-15,19-23*

A reading from the book of the prophet Hosea.

Even though my people have been unfaithful,
says the Lord,
I will lead them out into the wilderness once again,
and speak to them tenderly.
I will give them new vineyards,
a new beginning, and new hope.
And they will respond
as in the days of their youth,
when I freed them
from the land of Egypt.
I will renew my covenant with them,
in steadfast love, in mercy,
and in faithfulness.
I will say to them,
'You are my people',
and the heavens, and the earth, and the harvest,
will rejoice together,
as the people say,
'You are our God'.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 103.1-13, 22

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 4.5-7*

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

We do not proclaim ourselves.

We proclaim only
the Lord Jesus Christ,
and ourselves
as your servants
in him.

God said,
'Let light shine out of darkness,'
and any light
that shines out
from our hearts
is from God,
and its purpose
is to make known
the glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ.

We have this treasure
in earthen jars -
making clear
that this extraordinary power
comes from God,
and not from us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 2.13-22*

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

Jesus went out to the lakeside.
A large crowd gathered around him,
and he taught them.
Later, as Jesus was walking along,
he saw Levi, the tax collector,
sitting at the collecting booth.
Jesus said to him, 'Follow me' -
and Levi got up, and followed him.
Levi later invited Jesus and the disciples
to dine at his house.
Amongst the many disciples who gathered
were more tax collectors,
and others
who were regarded
by the Pharisees
as sinners.

When the Pharisees saw this,
they asked some of the disciples,
'Why does he eat with such people?'

Jesus heard this,
and said to them,
'It is not the healthy
who need a doctor,
but the sick.

I have not come
to call the righteous,
but sinners.'

Now John's disciples,
and the disciples of the Pharisees,
were fasting;
so people asked
why Jesus's disciples
were not fasting.

Jesus said to them,
'The wedding-guests
do not fast
while the bridegroom is with them.

But the days will come
when the bridegroom
is taken away from them,
and then they will fast.

You do not use new cloth
to patch up an old garment,
because the new cloth will pull away,
and cause more damage
than the damage
you were trying to repair.

And you cannot put new wine
into old wineskins,
because they will burst,
and both old and new will be lost.
New wine needs fresh wineskins.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 29 MAY AND 4 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Deuteronomy 5.12-15

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Observe the sabbath day
and keep it holy,
as the Lord your God commanded you.
For 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
on the sabbath day,
and neither shall your son,
or your daughter,
or your male or female servant,
or the foreigner living in your towns,
or your ox, or your donkey,
or any of your livestock,
for all of these shall rest,
as well as you.
Remember that you were a slave
in the land of Egypt,
and the Lord your God
brought you out from there
with a mighty hand
and an outstretched arm;
therefore the Lord your God commanded you
to keep the sabbath day.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 81.1-10

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 4.8-12

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

We are afflicted in every way,
but not crushed.
We face many challenges,
but we are not driven to despair.
We are persecuted,
but we know that we are not forsaken.
We are struck down,
but we are not destroyed.
We risk death, in Jesus' service -
so that, through our mortal bodies,
the life of Jesus
might be made known to you.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 2.23 - 3.6

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

Jesus was walking through a cornfield
on the sabbath day;
and as they walked along,
his disciples plucked some heads of grain.
The Pharisees said to him,
'What they are doing
is not lawful
on the sabbath.'
Jesus said to the Pharisees,
'Have you not read what David did,
when he and his companions were hungry
and in need of food?
He entered the house of God,
and ate the sacred bread,
which is reserved for the priests -
and he gave some to his companions!
The sabbath was made for the people,
not the people for the sabbath!
The Son of Man is Lord
even of the sabbath.'
The same day,
Jesus entered the synagogue,
and a man was there
who had a paralysed hand.
They watched Jesus,
to see whether he would cure the man
on the sabbath,
so that they might accuse him.
Jesus said to the man with the paralysed hand,
'Come forward.'
Then he said to the Pharisees,
'Which is lawful on the Sabbath:
to do good, or to do evil?
To save life, or to kill?'
They had no reply,
and remained silent.
Jesus looked around at them in anger,
grieved at their hardness of heart.
He said to the man,
'Stretch out your hand.'
The man stretched out his hand,
and it was restored.
The Pharisees went out,
and immediately
went to meet with
some of Herod's officials,
to conspire with them
against Jesus,
about how to destroy him.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 5 AND 11 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Genesis 3.8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The man and the woman

heard the Lord God

walking in the garden

at the time of the evening breeze,

and they hid themselves

from the presence of the Lord God

amongst the trees of the garden.

The Lord God called to the man,

and said to him, 'Where are you?'

The man said,

'I heard the sound of you in the garden,

and I was afraid,

because I was naked;

and I hid myself.'

The Lord God said,

'Who told you

that you were naked?

Have you eaten the fruit from the tree

that I commanded you not to eat?'

The man said,

'The woman you gave

to be with me -

she gave me fruit from the tree,

and I ate.'

The Lord God said to the woman,

'What is this

that you have done?'

The woman said,

'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.'

The Lord God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this,

you are cursed

amongst all animals

and wild creatures.

You shall go upon your belly,

and eat dust,

all the days of your life.

And there will be perpetual conflict

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

they will strike you on the head,

and you will strike them on the heel.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 130

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 4.13-15

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

The Psalmist wrote,

'I believe, and so I speak,

even though I am afflicted'.

In the same spirit of faith,

we believe and speak.

We believe

that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead

will raise us up,

and bring us into his presence,

and will bring you into his presence also.

And so we speak,

so that God's grace may be made known to you,

and to countless more,

all giving ever-greater praise and glory to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 3.20-35

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

The crowd gathered once again,

so that Jesus and his companions

were not even able to eat.

When his family heard of it,

they went there

to try to take charge of him,

saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.'

Meanwhile, the scribes

(who came from Jerusalem) said,

'He is possessed by the devil.

And that is how he casts out demons!'

Jesus said to them,

'How can Satan cast out Satan?

If a kingdom, or a household, is divided against itself,

it cannot stand;

so if Satan is divided against himself,

he is already defeated!

But hear this:

you cannot enter a strong man's house

and plunder his property

without first tying him up!

People will be forgiven their sins,

and forgiven whatever blasphemies they utter;

but this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

is unforgivable.'

(Jesus said this

because they had accused him

of working

not by the Holy Spirit

but by the devil.)

Then his mother and his brothers arrived,

but they remained outside,

because of the crowds.

The crowds around Jesus

said to him,

'Your mother and your brothers are outside,

and they are asking for you.'

Jesus said to them,

'Who are my mother and my brothers?'

And looking at those sitting around him, he said,

'Here are my mother and my brothers!

Whoever does the will of God

is my mother and sister and brother!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 12 AND 18 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 17.22-24*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

I myself will take a cutting
from the top of a fine cedar tree,
from the highest of its green branches.

I will plant it
on the mountain-side in Israel,
that it may grow,
and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Every kind of bird will come
and nest in its branches.

And all the trees of the field
shall know that I am the Lord,
the one who can bring down the mighty,
and raise up the lowly,
dry up the green tree,
and make the dry tree flourish.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 92.1-4, 11-14

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 4.16 - 5.1*

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

Our outer nature is wasting away,
but every day
our inner nature is renewed,
so we do not lose heart.

The temporary afflictions that we suffer
are as nothing
when compared
to the eternal glory
for which they are preparing us.

We are not concerned with the visible,
which is temporary,
but with the invisible,
which is eternal.

Our earthly tent
may be destroyed,
but in God
we have a secure and eternal home
in the heavens.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 4.1-2,26-34*

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

Jesus began to teach at the lake-side.

Such a large crowd
gathered around him
that he got into a boat,
and pushed out
on to the lake,
and taught from there,
while the crowd remained on land.

And he taught them in parables,
saying,

‘The kingdom of God is like this.

A farmer sows seed in the ground;
then sleeps and rises,
night and day,
and the seed sprouts, and grows;
the farmer does not know how.

Out from the soil
comes first the stalk,
and then the head,
and then the full grain;
and when the grain is ripe,
the farmer goes in with a sickle,
because the harvest has come.

Or the kingdom of God
is like a mustard seed,
which is the smallest of all seeds;
yet when it is sown,
it grows into a great tree,
and the birds of the air
come and nest in its branches.’

With these and many other parables,
Jesus spoke the word to the crowds,
as they could understand it.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**SUNDAY BETWEEN 19 AND 23 JUNE only
(if after Trinity Sunday)**

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Job 38.1-13

A reading from the book of Job.

The Lord answered Job

out of the whirlwind and the storm,
saying,

‘Who is this mortal,

questioning my wisdom
with ignorant words?

Prepare yourself,

for I will challenge you,
and you must answer!

For it was I, the Lord, and no mortal,

that laid the foundations of the earth,
and measured out its dimensions.

It was I, the Lord, and no mortal,

that set the cornerstone of the earth,
as the morning stars sang,
and the angels shouted for joy.

It was I, the Lord, and no mortal,

that enclosed the wild ocean
within its boundaries,
when it sprang forth
at its birth,

with storm-clouds
and thick darkness.

It was I, the Lord, and no mortal,

that defined the boundaries of the ocean,
setting its limits, saying,
“This far and no further!

Here shall your mighty waves be stopped!”

It was I, the Lord, and no mortal,

that directed the sun
to rise in the east
every morning
since your days began,

to lift the earth

like a sheet,

and shake the wicked away.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 107.1-3, 23-32

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 5.6-10

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

Brothers and sisters,

while we are at home in this earthly body,
we are

(in the body at least)

away from the Lord.

Of course we would rather be away from the body,
and at home with the Lord.

But even while we are here the body,

and away from the Lord,

we have confidence,

for we walk by faith,

and not by sight.

And whether we are at home or away,

we make it our aim

to be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord;

for we shall all appear

before the judgement seat of Christ

to receive due reward

for all that has been done

while here in the body,

both good and ill.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 4.35-41

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

As evening began to fall,

Jesus, already in the boat,

said to his disciples,

‘Let us go across to the other side.’

So they set off,

and others followed.

A great storm arose,

and the waves beat into the boat,

so that the boat

began to fill with water.

Jesus was asleep

at the back of the boat.

They woke him,

and said to him,

‘Teacher, do you not care

that we are perishing?’

Jesus stood up,

and rebuked the wind,

and said to the sea,

‘Peace! Be still!’

Immediately the wind stopped,

and there was a dead calm.

Jesus said to them,

‘Why are you afraid?

Have you still no faith?’

And were overwhelmed,

and said to one another,

‘Who is this,

that even the wind and the sea obey him?’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

when celebrated on 24 or 25 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 B

FIRST READING – Isaiah 11.1-5,10a

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.
A new son of David will appear,
and the spirit of the Lord will be with him:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of authority and strength,
the spirit of knowledge
and of honouring the Lord;
and his delight will be
in serving the Lord.
He will not judge by appearances,
but with righteousness
he will declare justice
for the poor;
the power of his words
will shake the earth
and strike down the wicked.
Righteousness and faithfulness
will be his strength,
and all the nations
will turn to him.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 5.6-10

A reading from the second letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.
Brothers and sisters,
while we are at home in this earthly body,
we are
(in the body at least)
away from the Lord.
Of course we would rather be away from the body,
and at home with the Lord.
But even while we are here the body,
and away from the Lord,
we have confidence,
for we walk by faith,
and not by sight.
And whether we are at home or away,
we make it our aim
to be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord;
for we shall all appear
before the judgement seat of Christ
to receive due reward
for all that has been done
while here in the body,
both good and ill.
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.'
In this way,
John the Baptist
fulfilled the word
of the prophet Isaiah,
who spoke of
'The voice of one
crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."
John wore clothing made from camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and his food was locusts
and wild honey.
People from Jerusalem,
and all Judea,
and all the region along the Jordan,
were going out to hear John,
and they were baptised by him
in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.
When John saw
that many religious leaders
were coming 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 imagine
that it is enough
to have Abraham as your ancestor!
God could raise up,
from these stones,
children to Abraham!
The axe is ready,
and any tree
that does not bear good fruit
will 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 shoes.
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.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

when celebrated between 26 and 30 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 B

FIRST READING – Isaiah 11.1-5,10a

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

A new son of David will appear,
and the spirit of the Lord will be with him:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of authority and strength,
the spirit of knowledge
and of honouring the Lord;

and his delight will be
in serving the Lord.

He will not judge by appearances,
but with righteousness
he will declare justice
for the poor;
the power of his words
will shake the earth
and strike down the wicked.

Righteousness and faithfulness
will be his strength,
and all the nations
will turn to him.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 2 Corinthians 5.14-21

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

When Christ died for us all,
we all died,
so that while we live,
we might live
no longer for ourselves,
but for Christ,
who died for us,
and rose again.

Previously, we regarded everyone,
even Christ,
from a human point of view;

but now we know
that if anyone is in Christ,
there is an entirely new creation:
everything old has passed away,
and everything has become new.

In Christ, God is reconciling the world to himself,
no longer counting our trespasses against us.

And God is making us ambassadors for Christ,
in the message and ministry of this reconciliation.

On behalf of Christ, we make this appeal:
be reconciled to God!

For our sake,
Christ entered into the consequences of our sin,
so that in Christ
we might enter into the righteousness of God.

And so,
the love of Christ urges us on.

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.’

In this way,

John the Baptist
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of the prophet Isaiah,
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‘The voice of one
crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.”’

John wore clothing made from camel’s hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and his food was locusts
and wild honey.

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

When John saw

that many religious leaders
were coming 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 imagine
that it is enough
to have Abraham as your ancestor!

God could raise up,
from these stones,
children to Abraham!

The axe is ready,
and any tree
that does not bear good fruit
will 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 shoes.

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.

SUNDAY 1 JULY or 2 JULY only

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Lamentations 3.22–33*

A reading from the book of Lamentations.
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
in great faithfulness, they are new every morning.
I place my hope and my trust in the Lord,
for the Lord is my inheritance,
and everything I need.
It is good to wait patiently
for the salvation of the Lord.
In your youth,
you may have to bow down, alone, in prayer,
under persecution and insult -
but the Lord will not reject us for ever,
and where there has been grief,
there will be compassion,
from the abundance
of the steadfast love of the Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 30

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 5.14-21*

A reading from the second letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.
When Christ died for us all, we all died,
so that while we live,
we might live
no longer for ourselves, but for Christ,
who died for us, and rose again.
Previously, we regarded everyone, even Christ,
from a human point of view;
but now we know
that if anyone is in Christ,
there is an entirely new creation:
everything old has passed away,
and everything has become new.
In Christ, God is reconciling the world to himself,
no longer counting our trespasses against us.
And God is making us ambassadors for Christ,
in the message and ministry of this reconciliation.
On behalf of Christ, we make this appeal:
be reconciled to God!
For our sake,
Christ entered into the consequences of our sin,
so that in Christ
we might enter into the righteousness of God.
And so,
the love of Christ urges us on.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 5.21-43*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.
One of the leaders of the synagogue
came to Jesus, and fell at his feet, begging him,
'My little daughter is at the point of death.
Come and lay your hands on her,
so that she may be made well, and live.'

So Jesus went with him,
and a large crowd followed them,
and pressed in on them.
Now there was a woman
who had been suffering with bleeding
for twelve years.
She had endured much, under many physicians,
and had spent all that she had;
and she was no better, but rather grew worse.
Having heard about Jesus,
she came up behind him in the crowd,
and touched his cloak, convinced that,
by this alone, she would be made well.
Immediately, her bleeding stopped;
and she felt in her body
that she was healed of her disease.
Aware that power had gone out from him,
Jesus turned around in the crowd, and said,
'Who touched my clothes?'
His disciples said to him,
'You see the crowd pressing in on you;
how can you say, "Who touched me?"'
But Jesus looked all around
to see who it might be.
The woman, knowing that she was healed,
came in fear and trembling,
and fell down before him,
and told him the whole truth.
Jesus said to her,
'Daughter, your faith has made you well;
go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'
While Jesus was still speaking,
some people came from the leader's house, saying,
'Your daughter is dead;
trouble the teacher no further.'
But overhearing what they said,
Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue,
'Do not fear, only believe.'
He allowed no one to follow him,
except Peter, and the brothers James and John.
When they arrived at the house
of the leader of the synagogue,
they saw a commotion,
with people weeping and wailing loudly.
Jesus entered the house, and said to them,
'Why do you make a commotion and weep?
The child is not dead, but sleeping.'
And they laughed at him.
Then he put them all outside,
and took the child's father and mother,
and those who were with him,
and went in where the child was.
He took her by the hand, and said to her,
'Daughter, get up!'
And immediately the girl got up
and began to walk about.
(She was twelve years of age.)
They were overcome with amazement.
Jesus ordered them
not to let anyone know what had happened;
and he told them to give her something to eat.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 3 AND 9 JULY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 2.1-5*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.
When the heavens were opened,
and I saw visions of God,
I bowed down
with my face to the ground.
Then I heard a voice, saying:
'Mortal, stand up,
and I will speak with you.'
A spirit entered into me,
and set me on my feet.
The voice continued,
'Mortal, I am sending you
to the people of Israel,
for they are
a nation of rebels.
They, and their ancestors,
have rebelled against me.
To this very day,
they are shameless and stubborn.
I am sending you
and you shall say to them,
"This is what the Lord God says."
And whether they hear,
or refuse to hear,
they shall know
that there has been a prophet amongst them.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 123

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 12.2-10*

A reading from the second letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.
I know a person in Christ
who, fourteen years ago,
was caught up into the third heaven.
Whether this was in the body,
or out of the body,
I do not know;
only God can know.
But I know that this person
was caught up into Paradise,
and into an experience
that no words can describe,
and no mortal can tell.
On behalf of such a person,
I could boast -
but on my own behalf,
I will not boast,
except of my weaknesses.
If I were to boast,
I would not be a fool,
for I would be speaking the truth;
but I refrain from boasting,
so that you may judge me
solely by what you see in me
and hear from me;

for despite
the exceptional character
of the revelations,
and to keep me from vanity,
I was given a thorn in the flesh,
like a messenger of Satan,
to torment me.

Three times
I appealed to the Lord
that it would leave me,
but the Lord has said to me,
'My strength is made perfect in weakness',
and 'My grace is all that you need'.
So I boast all the more gladly
of my weaknesses,
that the power of Christ
may dwell in me.
Indeed,
I am content with weaknesses,
insults, hardships, persecutions, and more,
for the sake of Christ;
for when I am weak,
then I am strong.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 6.1-6*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.
Jesus came to his home town,
and his disciples followed him.
On the sabbath,
he began to teach in the synagogue,
and many who heard him were astounded.
They said,
'Where did he get these teachings,
and the power to do such works?
Surely this is the carpenter,
the son of Mary.
His sisters are here with us,
and his brothers -
James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude.'
And they took offence at him.
Then Jesus said to them,
'Prophets are honoured everywhere,
except in their home town,
amongst their own people,
and in their own house.'
And he could do
no work of power there,
except that he laid his hands
on some who were sick,
and healed them.
And he was amazed
at their unbelief.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 10 AND 16 JULY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Amos 7.7-15*

A reading from the book of the prophet Amos.

The Lord showed Amos a vision

of a master-builder,
measuring a wall,
with a plumb-line in his hand.

And the Lord said to Amos,

‘See, I have set a plumb-line
to judge my people Israel,
and have found them to be untrue.

And so,

the high places of the land
will be made desolate,
the sanctuaries will be laid waste,
and I will rise against the king
with the sword.’

So Amos spoke

as the Lord had directed:

‘The king shall die by the sword,
and all Israel will be sent into exile.’

The priest of Bethel

sent a message to the king, saying,

‘Amos has conspired against you,
here at the very heart
of the house of Israel.

The nation cannot tolerate his words!’

And the priest of Bethel

said to Amos,

‘Flee away!

Go to the land of Judah!

Earn your bread there,

and work your prophecy there,

but never again speak here at Bethel,

for it is the king’s temple and sanctuary!’

But Amos answered him, saying:

‘I am no prophet,

nor any son of a prophet;

but a shepherd,

and a tender of fig trees.

But the Lord took me

from following the flock,

and said to me,

“Speak these words

to my people Israel.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 85.8-13

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 1.1-8a*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

From Paul,

an apostle of Christ Jesus

by the will of God.

To the saints in Ephesus,

the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace to you, and peace,

from God our Father,

and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has blessed us in Christ

with every spiritual blessing,

having chosen us, in Christ,

before the foundation of the world,

to be holy and blameless before him, in love.

God has adopted us in Jesus Christ,

redeeming us through his blood,

forgiving our trespasses,

and freely pouring out upon us

the riches of his glorious grace.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 6.7-13*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

Jesus called the twelve,

and began to send them out,

two by two,

giving them authority

over the unclean spirits.

He ordered them

to take nothing for their journey,

except a staff;

no bread, no bag,

no money in their belts;

and to take only sandals,

and one set of clothes.

He said to them,

‘Wherever you enter a house,

stay there until you leave that place.

If the place will not welcome you -

if they refuse to hear you -

shake the dust of the place

off your feet

as you leave.’

So they went out

and proclaimed

that all should repent.

They cast out many demons,

and anointed with oil

many who were sick,

and healed them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 17 AND 23 JULY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 23.1-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

This is what the Lord,
the God of Israel, says,
concerning the shepherds
who shepherd my people.
Woe to the shepherds
who destroy and scatter
the sheep of my pasture.
You have not attended to them.
You have driven them away.
You have scattered my flock.
But I will attend to you
for your evil doings,
says the Lord.
Then I myself
will gather the remnant of my flock
out of all the lands
where I have driven them.
I will bring them back to their sheepfold,
and they will thrive,
and become many.
I will raise up shepherds over them
who will tend them,
and they shall no longer
be afraid or dismayed,
and none shall be missing,
says the Lord.
And the days are surely coming
when I will raise up
a new son of David,
who will reign as king,
and deal wisely,
and bring justice and righteousness
to the land.
In those days,
Judah will be saved,
and Israel will live in safety.
And his name shall be:
'The Lord is our righteousness.'
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 23

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 2.12-22*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Previously,
you who are Gentiles, by birth,
did not know Christ.
You were excluded from Israel.
You were strangers to the covenants
and the promises of God -
without God, and without hope.
But now,
you who were once far off
have been brought near
by the blood of Christ.

For Christ is our peace.

In his flesh,
he has made the two into one,
and has broken down the hostility
which had been
like a dividing wall
between us.

He has abolished the law,
with its commandments and ordinances,
that he might create in himself
one new humanity, in place of the two,
making peace,
and reconciling both groups to God,
in one body, through the cross,
by which he put to death their hostility.
So he came and proclaimed peace
to you who were far off,
and peace to those who were near;
and through him
we all now have access,
in one Spirit,
to the Father.
So now,
you are no longer strangers and foreigners,
but fellow citizens, with the saints -
fellow members of the household of God,
built upon the foundation
of the apostles and the prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.
In Christ,
the whole structure is joined together,
and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
And you also are built
into this dwelling-place for God,
in the Spirit.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 6.30-34*

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

The apostles returned from their mission.
They gathered around Jesus,
and told him all that they had done and taught.
Jesus said to them,
'Let us go away,
to some deserted place,
by ourselves, and rest a while,'
(for many were coming and going,
and they had no respite, even to eat).
So Jesus and the disciples left by boat
for a remote place, by themselves.
But many saw them leave,
and realised where they were going;
and people hurried there on foot,
from all the towns,
and arrived ahead of them.
So as Jesus went ashore,
he saw a great crowd.
And he had compassion on them,
for they were like sheep without a shepherd;
and he began to teach them many things.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 24 AND 30 JULY

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *2 Kings 4.42-44*

A reading from the second book of Kings.

During the famine in Gilgal,
a traveller arrived,
from a village in the mountains,
with an offering of twenty bread rolls,
made from barley,
from the first fruits of the harvest.
He presented the twenty bread rolls to Elisha.
Elisha said to his servant,
'Give them to the people, and let them eat.'
But Elisha's servant said,
'How can I serve twenty bread rolls
to a hundred people?'
Elisha repeated,
'Give them to the people, and let them eat,
for the Lord says,
that they shall eat, and have some left over.'
So the servant set them before the people,
and they ate, with bread to spare,
as the Lord had made known to Elisha.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 145.10-19

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 3.14-21*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I pray to God, the Father of all,
that through the Holy Spirit,
you may be strengthened,
in your inner being,
from the riches of God's glory.
I pray that Christ may dwell in your hearts,
that you may be
rooted and grounded in love;
and indeed that you,
with all the saints,
may come to know
the full breadth, and length, and height, and depth,
of the love of Christ,
that surpasses all knowledge.
By the power that is at work within us,
God is able to accomplish
far more
than we can ever ask,
or even imagine.
To God be glory,
in the church, and in Christ Jesus,
through all generations, for ever!
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.1-21*

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

Jesus crossed to the far side
of the Sea of Galilee.
A large crowd kept following him,
because they saw the signs that he was doing
for the sick.

Jesus went up on the hillside,
and sat down there, with his disciples.
It was just before the Hebrew festival of the Passover.
When Jesus looked up,
and saw the large crowd, coming towards him,
he said to Philip,
'Where are we to buy bread
for all these people to eat?'
Jesus said this to test Philip,
for Jesus himself knew what he was going to do.
Philip answered Jesus,
'Six months wages would not buy enough bread
for each of them to have even a small piece.'
The disciple Andrew
(the brother of Simon Peter)
said to Jesus,
'There is a boy here
who has five barley-loaves and two fish.
But what are they amongst so many?'
Jesus said,
'Tell the people to sit down.'
There was grass there,
and the people sat down;
about five thousand in all.
Then Jesus took the five barley-loaves,
and when he had given thanks,
he distributed them to those who were seated;
and in the same way, the fish,
as much as they wanted.
When they had all had enough to eat,
Jesus said to his disciples,
'Gather up the pieces left over,
so that nothing is wasted.'
And they filled twelve baskets,
gathering up the pieces
left over by those who had eaten.
When the people saw the sign that Jesus had done,
they began to say,
'This is surely the prophet
who was to come into the world.'
When Jesus realised
that they were about to take him by force
to make him their king,
he withdrew again to the mountain
by himself.
When evening came,
and it was becoming dark,
Jesus had still not returned.
The disciples went down to the lake,
got into a boat,
and set out to cross the lake, in the dark.
The lake became rough,
with a strong wind blowing.
When they had rowed about three or four miles,
they saw Jesus walking on the lake towards the boat,
and they were filled with fear,
but Jesus said to them,
'Do not be afraid.'
As soon as they received him into the boat,
they found that they had
safely reached the shore.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 31 JULY AND 6 AUGUST

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron:

‘If only we had died,
by the hand of the Lord,
in the land of Egypt,
where we ate our fill of meat and bread;
but you have brought us out into this wilderness
to die of hunger.’

Then the Lord said to Moses,

‘I am going to rain down bread from heaven for you;
and each day, the people shall go out,
and gather enough for that day.

In this way I will test them,
whether they will follow my instruction or not.’

Moses said to Aaron,

‘Say to the whole gathered people of Israel,
“Draw near to the Lord,
for the Lord has heard your complaining.”’

And as Aaron spoke to the people,
they looked towards the wilderness,
and the glory of the Lord
appeared in a cloud.

The Lord said to Moses,

‘Say to the people,
“At twilight you shall eat meat,
and in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread;
then you shall know
that I am the Lord your God.”’

In the evening,
quails came up and covered the camp;
and in the morning
there was a layer of dew around the camp.

When the layer of dew lifted,
there on the surface of the wilderness
was a fine flaky substance,
as fine as frost
on the ground.

When the Israelites saw it,
they said to one another, ‘What is it?’
for they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them,
‘It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 78.23-29

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 4.1-6*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I urge you to lead a life
that is worthy of the calling that you have received,
a life of humility, gentleness, and patience,
forgiving and accepting one another in love,
working always to live in unity and peace;
for there is one body, and one Spirit,
one hope to which we are called,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.24-35*

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

When the crowd realised
that Jesus and his disciples
had left the place
where Jesus
had given the bread,
they got into the boats
and crossed the lake to Capernaum,
to look for him there.

When they found him,
they asked him,
‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’

Jesus said,

‘You came to find me
not because you understood the sign,
but because you ate your fill of bread!’

Do not work for the food that perishes,
but work for the food
that endures for eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you -
for it is on the Son of Man
that God the Father
has set his seal.’

They said to him,
‘What must we do
to be doing the work of God?’

Jesus said,
‘This is the work of God:
that you believe in the one
that God has sent.’

So they said to him,
‘What sign are you going to give us,
so that we may see it, and believe you?
What work are you performing?
Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness;
it says, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”’

Jesus said to them,
‘It was not Moses
who gave you the bread from heaven;
it is my Father
who gives you the true bread from heaven.

The bread of God
is that which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world.’

They said to him,
‘Sir, give us this bread always.’

Jesus said to them,
‘I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me
will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 7 AND 13 AUGUST

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 19.4-8*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

Elijah went a full day's journey
into the wilderness.

He sat down
in the shade of a single tree,
and asked that he might die:
'It is enough, now, O Lord;
take away my life,
for I am no better than my ancestors.'

Then he lay down,
in the shade of the tree,
and slept.

He was woken by an angel,
saying, 'Get up and eat.'

He looked around,
and there, next to where he had been lying,
was some bread, baked on hot stones,
and a jar of water.

He ate and drank,
and lay down again.

The angel of the Lord came a second time,
touched him, and said,
'Get up and eat,
or the journey
will be too great for you.'

Elijah got up,
and ate, and drank.

And he went, in the strength of that food,
forty days and forty nights,
to Horeb, the mountain of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 34.1-8

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 4.11-16*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Christ himself
gives to the church
apostles and prophets,
evangelists, pastors and teachers,
to build up the body of Christ,
to equip the saints
for the work of ministry,
to lead us to unity
of faith and understanding,
and to lead us to maturity,
and the full stature of Christ.

We will no longer be like children,
vulnerable to trickery and deceit,
but will grow up in every way,
in truth and in love,
into Christ, who is the head,
with each part of the body
joined and connected together,
and working as it should,
growing in the strength of love.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.35,41-51*

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

Jesus said,

'I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me
will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.'

They began to complain about Jesus,
because he said,

'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'

They were saying,

'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph,
whose father and mother we know?

How can he now say,

"I have come down from heaven"?'

Jesus said,

'Do not complain amongst yourselves.

Everyone who comes to me
is drawn by the Father who sent me;
and I will raise them up on the last day.

It is written in the prophets,

"They shall all be taught by God,"

and while none have seen the Father
(except the one who comes from God)
all who hear and learn from the Father
come to me.

Truly, I tell you,

whoever believes has eternal life.

And truly, I tell you,

I am the bread of life.

Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness,
and they died;

but here is the bread

that comes down from heaven,
which you may eat, and not die.

I am the living bread

that came down from heaven.

Whoever eats this bread

will live for ever.

And my body

is the bread that I give
for the life of the world.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 14 AND 20 AUGUST

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Proverbs 9.1-6*

A reading from the book of Proverbs.
Wisdom has built her house,
strong on seven pillars.
She has prepared her feast,
mixed her wine,
and set her table.
She has sent out her servant-girls
to announce,
from the highest places in the town,
'You that seek wisdom, gather here!'
To all who seek understanding, she says,
'Come, eat my bread, and drink my wine.
Lay aside all foolishness.
Walk in the way of insight, and live!'
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 34.9-14

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 4.25 - 5.2*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.
Rid yourselves of all dishonesty;
let us speak the truth to our neighbours,
for we are members of one another.
When you become angry,
do not give in to sin;
do not let the sun go down on your anger;
allow no opportunity for the devil.
Let none be a thief,
but let all do honest work;
and then share
what they have
with the needy.
When you speak,
let it never be harmful,
but useful for building up.
Do not grieve the Holy Spirit,
whose presence within you
marks you as God's own
for the day of salvation.
Put away all bitterness,
wrath, anger, dispute,
slander, and malice.
Be kind to one another,
tender-hearted,
forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.
Walk in the ways of godliness and love,
following the example of Christ,
who loved us,
and in that love,
became a perfect offering
to God the Father.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.51-58*

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

Jesus said,
'I am the living bread
that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats this bread
will live for ever.
And my body
is the bread that I give
for the life of the world.'
They then disputed amongst themselves, saying,
'How can this man give us his body to eat?'
So Jesus said to them,
'Truly, I tell you,
unless you eat the body
of the Son of Man,
and drink his blood,
you have no life in you.
Those who eat my body
and drink my blood
have eternal life,
and I will raise them up
on the last day;
for my body is true food
and my blood is true drink.
Those who eat my body
and drink my blood
abide in me,
and I in them.
Just as the living Father sent me,
and I live because of the Father,
so whoever eats of me
will live because of me.
This is the bread
that came down from heaven.
It is not like the bread from heaven
that your ancestors ate,
and they died,
for all who eat this bread
will live for ever.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 21 AND 27 AUGUST

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Joshua 24.1, 14-18*

A reading from the book of Joshua.

Joshua gathered the tribes of Israel,
with the elders, the leaders,
the judges, and the officers;
and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua addressed them, saying:

'It is the Lord your God
who has brought you to this place,
and to this day.

Now put away the gods
that your ancestors served,
and honour the Lord your God
with all your heart.

And if you are unwilling to serve the Lord,
choose this day the gods you will serve,
whether the gods of your ancestors,
or the gods of the those
in whose land you are living.

But as for me and my household,
we will serve the Lord!'

And the people answered,

'Far be it from us
that we should forsake the Lord our God
to serve other gods;

for it is the Lord our God
who brought us, and our ancestors,
out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery,
giving many great signs in our sight.

It is the Lord our God
who protected us along the way,
and gave us this land to possess.

Therefore we also
will serve the Lord,
for the Lord is our God.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 34.15-22

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 6.10-20*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Finally, be strong

in the power of the Lord.

Put on the whole armour of God,
so that you may be able to stand
against all the deceits of the devil.

For our struggle is not against enemies
of flesh and blood,
but against the spiritual rulers,
authorities, and cosmic powers
of this present darkness.

Therefore put on
the whole armour of God,
so that you may be able to stand firm
against every assault of the devil.

Fasten the belt of truth around your waist.

Put on the breastplate of righteousness;
and on your feet, the gospel of peace.

Take the shield of faith,
which will quench
the flaming arrows
of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation;
and the word of God,
which is the sword of the Spirit.

At all times,
pray in the Spirit,
making your requests known to God.

Stay alert,
and persevere in prayer
for all the believers.

Pray also for me,
that whenever I speak,
I may be given the words
to proclaim with boldness
the gospel
for which I am an ambassador
in chains.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.60-69*

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

When many of the disciples
heard these things,
they said,
'This teaching is difficult;
who can accept it?'

Jesus said,
'Does this offend you?

What if you were to see
the Son of Man
ascending to the place
from which he came?

It is the spirit that gives life;
the flesh counts for nothing,
and the words that I have spoken to you
are spirit and life;

and yet still, amongst you,
there are some who do not believe,'
(for Jesus knew who did not believe -
and he knew who would betray him).

Jesus said,
'No one can come to me
unless it is granted by the Father.'
Many of the disciples now turned back,
and no longer went about with him.

Jesus asked the twelve,
'Do you also wish to go away?'

Simon Peter answered him,
'Lord, to whom can we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
We have come to believe and know
that you are the Holy One of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**SUNDAY BETWEEN 28 AUGUST AND
3 SEPTEMBER**

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Deuteronomy 4.1a,2,6-8*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses said to the people:

‘You must observe and keep

the laws and statutes
of the Lord your God,
that I set before you this day,

neither adding to them,
nor taking anything away.

When other nations hear of these laws,
they will say,

‘Surely this is a wise and discerning people!’

For no other nation

has laws and statutes
to establish such justice and righteousness
as the laws and statutes
given to us by the Lord our God.

And no other nation has a god so near
as the Lord our God is to Israel
whenever we call upon him.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 15

SECOND READING – *James 1.19-27*

A reading from the letter of James.

My brothers and sisters,

there is wisdom in this:
be quick to listen,
but slow to speak,
and slow to anger,
for your anger
does not produce
God’s righteousness.

Cleanse yourselves
from all wickedness.

And welcome with humility

the word of God
that is planted in your heart,
for it has the power to save your soul.

Be doers of the word,
and not merely hearers,
who deceive themselves.

Those who are hearers of the word,
and not doers,
they are like those
who look in a mirror,
and as soon as they turn away,
forget what they look like.

But those who look into the perfect law -
the law that brings freedom -
and do not forget it,
but act upon it -
they will be blessed
in all that they do.

In the same way,

if you consider yourself religious,
but do not bridle your tongue,
your religion is worthless.

Religion that is pure and undefiled

before God, the Father, is this:

to care for orphans and widows in their distress,
and to keep yourself

from being corrupted by the world.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 7.1-8, 14-15, 21-23*

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

Some Pharisees and scribes, from Jerusalem,
joined the crowds

who were gathering around Jesus.

They noticed that some of his disciples, before eating,
did not rigorously observe
the ceremonial washing of hands.

(For the Pharisees,

and all who keep the Hebrew law
in the tradition of the elders,
do not eat, unless they first

have a ceremonial washing of their hands;
and they perform ceremonial washing

after visiting the market;
and there are many other traditions

that they observe,
including the ceremonial washing
of vessels and furniture.)

So the Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus,

‘Why do your disciples not live
according to the tradition of the elders,
but eat without
the ceremonial washing of their hands?’

Jesus said to them,

‘You hypocrites.

You hold to your human traditions
while neglecting the commandments of God.

As it says in Isaiah,

“They honour me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

Their teachings are human creations,
and they worship me in vain.”

Then Jesus said to the crowd,

‘There is nothing outside a person,
that by going in, can defile;
but the things that come out
are what defile.

For it is from within -

from the human heart -
that evil intentions come:
sexual immorality,
theft and murder,
greed and malice,
deceit and recklessness,
envy and slander,
arrogance and foolishness.

All these evil things come from within -
and they are what defile.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 4 AND 10 SEPTEMBER

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 35.4-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Say to those

whose hearts are full of fear:
be strong, and do not fear,
for God will come to save you,
bringing justice and recompense.

On that day,

the blind will see,
the deaf will hear,
the lame will dance,
and the voiceless will sing for joy.

Water will spring up in the wilderness,
and rivers will flow in the desert.

The burning sand will become a pool,
and the thirsty ground an oasis;

and where desert wild-animals
once lay in wait,
reeds and rushes will grow.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 146

SECOND READING – *James 2.1-9, 14-17*

A reading from the letter of James.

My brothers and sisters,

acts of favouritism
have no place
amongst those who have faith
in our Lord Jesus Christ.

If a person with gold rings

and fine clothes

comes into your assembly,

and a poor person in dirty clothes

also comes in,

and you say to the one in fine clothes,

'Have a seat up here,'

while to the other, you say,

'Stand there,'

or, 'Sit on the floor,'

have you not discriminated unjustly,

and revealed your corrupt motives?

Listen, my brothers and sisters:

God has chosen the poor in the world

to be rich in faith,

and to inherit the kingdom

that is promised

to those who love God.

But you have dishonoured the poor!

Surely it is the rich

who oppress you,

and drag you into court,

and dishonour the name of God.

The law above all other laws

in scripture is this:

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Acts of favouritism

go against this law.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters,

if you say you have faith,

but do not act upon it?

A faith like that cannot save you.

If a brother or sister is in rags, and without food,

it does no good to say

'Go in peace; keep warm, and eat your fill,'

unless you also attend to their practical needs.

Your faith is lifeless, and in decay,

if it does not lead to good works.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 7.24-37*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

Jesus travelled

to the northern coastal city of Tyre.

He did not want anyone

to know that he was there,

but news of his presence quickly spread.

A woman came, and bowed down at his feet,

and begged him to heal her daughter,

who was troubled by an unclean spirit.

The woman was a Syrian, a Gentile.

Jesus said to her,

'Let the children be fed first,

for it is not fair to take the children's food

and throw it to the pets in the house.'

She answered him,

'Yes, Lord, but even the pets

eat the crumbs

that fall from the children's table.'

Jesus said to her,

'Go in peace.

The demon has left your daughter.'

She went home,

and found the child resting, and at peace,

the unclean spirit gone.

Jesus travelled from there

to the region to the east of Galilee.

There they brought to him a deaf man,

with an impediment in his speech.

They begged Jesus

to lay his hand on him, to heal him.

Jesus took the man aside, in private,

away from the crowd.

He touched the man's ears,

and his tongue,

and looked up to heaven,

and sighed deeply, saying, 'effatha',

which means, 'be open.'

Immediately,

the man's ears were opened, and he could hear;

and his tongue was freed, to speak clearly.

Jesus asked them to tell no one;

but the more he asked them,

the more they proclaimed it,

All who heard it said,

'He does great works;

he even makes the deaf to hear,

and frees the tongue of the voiceless to speak.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 11 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 50.4-9a*

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 me -
awakens my ear -
to learn wisdom
as a disciple of the Lord.

When I face persecution,
I do not hide my face,
or turn away,
for the Lord God is my helper.

I do not count their insults a disgrace.

I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame,
for the one who vindicates me is near.

Let my adversaries challenge me,
confront me, and contend with me,
for the Lord God is my steadfast helper,
and my adversaries
will be put to shame.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 116.1-8

SECOND READING – *James 3.1-12*

A reading from the letter of James.

Not many of you should become teachers,
my brothers and sisters,
for you know that we who teach
will be judged more strictly.

We all have many faults and failings,
and yet if only we could control the tongue,
we would soon have
perfect self-control in everything.

The tongue is like the bit
in the mouth of a horse,
that guides its entire body,
or like the rudder
that guides a great ship
in a strong wind;
it is small,
but has such great power.

One small fire
can set a whole forest ablaze -
and the tongue is like a fire,
burning with a whole world of iniquity,
corrupting the whole body,
and scorching the whole course of your life,
as if set on fire by hell itself.

Every species on earth
has been tamed,
but no one can tame the tongue -
recklessly dangerous,
and full of deadly poison.

With it we bless our God and Father,
and with it we curse our neighbours
who are made in the image of God.

Fresh and foul water
do not flow from the same spring.
Each tree produces one kind of fruit,
and not any other.

And yet from the same mouth
come both blessing and cursing.

My brothers and sisters,
this ought not to be so.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 8.27-36*

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

Jesus went with his disciples
towards the villages north of Galilee.

On the way, he asked his disciples,
'Who do people say that I am?'

They answered him,
'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah;
and others say one of the prophets.'

Jesus asked them,
'But who do you say that I am?'

Peter answered him,
'You are the Messiah.'

Jesus warned the disciples
to say this to nobody.

And he began to teach them
that the Son of Man
must undergo great suffering,
and be rejected by the elders,
the chief priests, and the scribes,
and be killed, and after three days, rise again.

Peter took Jesus aside,
and began to rebuke him.

But turning and looking at his disciples,
Jesus rebuked Peter, saying:

'Get behind me, Satan!

For your mind
is still set
on the human,
and not yet
on the divine.'

He then called the crowd,
as well as his disciples,
and said to them,

'To become my disciple,
you must deny yourself,
and take up your cross,
and follow me.

For the more you try to save your life,
the more you will lose it,
but if you lose your life
for my sake,
and for the sake of the gospel,
you will save it.

And what would it profit anyone
to gain the whole world
but lose their very soul?'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 18 AND 23 SEPTEMBER only
Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 11.18-20*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

I was led like a lamb
to the slaughter.

They said,

'Let us destroy both the tree and its fruit.
Let us cut him off
from the land of the living,
so that even his name
will be remembered no more!'

I did not know

that it was against me
that they were devising their evil schemes,
until the Lord made it known to me.

But you, O Lord of hosts -

you are the one who judges righteously.
You examine the heart and the mind.

Let me see your judgement upon them,
for I have committed my cause to you.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 54

SECOND READING – *James 3.13 - 4.3,7b-8a,10*

A reading from the letter of James.

It is by a life

filled with good deeds
and with gentleness
that you demonstrate
true wisdom and understanding.

Bitterness, envy,

and selfish ambition,
do not come from godly wisdom,
but are earthly, unspiritual, even devilish,
bringing disorder and wickedness
of every kind.

Godly wisdom is innocent, and peaceful,

gentle, and accommodating,
full of mercy and good deeds,
with no trace of partiality or hypocrisy;
and what is planted in peace
brings a harvest of righteousness.

Your conflicts and disputes

come from unworthy desires
at war within you.

You want something you do not have,

so you engage in disputes and conflicts
that lead even to murder.

But you do not have,

because you do not ask!

Or you ask wrongly,

seeking only to fulfil your unworthy desires.

So resist the devil,

and the devil will flee from you.

Draw near to God,

and God will draw near to you.

Be humble before God,

and God will raise you up.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 9.30-37*

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

Jesus and his disciples

passed through Galilee,
and he did not want anyone to know it;
for he was teaching his disciples,
saying to them,

'The Son of Man

is to be betrayed
into human hands,
and they will kill him,
and after three days,
he will rise again.'

But they did not understand what he was saying,
and they were afraid to ask him.

Later that day, in the house,

Jesus asked them,
'What were you arguing about,
on the way?'

And they were silent,

because they had been arguing with one another
about which of them
was the greatest.

Jesus sat down,

and called the twelve,
and said to them,

'Whoever wants

the first place
must take the last place,
and be the servant of all.'

Then he called a little child

to stand amongst them,
and he said to the disciples,

'Whoever welcomes a little child

in my name
welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MICHAELMAS

when celebrated on 24 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 B

FIRST READING – Genesis 32.22-30

A reading from the book of Genesis.

While it was still dark,
they got up,
and Jacob led
his two wives,
his two maids,
and his eleven children,
to the place
where they could ford the Jabbok river.

Jacob sent them all across,
ahead of him,
carrying everything they had,
until Jacob was left alone.

And there,
someone wrestled with Jacob
until daybreak.

Still failing to overpower Jacob,
he struck Jacob on the hip,
putting Jacob's hip out of joint,
and said to Jacob,
'Let me go,
for the day is breaking.'

But Jacob said,
'I will not let you go,
unless you bless me.'

The one who had been wrestling with Jacob
asked Jacob's name,
and then said,
'You shall no longer be called Jacob,
but Israel
(which means, "wrestling with God"),
for you have wrestled
with God,
and with mortals,
and have prevailed.'

Jacob said,
'Please tell me your name.'

But the one who had been wrestling with Jacob
said, 'Why would you ask my name?'
and blessed Jacob.

So Jacob called the place Peniel
(which means, 'the face of God'),
saying,
'I have seen God face to face,
and yet my life is preserved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – James 3.13 - 4.3,7b-8a,10

A reading from the letter of James.

It is by a life
filled with good deeds
and with gentleness
that you demonstrate
true wisdom and understanding.

Bitterness, envy,
and selfish ambition,
do not come from godly wisdom,
but are earthly, unspiritual, even devilish,
bringing disorder and wickedness
of every kind.

Godly wisdom is innocent, and peaceful,
gentle, and accommodating,
full of mercy and good deeds,
with no trace of partiality or hypocrisy;
and what is planted in peace
brings a harvest of righteousness.

Your conflicts and disputes
come from unworthy desires
at war within you.

You want something you do not have,
so you engage in disputes and conflicts
that lead even to murder.

But you do not have,
because you do not ask!
Or you ask wrongly,
seeking only to fulfil your unworthy desires.

So resist the devil,
and the devil will flee from you.

Draw near to God,
and God will draw near to you.

Be humble before God,
and God will raise you up.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 22.39-43

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

After the meal in the upper room,
Jesus went to the Mount of Olives;
and his disciples followed him.

When he reached the place,
he said to them,

'Pray, that you may not come
into the time of trial.'

And he withdrew from them,
about a stone's throw,
and knelt down,
and prayed, saying,

'Father, if you are willing,
remove this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'

And an angel from heaven appeared to him,
and gave him strength.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MICHAELMAS

when celebrated between 25 and 30 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 B

FIRST READING – Genesis 32.22-30

A reading from the book of Genesis.

While it was still dark,
they got up,
and Jacob led
his two wives,
his two maids,
and his eleven children,
to the place
where they could ford the Jabbok river.

Jacob sent them all across,
ahead of him,
carrying everything they had,
until Jacob was left alone.

And there,
a man wrestled with Jacob
until daybreak.

Failing to overpower Jacob,
he struck Jacob on the hip,
putting it out of joint,
and said to Jacob,
'Let me go,
for the day is breaking.'

But Jacob said,
'I will not let you go,
unless you bless me.'

So the man asked Jacob,
'What is your name?'

And when Jacob gave his name,
the man replied,
'You shall no longer be called Jacob,
but Israel
(which means, "wrestling with God"),
for you have wrestled
with God,
and with mortals,
and have prevailed.'

Jacob said,
'Please tell me your name.'

But he said,
'Why would you ask my name?'

And there he blessed Jacob.
So Jacob called the place Peniel
(which means, 'the face of God'),
saying,
'I have seen God face to face,
and yet my life is preserved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – James 5.13-16

A reading from the letter of James.

Those amongst you
who are suffering
should pray;
and those who are strong
should sing songs of praise.

Those who are sick
should call for the elders of the church,
to pray over them,
and to anoint them with oil
in the name of the Lord;

and the prayer
offered in faith
will restore
the one who is sick,
for the Lord will raise them up;
and if they have sinned,
they will be forgiven.

Confess your faults to one another,
and pray for one another,
that you may be restored,
for the prayer of the righteous
is powerful and effective.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 22.39-43

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

After the meal in the upper room,
Jesus went to the Mount of Olives;
and his disciples followed him.

When he reached the place,
he said to them,

'Pray, that you may not come
into the time of trial.'

And he withdrew from them,
about a stone's throw,
and knelt down,
and prayed, saying,

'Father, if you are willing,
remove this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'

And an angel from heaven appeared to him,
and gave him strength.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

HARVEST FESTIVAL
when celebrated on 1 October
Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Genesis 2.4-5,7-8

A reading from the book of Genesis

When the Lord God first made
the earth and the sky,
there were no plants
or crops in the ground,
for the Lord God
had not yet sent rain
upon the earth,
and there was no one to cultivate the ground.
Then the Lord God formed Adam
from the dust of the earth,
and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life;
and Adam became a living being.
And the Lord God planted a garden,
in Eden,
in the east;
and placed Adam within it.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 100

SECOND READING – James 5.13-16

A reading from the letter of James.

Those amongst you
who are suffering
should pray;
and those who are strong
should sing songs of praise.
Those who are sick
should call for the elders of the church,
to pray over them,
and to anoint them with oil
in the name of the Lord;
and the prayer
offered in faith
will restore
the one who is sick,
for the Lord will raise them up;
and if they have sinned,
they will be forgiven.
Confess your faults to one another,
and pray for one another,
that you may be restored,
for the prayer of the righteous
is powerful and effective.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 6.25-33

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

Do not worry
about your life,
what you will eat,
or what you will drink,
or about your body,
or what you will wear.
There is more to life than food,
and there is more to the body
than clothing!
Consider the birds of the air:
they do not plant,
or harvest,
or gather into barns,
and yet
your heavenly Father feeds them.

Surely you are more valuable
than the birds of the air!

Worrying
will not add a single hour
to your span of life.

Or consider the wild flowers,
how they grow:
they do not weave,
or sew,
or worry what to wear,
and yet not even Solomon
in all his glory
was clothed
as finely as these.

If God clothes
the grass of the field,
in this way -
grass which is alive today, and dried up tomorrow -
how much more
will God clothe you!

So have faith!

While others ask
“What will we eat?”
or “What will we drink?”
or “What will we wear?”
you are not to worry
about these things,
for your heavenly Father
knows that you need them.

Work instead
for the kingdom of God,
and for righteousness,
and all these other things
will be given to you as well.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

when celebrated between 2 and 7 October

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 2.4-5,7-8*

A reading from the book of Genesis

When the Lord God first made
the earth and the sky,
there were no plants
or crops in the ground,
for the Lord God
had not yet sent rain
upon the earth,
and there was no one to cultivate the ground.
Then the Lord God formed Adam
from the dust of the earth,
and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life;
and Adam became a living being.
And the Lord God planted a garden,
in Eden,
in the east;
and placed Adam within it.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 8

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 2.6-11*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

In the psalms, it says:

‘What are human beings,
that you are mindful of them,
or mortals,
that you care for them?
You have made them,
for a little while,
to be lower than the angels;
and yet you have set them
to rule over
all that you have made,
and you have crowned them
with glory and honour.’

We do not yet see this
fully accomplished
for us all,
but we do see Jesus,
who, for a little while,
was indeed made
lower than the angels;
and, by the grace of God,
having tasted death for everyone,
is indeed now crowned
with glory and honour.

He calls us his brothers and sisters,
because we share the same Father,
the creator of all that exists.

And having shared with us in our sufferings,
he has become the pioneer of our salvation,
leading many to glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 6.25-33*

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

Do not worry
about your life,
what you will eat,
or what you will drink,
or about your body,
or what you will wear.
There is more to life than food,
and there is more to the body
than clothing!
Consider the birds of the air:
they do not plant,
or harvest,
or gather into barns,
and yet
your heavenly Father feeds them.

Surely you are more valuable
than the birds of the air!

Worrying
will not add a single hour
to your span of life.

Or consider the wild flowers,
how they grow:
they do not weave,
or sew,
or worry what to wear,
and yet not even Solomon
in all his glory
was clothed
as finely as these.

If God clothes
the grass of the field,
in this way -
grass which is alive today, and dried up tomorrow -
how much more
will God clothe you!

So have faith!

While others ask
“What will we eat?”
or “What will we drink?”
or “What will we wear?”
you are not to worry
about these things,
for your heavenly Father
knows that you need them.

Work instead
for the kingdom of God,
and for righteousness,
and all these other things
will be given to you as well.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER only

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 2.18-24*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord God said,

‘It is not good

for the man

to be alone.

I will make him a helper,

to be alongside him.’

So the Lord God formed,

out of the ground,

every animal of the field,

and every bird of the air,

and brought them to the man,

to see what he would call them;

and whatever the man called

each living creature,

that was its name.

The man gave names

to the cattle,

to the birds of the air,

and to every animal of the field;

but still, no helper was found

to be alongside the man.

So the Lord God

caused the man

to fall into a deep sleep,

and while the man slept,

God took

one of the man’s ribs,

and formed the rib

into a woman,

and brought her

to the man.

And the man said,

‘This at last

is bone of my bones,

and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called Woman,

for she was brought forth

out of the man.’

It is for this reason

that a man leaves his father and his mother,

and is united to his wife,

and they become one flesh.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 8

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 2.6-11*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

In the psalms, it says:

‘What are human beings,

that you are mindful of them,

or mortals,

that you care for them?

You have made them,

for a little while,

to be lower than the angels;

and yet you have set them

to rule over

all that you have made,

and you have crowned them

with glory and honour.’

We do not yet see this

fully accomplished

for us all,

but we do see Jesus,

who, for a little while,

was indeed made

lower than the angels;

and, by the grace of God,

having tasted death for everyone,

is indeed now crowned

with glory and honour.

He calls us his brothers and sisters,

because we share the same Father,

the creator of all that exists.

And having shared with us in our sufferings,

he has become the pioneer of our salvation,

leading many to glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 10.13-16*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

People were bringing children to Jesus,

that he might bless them.

When Jesus realised

that the disciples

were trying to stop them,

he was indignant,

and said to them,

‘Let the children come to me,

for the kingdom of God

belongs to them.

I tell you,

whoever does not receive

the kingdom of God

like a little child

will never enter it.’

And he put his arms around them,

and blessed them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 9 AND 15 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Amos 5.6-7, 10-15*

A reading from the book of the prophet Amos.

Now is the time to seek the Lord, and live,
for the Lord is preparing
to sweep through the tribes of Israel like a fire.
For you replace justice with poison,
and you trample righteousness to the ground.
You despise those who challenge you,
and all who speak the truth.
You trample on the poor,
with tax on their produce.
And so, the Lord says:
you have built fine stone houses,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
For I know all your offences,
and the number of your crimes -
how you take bribes,
persecute the innocent,
and deny justice to the needy.
The prudent stay silent,
for it is an evil time.
You say that the Lord God is with you,
so turn to pursue good, and not evil,
that the Lord may indeed be with you,
and that you may live.
Hate all that is evil, love all that is good,
and establish justice in your courts,
that the Lord God of hosts
might have mercy upon you.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 90.13-17

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 4.12-16*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The word of God
is living and active.
Sharper than a sword,
it pierces into the soul and the spirit,
and judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
None can hide from it,
for everything will be seen
when we are called to give an account
before God.
But now, we have a great high priest,
who has passed into the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,
who is able to sympathise with all our weaknesses,
for he himself has been tested,
in every way, as we are,
yet without sin.
So let us trust in him,
and approach the throne of grace with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy,
and find grace to help
in time of need.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 10.17-31*

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

As Jesus was setting out on a journey,
a man ran up to him,
and knelt before him, asking,
'Good Teacher, what must I do
to inherit eternal life?'
Jesus said to him,
'Why do you call me good?
No one is good, but God alone.
You know the commandments:
You shall not murder;
you shall not commit adultery;
you shall not steal,
or bear false witness,
or defraud;
honour your father and mother.'
He said to Jesus,
'Teacher, all these I have kept since my youth.'
Jesus looked at him
with compassion, and said,
'You lack one thing.
Go and sell everything you own,
and give the money to the poor;
and you will have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow me.'
When he heard this, he was shocked,
and went away grieving,
for he had many possessions.
Then Jesus looked around,
and said to his disciples,
'How hard it will be
for those who have wealth
to enter the kingdom of God!'
The disciples were taken aback at these words.
But Jesus said to them again,
'How hard it is
to enter the kingdom of God!
It is easier for a camel
to go through the eye of a needle
than for those who are rich in earthly things
to enter the kingdom of God.'
They said to one another,
'Who then can be saved?'
Jesus looked at them and said,
'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God.
For God, all things are possible.'
Peter began to say to him,
'Look, we have left everything and followed you.'
Jesus said,
'Truly I tell you,
all who have left house,
or brothers or sisters, or mother or father,
or children or fields, for my sake,
and for the sake of the gospel,
will receive a hundredfold now
(though with persecutions),
and in the age to come, eternal life.
Many who are first now will be last,
and many who are last will be first.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 16 AND 22 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 53.4-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Truly it was our sickness
that weighed him down,
and our suffering
was his burden.
We considered
that God
had struck him down and afflicted him -
but he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him
was the punishment
that made us whole,
and by his wounds,
we are healed.

For we, like sheep, have gone astray,
each turning to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 91.9-16

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 5.1-6*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Each high priest
is chosen from amongst mortals
to represent them before God,
presenting their offerings and sacrifices for sin.

Having been chosen
from amongst mortals,
the high priest is able to deal gently
with the foolish, and the wayward,
for he himself
is subject to weakness.

He offers sacrifices for his own sins,
as well as offering sacrifices
for the sins of the people.

He does not presume
to choose for himself
the honour of serving as high priest,
but like Aaron,
he serves only
when called by God.

In the same way,
Christ did not glorify himself
in becoming a high priest,
but was appointed by God,
who said,
'You are my Son,
I am your Father,
and you are a high priest for ever.'

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 10.35-45*

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

The brothers James and John
approached Jesus, and said,
'Teacher, there is something
we would like you to do for us.
Let us sit,
one at your right hand,
and one at your left,
in your glory.'

Jesus said to them,
'You do not know what you are asking.
Are you able to drink
the cup that I shall drink,
or endure the baptism
with which I am to be baptised?'

They replied,
'Yes, we are able.'

Jesus said to them,
'You will indeed drink
the cup that I shall drink,
and endure the baptism
with which I am to be baptised;
but to sit at my right hand
or my left
is not mine to grant.'

When the other disciples
heard of this,
they were indignant
at James and John,
so Jesus called them all to him, and said,
'Out in the world,
the ones they call leaders
dominate their people;
the ones they call great
exercise power over them.

But it shall not be so amongst you,
where the truly great
are those who serve,
and the greatest of all
is the one who is the servant of all.

For the Son of Man came
not to be served,
but to serve,
and to give his life for all.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 23 AND 29 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 31.7-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Shout out with gladness for Jacob,
and sing with joy for Israel,
the first amongst the nations,
even as you pray,
'Save us, O Lord,
the remnant of your people.'

For the Lord says this:

'I will bring you back
from the lands of the north,
and I will gather you
from the furthest ends of the earth.

A great multitude shall return -
including the blind and the lame,
and those preparing to give birth,
even those in labour.

With weeping and prayer,
they shall return.

I will lead them by streams of water,
on a level path,
where they shall not stumble;

for I am a father to Israel,
and every child of Israel
is like my firstborn.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 126

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 7.23-28*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The former priests
were many in number,
because they were prevented by death
from continuing in office.

But Jesus lives for ever,
and his priesthood
does not come to an end.

He is able to intercede,
for all time,
for those who approach God
through him.

He is holy, righteous, undefiled,
separate now from sinners,
exalted above the heavens.

The former high priests
offered sacrifices
day after day,
for their own sins
and for the sins of the people;
but Jesus made his sacrifice
once for all
when he offered himself.

The old law appointed high priests
who were subject to weakness,
but the new law appoints a Son
who has been made perfect for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 10.46b-52*

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

Jesus and his disciples
were leaving Jericho,
and crowds of people
were following them.

Bartimaeus, a blind beggar,
was sitting by the roadside.

When Bartimaeus heard
that Jesus of Nazareth
was passing by,
he began to shout out:
'Jesus, Son of David,
have mercy on me!'

Many told him to stop,
but he cried out all the more:
'Jesus, Son of David,
have mercy on me!'

Jesus stopped, and said,
'Call him.'

So they said to the blind man,
'Get up, come forward, he is calling you.'

Leaving his cloak,
he stood up,
and came forward to Jesus.

Jesus said to him,
'What do you want me to do for you?'

The blind man said to him,
'Teacher, let me see again.'

Jesus said to him,
'Go, your faith has made you well.'

And immediately,
Bartimaeus regained his sight,
and joined the crowds
following Jesus
along the road.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

4 BEFORE ADVENT – ALL SAINTS SUNDAY
Sunday between 30 October and 5 November
Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – Deuteronomy 6.1-9

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses said to the people,
'These are the commandments, laws, and decrees,
that the Lord your God
has directed me to teach to you,
to observe in the land
that you are now to enter
and possess.

Hear therefore, O Israel,
these commandments, laws, and decrees,
and observe them diligently,
so that you,
and your children,
and your children's children,
may honour the Lord your God,
all the days of your life,
so that your days may be long,
and you may prosper, and multiply greatly,
in this land,
flowing with milk and honey,
as promised to you
by the Lord,
the God of your ancestors.

Now hear, O Israel:
the Lord our God
is one Lord,
and you shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your might.

Keep these words,
that I am commanding you today,
in your heart.

Teach them to your children.

Recite them at home,
and when you travel;
at the end of the day,
and in the morning.

Mark them on your hand,
and on your forehead;
on your doorposts,
and on your gates.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 119.1-8

SECOND READING – Hebrews 9.11-14

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Christ is the high priest
of the new covenant.
He has entered, once for all,
into the most holy sanctuary
which is greater by far
than any made by human hands on earth.

He has entered,
not with the blood of goats or calves,
but with his own blood,
attaining
everlasting redemption.

The blood of goats and bulls,
and the ashes of a calf,
have been applied
to sanctify the bodies
of those who have been defiled.

How much more
will the blood of Christ,
offering himself,
through the eternal Spirit,
without blemish, to God,
purify our hearts
from sin that leads to death,
that we may worship the living God!

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 12.28-34a

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

One of the scribes asked Jesus,
'Which commandment is the greatest of all?'
Jesus answered,

'The greatest commandment is this:

"Hear, O Israel,
the Lord our God is one Lord;
and you shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength."

And the second is this,

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

There is no commandment
greater than these.'

The scribe said to him,

'Yes, teacher, this is surely right:

the Lord our God is one, and there is no other;
and to love the Lord our God
with all your heart, understanding, and strength -
and to love your neighbour as yourself -
this is more important
than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices.'

Recognising the wisdom of this answer,

Jesus said to the scribe,

'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

3 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday between 6 and 12 November

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – 1 Kings 17.8-16

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying,

‘Go now to the coastal town of Sarepta,
between Tyre and Sidon,
in Lebanon,
and live there;
for I have commanded a widow there
to feed you.’

So Elijah set out,
and went to Sarepta,
as the Lord commanded.

When Elijah arrived
at the gate of the town,
a widow was there, gathering sticks.

Elijah asked her for a cup of water,
and as she went,
he called after her,
asking also for a piece of bread.

She turned and said to Elijah,
‘As the Lord your God lives,
I have nothing baked.
I have only a handful of flour, in a jar,
and a little oil, in a jug.

I am gathering these sticks
so that I may go home,
and prepare all that remains,
for myself and my son,
that we may eat it, and die.’

Elijah said to her,
‘Do not be afraid.
Go, and do as you have said.
But first, make something from it
and bring it to me,
and afterwards make something for yourself
and your son.

For the Lord, the God of Israel, says this:
The jar of flour will not be empty,
and the jug of oil will not run dry,
until the day
that the Lord sends rain
on the earth.’

She went and did as Elijah had said,
and she, and Elijah, and her household,
ate for many days;
and the jar of flour was not empty,
and the jug of oil did not run dry.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 146

SECOND READING – Hebrews 9.24-28

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The earthly high priest

enters a sanctuary made by human hands,
a mere copy of the true one,
but Christ enters into heaven itself,
to appear in the presence of God
on our behalf.

Year after year,
the earthly high priest
enters the holy place,
to offer the blood of goats and bulls -
but Christ, entering heaven,
does not have to offer himself again and again.

Christ appears once,
at the right time,
to remove all sin,
by the sacrifice of himself.

Mortals die once, and then face judgement,
but Christ, having been offered once,
for the sins of many,
will appear at the judgement,
not to offer himself for sin once again,
but to welcome into salvation
all those who are waiting,
with eager anticipation, for him.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Mark 12.38-44

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

Jesus was teaching in the temple,
and a large crowd was listening to him.

Jesus said,
‘Beware of the scribes!
They like to walk around in long robes,
and have people bow down to them in public.
They like to have the best seats in the synagogues,
and places of honour at banquets.
Yet they cheat widows out of their property,
while, for the sake of appearances,
they say long prayers.
They will be judged most harshly.’

Jesus sat down
opposite the place
where money was offered,
and watched the crowd
putting in what they had brought.

Many rich people were giving large sums.
A poor widow came,
and put in two small coins.

Jesus called his disciples, and said to them,
‘Truly, this poor widow
has put in more
than all those others.
For they have contributed
from all that they have to spare;
but she, in her poverty,
has put in all she had to live on.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

2 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday between 13 and 19 November

Readings for *Year B*

FIRST READING – *Daniel 12.1-3*

A reading from the book of Daniel.

When the nation faces
its greatest distress -
greater than any
since the nations first came into being -
Michael, the great prince,
the protector of your people, will arise,
and your people will be saved -
all those whose names
are recorded in the book.
Many who have died
will awake to judgement -
some to shame and disgrace,
and some to everlasting life.
Those who are wise will shine
like the brightness of the sky,
and those who lead others to righteousness
will shine, for ever, like the stars.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 16

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 10.11-14, 19-25a*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The priest in the earthly temple
offers the same sacrifices,
day after day,
that can never take away sin.
But when Christ offered,
for all time,
a single sacrifice for sin,
'he sat down at the right hand of God' -
and 'his enemies
will be his footstool'.
For by his one offering of himself,
he completed the work
of taking away sin,
in full, and for all time,
so that we can now
enter the most holy place
with confidence.
Christ himself
is the new and living way
into the most holy place,
where once,
only the high priest could enter.
So with Christ as our high priest,
let us draw near with a true heart,
and the full assurance of our faith,
knowing that we are purified by his sacrifice;
meeting together faithfully,
fully confident in the promises of God,
encouraging one another
to love, and to good deeds.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Mark 13.1-13*

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

As Jesus was leaving the temple,
one of his disciples said,
'Look at these huge stones,
and magnificent buildings!'
Jesus said,
'The day will come
when not one stone
will be left upon another.'
Later, he was sitting opposite the temple
at the Mount of Olives.
Peter, James, John, and Andrew
asked him privately,
'When will this happen?
And how will we know?'
Jesus said,
'Do not be misled.
Many will come
claiming my name,
claiming to be the one,
and many will be led astray.
But even when you hear of wars,
and rumours of wars,
do not be alarmed,
for all this must take place -
but the end is not yet.
Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be earthquakes, and famines,
in various places,
but even this is only the beginning.
You will be handed over to councils,
and beaten in synagogues;
and dragged before governors and kings;
but do not fear,
for the Holy Spirit
will give you the words to say.
You will be hated because of my name;
brother will betray brother to death,
and a father his child;
children will rise against parents,
and have them put to death.
But the good news
will be proclaimed to all nations;
and the one who endures to the end
will be saved.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CHRIST THE KING

Last Sunday before Advent

Sunday between 20 and 26 November

Readings for Year B

FIRST READING – *Daniel 7.9-10, 13-14*

A reading from the book of Daniel.

As I watched,
 thrones were set in place,
 and the Ancient of Days
 was seated on his throne.
His clothing was dazzling white,
 and his hair was like wool.
His throne was flames of fire
 that streamed out from his presence.
A countless multitude
 surrounded him, to serve him.
The court assembled,
 and the books were opened.
And as I watched,
 one like a human being
 appeared in the clouds of heaven,
 and approached the Ancient of Days.
And to him was given
 authority, glory, and honour,
 that people of every nation and language
 should serve him.
His glory will last for ever,
 and his kingdom will never pass away.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 93

SECOND READING – *Revelation 1.4b-8*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

From John,
 to the seven churches in Asia.
Grace to you, and peace,
 from God,
 who was,
 and is,
 and is to come.
Grace to you, and peace,
 from the seven-fold spirit
 before the throne of God.
Grace to you, and peace,
 from Jesus Christ,
 the faithful witness,
 the firstborn from the dead,
 the leader of all humankind,
 who loves us,
 and by his sacrifice
 freed us from our sins,
 and made us to be a royal priesthood
 serving his God and Father;
 to him be the power and the glory for ever.
Amen!

Look! He is coming with the clouds!

Every eye will see him -
even those who pierced him.
All the nations of the earth
will cry out to him.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega',
says the Lord God,
'the first and the last,
the beginning and the end,
who was, and is, and is to come.'
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 18.33b-37*

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

Pilate asked Jesus,
'Are you the King of the Jews?'
Jesus replied,
'Do you ask this for yourself,
or because others
have said it about me?'
Pilate said,
'Your own nation
and your own chief priests
have handed you over to me.
What is it
that you have done?'
Jesus answered,
'I have no earthly kingdom.
You see that I have no warriors
fighting to protect me.
My kingdom is not of this world.'
Pilate said,
'So you are a king!'
Jesus replied,
'You use the word "king".
I came into the world
to proclaim the truth.
For this I was born;
and everyone who seeks the truth
listens to my voice.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 1

Sunday between 27 November and 3 December

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 33.14-16*

A reading from the book
of the prophet Jeremiah.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will fulfil
the promise I made
to the people of Israel
and to the house of Judah.

In those days,
and at that time,
I will raise up a new son of David,
who will bring justice
and righteousness
to the land.

In those days,
all Judah will be saved,
and Jerusalem will live in safety;
and they shall call Jerusalem
the City of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 25.1-10

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 3.12-13*

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

May the Lord grant you
to have ever greater love,
for one another,
and for everyone,
just as we have
such great love for you.

And may the Lord
strengthen your hearts
in holiness,
that you may be ready
to meet our God and Father
at the coming of our Lord Jesus
with all the saints.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 21.25-28,34-36*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'In those days,
even the powers of the heavens
will be shaken:
the sun and the moon and the stars.

On the earth,
there will be distress
amongst the nations;
and in the oceans,
the thundering of the waves;
and people will be in fear
for all that is coming upon the world.

Then they will see the Son of Man,
coming in a cloud,
with power and great glory.
When these things begin to take place,
stand up, and raise your heads,
because your salvation is drawing near.

These things
will come upon all who live
upon the face of the whole earth -
so be ready.

Do not let your hearts
be weighed down
by the excesses and worries
of this present age,
for that day to catch you unexpectedly.

Be alert at all times,
praying that you may have the strength
to escape all these things,
and to stand, on that day,
before the Son of Man.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 2

Sunday between 4 and 10 December

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Malachi 3.1-4*

A reading from the book
of the prophet Malachi.

‘See, I am sending my messenger before me,
to prepare the way,’
says the Lord of hosts.

All who seek the Lord,
all who delight in the Lord,
will see the Lord appear in the temple
as the messenger of the covenant.

But who can endure
the day of the Lord?

And who can stand
when the Lord appears?

For the Lord of hosts
is like a refiner’s fire.

The Lord will purify
the priests of the temple,
refining them like silver and gold,
until they present offerings to the Lord
in righteousness.

On that day,
the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem
will once again be pleasing to the Lord,
as they were in days of old,
and former years.

This is the word of the Lord.

Benedictus

SECOND READING – *Philippians 1.3-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

I thank my God

every time I remember you,
and I am joyful
in my prayers for you,
because of the way
you have shared in the gospel,
from the time
you first heard the word.

And I am confident of this:

that the one who began
a good work amongst you
will bring it to completion
on the day of Jesus Christ.

I know that you hold me in your heart,
and that you share with me
in God’s grace,

both in my imprisonment,
and in my work
proclaiming and defending the gospel.

And with all the compassion of Christ Jesus,
I pray for you earnestly.

I pray that your love may abound
more and more.

I pray that you may grow
in knowledge, and insight, and discernment.

I pray that, through Jesus Christ,
you may produce
a full harvest of righteousness
to the praise and glory of God.

And I pray that you may be found
pure and blameless
on the day of Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 3.1-6*

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

When Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
and Herod was ruler of Galilee,

the word of God
came to John,
in the wilderness.

And 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.

ADVENT 3

Sunday between 11 and 17 December

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Zephaniah 3.14-19*

A reading from the book

of the prophet Zephaniah.

Sing aloud, O Zion;

shout out, O Israel!

Rejoice with all your heart,

O daughter Jerusalem!

For the Lord has taken away

the judgements against you,

and has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is with you,

and no disaster shall come upon you.

Stay strong,

and do not fear,

O Zion;

for the Lord your God

is with you

as a mighty saviour.

And the Lord says this:

I will delight in you with gladness,

I will rejoice over you with singing,

and I will renew you

in my constant love.

I will remove disaster from you,

and free you from oppression;

no longer will you be ashamed.

I will save the lame,

and gather the outcast,

and I will change your shame

into praise and honour

in all the earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

Canticle *Isaiah 12.2-6*

SECOND READING – *Philippians 4.4-7*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord, always;

and again, I say,

Rejoice.

Let your gentleness

be known to everyone.

The Lord is always near,

so do not worry about anything,

but in everything,

by prayer, and 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 3.7-18*

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

The crowds came out

to be baptised by John,

and he addressed them, saying:

'You brood of vipers!

Who warned you to flee

from the judgement

that is coming?

Bear fruit worthy of repentance!

And do not begin to say,

"but we have Abraham as our father",

for I tell you,

God could turn these stones

into children of Abraham!

The axe is ready,

and any tree

that does not bear good fruit

will be cut down

and thrown into the fire!

The crowds asked John the Baptist,

'What should we do?'

He said to them,

'Whoever has two coats

must share with anyone who has none;

and whoever has food must do likewise.'

Tax-collectors came to be baptised,

and they asked him,

'Teacher, what should we do?'

He said to them,

'Collect only what you have been ordered to collect.'

Soldiers also asked him,

'And what should we do?'

He said to them,

'Do not extort money

using threats and false accusations;

be content with your pay.'

The people were filled with expectation,

and were questioning in their hearts,

concerning John,

whether he might even be the Messiah.

John answered them, saying,

'I baptise you with water;

but one is coming

who is greater than me.

I am not worthy

even to be his servant.

He will baptise you

with the Holy Spirit,

and with fire,

and he will separate the wheat from the chaff.'

With these,

and many other

words and challenges,

John proclaimed the good news

to the people.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ADVENT 4

Sunday between 18 and 24 December

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Micah 5.2-5a*

A reading from the book
of the prophet Micah.

You, O Bethlehem,
are one of the smallest
of all the clans of Judah,

and yet from you
will come the one
who is to rule for me
in all Israel,

whose origin is long ago,
in ancient days.

There will be desolation
until
the one who is in labour
has given birth -

but then all Israel
will be gathered together,
and he shall stand tall,
and tend his flock,
in the strength of the Lord -

in the majesty
of the name
of the Lord his God.

The people will dwell in peace;
and his greatness will be known
to the ends of the earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

Canticle Magnificat

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 10.1, 4-7, 10*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The old law
contained only a shadow
of the good things
that were to come.

Under the law,
the same sacrifices
were offered continually,
year after year,
demonstrating
that they can never make perfect
those who offer them;

for it is impossible
for the blood of bulls and goats
to take away sin.

Therefore,
when Christ comes into the world,
he says,

‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired.

In burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings,
you have taken no pleasure.

But a body you have given me.

See, O God, I have come to do your will.’

It is by God’s will

that we have now been sanctified
through the offering
of the body of Jesus Christ,
once for all.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 1.39-55*

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

Mary set out
and went with haste
to a town
in the hill country of Judah,
where she entered the house of Zechariah,
and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting,
the child leapt in her womb,
and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,
and said to Mary,

‘Blessed are you amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

How has this happened to me,
that the mother of my Lord
has come to me?

For as soon as I heard your greeting,
the child in my womb leapt for joy.

Blessed is she who trusted
that the message
spoken to her from the Lord
would be fulfilled.’

And Mary said,

‘My soul gives praise to the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices
in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour
on his lowly servant.

From this time forward,
all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One
has done great things for me.
Holy is his name!

His mercy is on all who honour him,
in every generation.

He has revealed his power,
and has scattered the proud in their vanity.

He has brought down the powerful,
and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and has sent the rich away empty.

In his everlasting mercy
he has come to the aid
of his servant Israel,

fulfilling the promise
he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham
and to his descendants for ever.’

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 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.

GOSPEL – *Luke 2.1,3-20*

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

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

As a descendant of David,
Joseph went from Nazareth, in Galilee,
to Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem.

He took with him 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, a son,
and wrapped him in bands of cloth,
and laid him in a manger,
because there was no room 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, saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,
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.

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.'

Listen!

Your watchmen are 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,
the one 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
all people,
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,
glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Sunday between 26 December and 1 January

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

FIRST READING – 1 Kings 19.11-13a

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The Lord said to Elijah,
‘Go out
and stand on the mountain
before the Lord,
for the Lord is about to pass by.’
Then there came 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.

SECOND READING – 1 John 4.9-12, 16b

A reading from the first letter of John.

God’s love was revealed in this:

that God sent his only Son
into the world
that we might live
through him.
In this is love:
not that we loved God,
but that God loved us,
and sent his Son
to be the sacrifice for our sins.
Beloved,
since God loved us so much,
we also
ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
and yet if we love one another,
God lives in us,
and God’s love
is perfected in us.
God is love,
and those who live in love
live in God,
and God lives in them.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 1.1-12, 14, 16-18

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
all people,
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,
glory as of a father’s only son,
full of grace and truth.
From these riches,
we have received
grace upon grace,
for while the law was given through Moses
grace and truth
came through Jesus Christ.
No one has ever seen God,
but the one Son of God,
who is close to the Father’s heart,
has made God known.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

THE EPIPHANY

Sunday between 2 and 6 January only

Readings for *Year C*

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 has covered the earth,
and thick darkness has covered the nations;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and the glory of the Lord
will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings shall come
to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around:
they gather together,
they come to you.
Your sons shall come from far away,
and your youngest daughters shall be carried here
on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see,
and be radiant.
Your heart shall thrill and rejoice;
for the abundance of the sea
shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations
shall come to you.
Camels, from Egypt, and Arabia,
will fill the land.
They will bring gold and frankincense,
and they will 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 been commissioned
to make known
a glorious truth
that was unknown
to former generations.
But now, by the Holy Spirit,
this glorious truth has been revealed
to God's apostles and prophets
through the gospel:
that the Gentiles
are our brothers and sisters
in Christ -
members of the same body,
and inheritors of the same promise.
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
the chief priests and the scribes,
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
amongst 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 between 7 and 13 January

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 43.1b-3a,4a,5a,7*

A reading from prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says: Do not fear,
for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name, and you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.

When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you;

for I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

Do not fear, for I am with you.

I called you by name, and created you for glory,
and you are precious in my sight.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 29

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 2.6-11,14-15,17-18*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

In the psalms, it says:

‘What are human beings,
that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?
You have made them, for a little while,
lower than the angels;
and yet you have set them to rule
over all that you have made,
and crowned them with glory and honour.’

We do not yet see this fully accomplished
for all human beings,
but we do see Jesus, who, for a little while,
was indeed made lower than the angels,
and, by the grace of God,
having tasted death for everyone,
is now indeed crowned with glory and honour.

He calls us his brothers and sisters,
because we share the same Father,
the creator of all that exists.

And having shared with us in our sufferings,
he has become the pioneer of our salvation,
leading many to glory.

By sharing in our flesh and blood,
through his death, he has destroyed
the devil, and the power of death,
and has freed those
who were held captive
in the fear of death.

By becoming like us, in every respect,
he was able to serve
as a faithful and merciful high priest,
making a sacrifice of atonement
for the sins of the people;
and having been tested himself,
by what he suffered,
he is able to help
those who face the same trials.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 2.22-40*

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

In the law of the Lord, it is written,
that every firstborn male
shall be dedicated to the Lord;
so on the fortieth day after his birth,
Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem
to present him to the Lord,
and to offer a sacrifice,
in accordance with the law of the Lord,
‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

Now there was, in Jerusalem,
a man whose name was Simeon.

Simeon was righteous, and devout,
looking forward to the consolation of Israel;
and the Holy Spirit rested upon him.

It had been revealed to Simeon, by the Holy Spirit,
that he would not see death
until he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.

Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple;
and when the parents brought in the child Jesus,
to do for him what was customary under the law,
Simeon took the child in his arms,
and praised God, saying,

‘Lord, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
in accordance with your word;

for my eyes have now seen your salvation,
which you have prepared
in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.’

And the child’s father and mother were amazed
at what was being said about him.

Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary,
‘This child is destined
for the falling and the rising of many in Israel,
and is destined
to be a sign that will be opposed.

The inner thoughts of many will be revealed,
and a sword shall pierce even your own soul.’

There was also a prophetess, Anna
the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was of a great age,
having lived with her husband seven years
after her marriage,
then as a widow, to the age of eighty-four.

She never left the temple,
but worshipped there, with fasting and prayer,
night and day.

She began to praise God,
and to speak about the child
to all who were looking
for the salvation of Jerusalem.

When the parents of Jesus
had finished everything
required by the law of the Lord,
they returned to Galilee,
to their own town of Nazareth.

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom;
and the favour of God was upon him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 2

Sunday between 14 and 20 January

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 1.4-10*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

‘Before you were even born,
I chose you,
and appointed you
to be a prophet to the nations.’

And I said,

‘O Lord,
I do not know how to speak,
for I am only a boy.’

But the Lord said to me,

‘Do not be afraid,
and do not say, “I am only a boy”;
for I am with you
to protect you,
and you will speak my word
to many peoples.’

Then the Lord reached out his hand
and touched my lips, saying,

‘Now I have put my words in your mouth.

See, today I appoint you
over nations and over kingdoms,
to uproot, and tear down,
to destroy, and overthrow,
to build up, and to plant anew.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 148

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 12.4-11*

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

There are many different gifts,
but all from the same Spirit.

There are different kinds of ministry,
but all from the same Lord.

And there are different ways of working,
but it is the same God at work
in all of them, in everyone.

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 gifts of healing;
and another receives the gift
of the working of 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 2.41-52*

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

Every year,

the parents of Jesus
went to Jerusalem
for the festival of the Passover;
and when he was twelve years old,
they went up as usual
for the festival.

At the end of the festival,

when they set out
to return to Nazareth,
the boy Jesus
stayed behind in Jerusalem,
but his parents did not know it.

Assuming that he was in the group of travellers,

they went a day’s journey,
then started to look for him
amongst their relatives and friends.

When they did not find him,
they returned to Jerusalem
to search for him.

After three days,

they found him in the temple,
sitting amongst the teachers.

He was listening to them,

and asking them questions -
and all who heard him were amazed
at his understanding
and his answers.

When his parents saw him,

they were overwhelmed;
and his mother said to him,
‘Child, why have you treated us like this?
Your father and I have been searching for you
in great anxiety.’

Jesus said to them,

‘Why were you searching for me?
Did you not know
that I must be in my Father’s house?’

But they did not understand what he said to them.

Then Jesus returned with them to Nazareth,
and he was obedient to them;

and his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature,
and in divine and human favour.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 3

Sunday between 21 and 27 January

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Nehemiah 8.1-4a, 7-10

A reading from the book of Nehemiah.

On the first day of the seventh month,

all the people gathered together
in the public square
by the city's main well.

The priest Ezra brought out

the book of the law of Moses,
which the Lord had given
to the people of Israel.

He brought it before the assembly,
which included both men and women,
and all who were old enough to understand.

He stood on a wooden platform
which had been built for the purpose,
and read from the book of the law,
from early morning, until midday.

All the people

gave their full attention
to the reading of the book of the law,
and the Levites
gave the interpretation, and the meaning,
so that the people could understand
all that was being read.

And the people wept

when they heard and understood
the words of the law.

But Nehemiah the governor,

and Ezra the priest,
and the Levites who taught the people,
said to the people,

'Do not mourn or weep,

for this day is holy
to the Lord your God.

Make a feast of the best food and wine,

and send portions to any
who have nothing to prepare,
for this day is holy to the Lord.

Do not grieve,

for rejoicing in the Lord
is your strength.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 19

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 12.12-20,27-31

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

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.

And this body
does not consist
of one part,
but of many.

The foot

is no less a part of the body
than the hand.

The ear

is no less a part of the body
than the eye.

If the whole body were an eye,

it would not be able to hear.

If the whole body were an ear,

it would have no sense of smell.

But God has arranged

that many parts
make up the whole body.

Now you are the body of Christ,
and each individually a part of it.

God has appointed in the church
apostles, prophets, and teachers;
works of power, gifts of healing,
roles of support and leadership,
and various kinds of tongues.

Not all are apostles, or prophets, or teachers;

not all work miracles or gifts of healing;

not all speak in tongues or interpret.

But all should strive for the greater gifts -

and the greatest of all is love.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 4.14-21

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

Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit,
returned from the wilderness to Galilee,
and a report about him
spread through all the surrounding country.

He began to teach in the synagogues
and everyone spoke well of him.

When he came to Nazareth,

where he had been brought up,
he went to the synagogue as usual
on the sabbath day.

He stood up to read,

and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll

and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

He rolled up the scroll,

gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.

The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Then he began to say to them,

'Today, this scripture is being fulfilled
in your hearing.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 4

Sunday between 28 January and 3 February

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 1.17-19*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

‘Make yourself ready

to stand up and tell them

everything that I command you to say to them.

Do not be afraid,

for I will make you strong

like a fortified city,

like an iron pillar,

like a bronze wall,

to challenge the whole of the land of Judah:

to challenge the kings and the princes,

to challenge the priests, and the people.

They will fight against you;

but they shall not prevail against you,

for I am with you,

and I will deliver you.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 71.1-6

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 12.31 - 13.13*

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

Let me show you now

the most excellent gift of all.

If I speak in the languages

of both earth and heaven,

but do not have love,

I am a noisy gong

or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers,

and understand all mysteries

and all knowledge,

and if I have all faith,

so as to remove mountains,

but do not have love,

I am nothing.

If I give away all my possessions,

and if I hand over my body to martyrdom,

but do not have love,

I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind;

love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

Love does not insist on its own way;

it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice in wrongdoing,

but rejoices in the truth.

Love has faith, and hope, and patience,

that never fail.

Love never ends.

Our prophecies will come to an end,

our tongues will cease,

even our knowledge will come to an end,

for we know only in part,

and we prophesy only in part,

and when the complete comes,

the partial will come to an end.

When I was a child,

I spoke like a child,

I thought like a child,

I reasoned like a child;

but when I became an adult,

I put an end to childish ways.

In the same way,

while for now, we see only faintly,

as though through darkened glass,

in the fullness of time, we shall see face to face.

While now,

I know only in part;

then I will know fully,

even as I have been fully known.

But these three endure:

faith, and hope, and love;

and the greatest of these is love.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 4.21-30*

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

In the synagogue at Nazareth,

after reading from the prophet Isaiah,

Jesus began to say to them,

‘Today, this scripture is being fulfilled

in your hearing.’

All the people spoke well of him,

marvelling at the gracious words

spoken by the son of Joseph,

one of their own.

Jesus said to them,

‘I know you will quote the proverb,

“Doctor, cure yourself,”

and ask me to do here,

in my home town,

the things that I did

at Capernaum.

But a prophet

is never received

in his home town.

There were many widows in Israel

during the famine,

in the time of Elijah,

yet Elijah was sent to none of them,

but to a widow at Sarepta, in Lebanon.

And there were many people with leprosy in Israel

in the time of the prophet Elisha,

but the only person healed of leprosy

was Naaman the Syrian.’

When those who were gathered

in the synagogue

heard this,

they were filled with indignation.

They rose up

and drove Jesus out of town,

and to the edge of the hill

on which the town was built,

as if to throw him off.

But he passed through the crowd

and went on his way.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 5

Sunday between 4 and 10 February

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for Year C

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 high throne,
in a robe
that filled the temple.
Angels, around the Lord,
called out to one another, saying:
'Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'
Their voices shook
the very foundations
of the temple,
and the temple was filled with smoke.
And I said:
'I am ruined!
For I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live amongst a people
of unclean lips;
yet my eyes have seen the King,
the Lord of hosts!'
Then one of the angels flew to me,
and touched my lips
with a burning coal
that had been taken from the altar,
and said,
'Now that this has touched your lips,
your guilt is removed,
and your sin is forgiven.'
Then I heard the voice of the Lord,
saying, 'Is there anyone I can send?'
And I said,
'Here I am; send me.'
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 138

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15.1-10a

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

Let me remind you again, my brothers and sisters,
of the good news
that I proclaimed to you,
which you received,
in which you now stand,
and in which are saved:
that Christ died for our sins, and was buried;
and that he was raised on the third day -
and all this in fulfilment of the scriptures.
After he was raised from the dead,
he appeared to Peter,
then to the twelve,
then to more than five hundred brothers and sisters
at one time,
most of whom are still alive.

Then he appeared to James,
and to all the apostles.

Last of all,
as to one untimely born,
he appeared also to me.
For I am the least of the apostles,
unfit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted
the church of God.
But by the grace of God,
I am what I am,
and God's grace towards me
has not been in vain.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 5.1-11

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
Jesus was standing by the sea of Galilee,
and the crowd was pressing in on him
to hear the word of God.
There were two boats by the shore,
which the fishermen had left,
while washing their nets.
Jesus got into one of the boats
(the one belonging to Simon),
and asked him to put out a little way from the shore.
Then Jesus sat down
and taught the crowds from the boat.
When Jesus had finished speaking,
Jesus said to Simon,
'Put out into the deep water,
and let down your nets for a catch.'
Simon answered,
'Master, we have worked all night long
and have caught nothing.
Yet if you say so,
I will let down the nets.'
And they did so -
and caught so many fish
that their nets were beginning to break.
They signalled to their partners,
James and John (the sons of Zebedee),
to come and help them,
and they filled both boats
with so great a catch of fish
that they began to sink;
and they were all amazed
at the catch of fish that they had taken.
Simon Peter
fell to his knees before Jesus, saying,
'Leave me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'
Jesus said,
'Do not be afraid;
from now on,
you will be fishing for people.'
When they had brought their boats to shore,
they left everything,
and followed Jesus.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 6

**Sunday between 11 and 17 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Jeremiah 17.5-8

A reading from the book
of the prophet Jeremiah.
Woe to those who trust in mortals.
They make mere flesh their strength,
and their hearts turn away from the Lord.
They will be like
dried out plants in the desert.
They will not live
to see the day
when prosperity comes.
They shall live
in the dried out places
of the wilderness,
in desolate lands.
But blessed are those
who place their trust in the Lord.
They will be like trees
that are planted by water,
with roots by the flowing stream.
They will not fear the scorching heat.
Their leaves will stay green,
and they will bear fruit
even in the year of drought.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 1

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15.12-20

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.
Christ himself
is proclaimed
as risen from the dead -
so how is it
that some of you say
that there is no resurrection of the dead?
If there is no resurrection of the dead,
then Christ has not been raised.
And if Christ has not been raised,
our proclamation has been in vain,
and your faith has been in vain.
We are even found
to be misrepresenting God,
because we testify that God
raised Christ from the dead.
But if the dead are not raised,
then Christ has not been raised.
And if Christ has not been raised,
your faith is futile,
and you are still lost in your sins,
and those who have died in Christ
have perished.
If it is
for this life only
that we have hoped in Christ,
then we are to be pitied.

But Christ has indeed
been raised from the dead!
And the Risen Christ
is the first fruits
of all those
who have died
and will be raised again to life!
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 6.17-26

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
Jesus came down from the mountain,
with the twelve disciples,
and stood on a level place,
amongst a great crowd
of his disciples,
and a great multitude of people
from all Judea and Jerusalem,
and from the coast
of Tyre and Sidon.
They had come to hear him,
and to be healed of their diseases.
Those who were troubled
with unclean spirits
were cured.
And all in the crowd
were trying to touch him,
for power came out from him,
and healed them.
Then Jesus looked up at his disciples,
and said:
'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
exclude you,
revile you,
and defame you,
on account of the Son of Man.
Their ancestors
did the same to the prophets,
so rejoice
when they do the same to you,
for surely
your reward is great in heaven.
But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is how
their ancestors spoke
of the false prophets.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 7

**Sunday between 18 and 24 February
(if before Ash Wednesday)**

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – 1 Samuel 26.7-13,22-23,25a

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

David, and his nephew, went by night
to the place where Saul's army
had set up camp.

Saul lay sleeping, within the camp,
with his spear
stuck in the ground, by his head.

Saul's chief military officers, and his whole army,
lay around him.

David's nephew said to David,
'God has given your enemy into your hands.

Let me pin him to the ground,
with one stroke of his own spear.
I will not need to strike him twice.'

But David said to his nephew,

'Do not destroy him,
for you cannot raise your hand
against the Lord's anointed
and be guiltless.

As the Lord lives,
it is the Lord who will strike him down,
or his day may come to die,
or he will go into battle, and perish there.

But let us take his spear,
and his water jar, and go.'

And no one saw it, or knew of it,
and no one awoke,
for the Lord had made a deep sleep fall upon them.

The following morning,
on the other side of the valley,
David stood on a hill top,
and across that great distance,
called out to Saul.

'Here is your spear, O king!

Let one of the young men come over and retrieve it!

The Lord gave you into my hand today,
but I would not raise my hand
against the Lord's anointed,
for it is the Lord who will reward everyone
according to their righteousness
and their faithfulness.'

And Saul replied to David,

'Blessings be upon you, David my son;
you will accomplish great things.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 37.1-7

SECOND READING – 1 Cor 15.35-37a,42-44,47,49

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

Some ask, 'How will the dead be raised,
and what kind of body will they have?'

Consider a seed, from a plant:

first it must die;
then it is planted in the ground,
and comes to life again.

You do not sow in the ground
the plant that the seed will become,
but only the dry seed.

And so it is
with the resurrection of the dead.

What is sown is mortal,
but what is raised
will live for ever.

Sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.
Sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

Sown a physical body,
it is raised a spiritual body.

We have lived in the image of Adam,
who came from the earth, from the dust;
we shall rise in the image of Christ,
who comes from heaven.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 6.27-38

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

Jesus said,

'Love your enemies.

Do good to those who hate you.

Bless those who curse you.

Pray for those who abuse you.

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

If someone takes away your coat,
offer your shirt as well.

Give to everyone who asks,
and if anyone takes what belongs to you,
do not demand it back.

Do to others
as you would have them do to you.

Even sinners
love those who love them,
do good to those
who do good to them,
and lend when they expect a return;

but I say to you:
love your enemies,
and do good, and lend,
expecting nothing in return,

for God also is kind,
even to the ungrateful,
and the wicked,
and your reward will be great.

Be merciful, as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge others,
and you will not be judged.

Do not condemn others,
and you will not be condemned.

Forgive others,
and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you -
a good measure, pressed down,
shaken together, running over,
will be poured into your lap -
for the measure you give
will be the measure you receive.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 8

Sunday between 25 February and 3 March

[not Sunday 3 March in a leap year]

(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Isaiah 55.10-11, 13

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 it fruitful with grain,
producing bread to eat,
and new seed to sow.

In the same way,
says the Lord,
the word that I speak
will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish
all that I intend,
and succeed
in the purpose for which I sent it.

Where once
there were thorns and brambles,
tall and blossoming trees will grow,
and this will be a memorial,
an everlasting sign,
to honour the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 92.1-4, 11-14

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15.51-57

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

Listen! I will tell you a mystery!

We will not all die.

But we will all be changed,
in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised,
and we will be changed.

The mortal
will be raised immortal,
and the perishable
will be raised incorruptible.

Then the scripture will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

The weapon of death was sin,
and the power of sin was the law,
but thanks be to God,
who has given us the victory
over sin and death,
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 6.39-49

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

Jesus taught them with these parables.

‘If a blind person leads a blind person,
they will both fall into a pit.

The one who is following
can do no better
than the one who is leading;
the one who is taught
can reach no higher standard
than their teacher.

You cannot help
take the speck
from your neighbour’s eye
until you have taken the log
from your own.

You do not find figs
on a thorn bush,
or grapes
on a bramble.

A bad tree
does not produce good fruit,
and a good tree
does not produce bad fruit.
You know the tree by its fruit.

And the good person
produces good words
and good deeds
from the good
stored up in their heart;
while the wicked person
produces wicked words and deeds
from the wickedness
stored up in their heart.

Now if you call me Lord,
you should surely act
on what I say.

If you come to me,
and you hear my words,
and you act on them,
you are building a house
on deep foundations,
dug down to the rock.

When the flood comes,
and the waves storm against it,
it stands secure.

But those who hear my words,
and do not act
on what they hear,
are building a house
without foundations,
and it crashes down
when the river
bursts out against it.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EPIPHANY 9

Sunday between 4 and 7 March
[plus Sunday 3 March in a leap year]
(if before Ash Wednesday)

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 8.41-43*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

From the prayer of Solomon,
at the dedication of the temple.

‘Even in distant lands, O Lord,
they shall hear
of your great name,
your mighty hand,
and your outstretched arm.

When the people of other nations
come to pray at this temple,
hear them in heaven, your dwelling-place,
O Lord,
and answer their prayer,
so that not only Israel,
but all the nations of the earth,
may know your name,
and honour you,
and may know
that your name is honoured
in this house
that I have built.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 96.1-9

SECOND READING – *Galatians 1.1-5*

A reading from the letter of Paul
to the Galatians.

From Paul,
made an apostle
not by human commission or authority,
but by Jesus Christ,
and God the Father,
who raised him from the dead;
and from all the members of God’s family
who are with me.

To the churches of Galatia
in Asia Minor.

Grace to you,
and peace,
from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ
gave himself up for us,
because of our trespasses,
to set us free
from this evil age;

fulfilling the will
of our God and Father,
to whom be glory
for ever and ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 7.1b-10*

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

A centurion
had a servant,
whom he held in high esteem.

This servant had become ill,
and was close to death.

When the centurion
heard about Jesus,
the centurion
sent some of the Jewish elders
to ask Jesus
to come and heal his servant.

When the elders came to Jesus,
they appealed to him earnestly, saying,

‘He is worthy
to have you do this
for him,
for he loves our people,
and built our synagogue.’

Jesus went with them;
but as they approached the house,
the centurion sent friends
to relay this message to Jesus:

‘Lord, do not trouble yourself;
for I am not worthy
to have you come under my roof;
and indeed

I did not presume to approach you;
but I know
that if you only say the word,
and my servant will be healed.

For I am under the authority of others,
and I also
have soldiers under my authority,
such that
I only have to say the word,
and it is done.’

When Jesus heard these words,
he was amazed,
and turning to the crowd that was following him,
he said,

‘I tell you,
not even in Israel
have I found such faith.’

When the centurion’s friends
returned to the house,
they found the servant fully recovered
and in good health.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *2 Corinthians 5.20b - 6.2*

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

In the name of Christ,

we urge you

to be reconciled to God.

God made

the one who knew no sin

to be sin, for us,

so that in him,

we might become

the righteousness of God.

The Lord says,

‘Now is the day of salvation;

I have heard your cry,

and I have come to your aid.’

So we urge you once more

to welcome this gift of God’s grace,

and be reconciled to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21*

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

Jesus said to the disciples,

‘Beware of practising your piety before others,
in order to be seen by them;

for if that is your purpose,

you will have no reward

from your Father in heaven.

When you give to the needy,

do not announce it with a fanfare,

in the synagogues and in the street,

as the hypocrites do,

seeking praise.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you give to the needy,

do not let your left hand know

what your right hand is doing.

Let your giving be done in secret,

and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

And when you pray,

do not be like the hypocrites,

who love to stand and pray

in the synagogues,

and at the street corners,

where they may be seen by others.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you pray,

go into your room, and shut the door,

and pray to your Father, who is in secret;

and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

And when you fast,

do not look dismal, like the hypocrites,

who disfigure their faces

to show others that they are fasting.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you fast,

clean your hair, and wash your face,

so that your fasting may be seen

not by others

but by your Father;

and your Father,

who knows all things,

will reward you.

And do not put your heart

into storing up treasures on earth,

where everything decays,

and thieves break in and steal.

But put your heart, instead,

into storing up

everlasting treasures in heaven,

that no thief can take away.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 1

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Deuteronomy 26.1-11

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses spoke to the people, saying:

When you have entered the land
that the Lord your God is giving you,
and have possessed it, and settled in it,
you shall take the first fruits
of all that you harvest
from the soil of the land,
to the place
that the Lord your God will appoint
as a dwelling for his name.

You shall go to the priest there, and say,
'Today I acknowledge,
before the Lord our God,
that I have entered into the land
that the Lord has given to us,
as the Lord promised
to our ancestors.'

The priest will take the offering,
and place it before the altar
of the Lord your God.

There you shall say,
'A wandering Aramean was my father.
He went down into Egypt,
and lived there as a foreigner,
few, at first, in number;
but there became a great nation,
mighty and populous.

When the Egyptians treated us harshly,
and afflicted us,
imposing hard labour upon us,
we cried to the Lord,
the God of our ancestors,
and the Lord heard our voice,
and saw our affliction,
our toil, and oppression,
and brought us out of Egypt,
with a mighty hand,
and an outstretched arm,
and signs of almighty power.

And the Lord brought us to this place,
and gave us this land,
a land flowing with milk and honey.

So now I bring
the first fruits of the land
that you, O Lord, have given me.'

And you shall bow down
before the Lord your God.

Then, with the Levites,
and with the Gentiles who live amongst you,
you, and your household,
shall celebrate,
with all that the Lord your God has given to you.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 91.1-2, 9-16

SECOND READING – Romans 10.8b-13

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Scripture says:

'The word is near to you;
it is on your lips, and in your heart'.
And this is now the word of faith that we proclaim -
that if you confess with your lips
that Jesus is Lord,
and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved.

Scripture also declares
that no one who believes in him will be put to shame,
and that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved;

so there is no distinction between Jew and Greek;
the same Lord
is Lord of all,
and is gracious to all
who call upon him.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 4.1-13

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

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,
returned from his baptism in the river Jordan,
and was led, by the Spirit, into the wilderness,
where, for forty days, he was tempted by the devil.

Jesus ate nothing during those days
and while he was experiencing great hunger,
the devil said to him,
'If you are the Son of God,
command this stone
to become bread.'

Jesus answered,
'The scripture says,
"Life does not come
from bread alone."'

Then the devil led him up
and showed him in an instant
all the kingdoms of the world.

And the devil said to Jesus,
'I can give you the glory of all these kingdoms,
and all this authority!
If you will worship me, it will all be yours!'

Jesus answered, 'The scripture says,
worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'

Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem,
and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,
saying to him,

'If you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down from here,
for the scripture says,
"He will command his angels to protect you,"
and "On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."'

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

And the devil departed from him
until an opportune time.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 2

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Genesis 15.12-15, 18b*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

As the sun was going down,
a deep sleep fell upon Abram,
and a deep and terrifying darkness
descended upon him.

And the Lord said to Abram,
'For four hundred years,
your descendants
will live as foreigners
in a land that is not their own;
and they shall be slaves there,
and they shall be oppressed;

but I will bring judgement
on the nation
that enslaves them,
and they shall leave that place
with great possessions.

As for you, Abram,
you shall go to your ancestors in peace,
being buried at a great age.

And to your descendants,
I shall give this land,
from Egypt to Assyria.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 27

SECOND READING – *Philippians 3.18 - 4.1*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

My brothers and sisters, I write
with tears in my eyes,
as I say again
that there are many who live
as enemies
of the cross of Christ.

Their minds are set
on earthly things.

Greed is their god;
their only glory
is their shame,
and their end
is destruction.

But we belong
not to earth,
but to heaven,

and we look to the day
when our Saviour,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
with authority over all creation,
will transform our lowly bodies
to be like his glorious body.

So, my beloved brothers and sisters,
my joy and crown,
stand firm in the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 9.28-36*

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

Jesus went up on the mountain to pray,
taking with him
Peter, John, and James.

And while he was praying,
the appearance of his face changed,
and his clothes became dazzling white.

And there with him, in glory,
were Moses, and Elijah,
and they were speaking together
of his departure,
which he was about to accomplish
at Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions
were weighed down with sleep;
but became fully awake
when they saw his glory
and Moses and Elijah standing with him.

As Moses and Elijah
were preparing to depart,
Peter said to Jesus,
'Master, it is good for us to be here;
let us make three shelters,
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'
He did not know what he was saying.

While Peter was saying this,
a cloud came,
and covered them;
and they were afraid.

Then, from the cloud, came a voice, saying,
'This is my Son, my Chosen;
listen to him!'

When the voice had spoken,
they looked, and saw Jesus alone.

And the disciples were silent,
and in those days,
they told no one
of what they had seen.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 3

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.6-7*

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.

Turn away

from your wicked ways;

turn away

from your plotting
for injustice.

Return to the Lord your God,

for God will have mercy,
and freely forgive.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 103

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 10.1-6,9-13*

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

My brothers and sisters,

when our ancestors
passed through the sea,
and were guided through the wilderness
by the cloud above them,

it was as though

they were baptised into Moses,
both in the sea,
and in the cloud.

They even ate spiritual food,

and drank spiritual drink
from the rock
that was Christ himself.

And still

they rebelled against God,
and were struck down
in the wilderness.

All this becomes a warning

for us, in our own time,
not to pursue evil as they did;
not to put Christ to the test,
or complain,
as led to their destruction.

So if you imagine

that you standing firm,
take care
that you do not fall.

But if you are fully aware of your trials,

be assured
that no testing has come upon you
that is not common to everyone;
and that God is faithful,
and will not let you be tested
beyond your strength,
but with the testing,
will always provide the way out,
that you may be able to endure it.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 13.1-9*

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

There were some present

who told Jesus
about the Galileans
whose blood
Pilate had mingled
with their sacrifices.

Jesus said to them:

'Do you think
that because these Galileans
suffered in this way
they were worse sinners than others?

No, I tell you;

but unless you repent,
you will all perish as they did.

Or the eighteen who were killed

when the tower of Siloam
fell on them -

do you think that they
were worse offenders
than all the others
living in Jerusalem?

No, I tell you;

but unless you repent,
you will all perish as they did.'

And he told them this parable:

'A man had a fig tree
planted in his vineyard;
and he came looking for fruit on it,
and found none.

So he said to the gardener,

"Look! For three years
I have come looking for fruit
on this fig tree,
and still I find none.

Cut it down!

Why should it be wasting the soil?"

The gardener replied,

"Sir, allow it one more year,
while I dig around it,
and put manure on it.

If it bears fruit next year, well and good;
and only if not, cut it down."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 4

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Joshua 5.9-12*

A reading from the book of Joshua.

After crossing the Jordan, to enter the promised land,
the people camped at Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho.

And there they kept the Passover,
on the evening
of the fourteenth day of the month.

The next day,
there was no miraculous food on the ground,
for now they were able to eat
the ordinary produce of the promised land.

That first day, they ate the produce of the promised land
as unleavened bread, and roasted grain.

And the Lord said to Joshua:
'Today I have taken away
the disgrace you suffered in Egypt.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 32

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 5.17-20*

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

By God's grace,
we have been reconciled to God, in Christ.

And now God has entrusted to us
the message of reconciliation.

God has made us ambassadors for Christ,
to proclaim this message to the world:
'God no longer counts your trespasses against you!
Be reconciled to God!'

Anyone who is in Christ
is a new creation.

The old has passed away,
and everything is new.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 15.1-3, 11-32*

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

The Pharisees and the scribes
complained against Jesus,
because he welcomed
the tax collectors and sinners
who came to listen to him,
and would even eat with them.

So Jesus told them this parable:
'There was a man who had two sons.
The younger son said to his father,
"Give me my share of the property."

So the father divided his property
between his two sons.

A few days later,
the younger son
gathered his belongings,
and travelled to a distant country,
and there
began to squander
all his wealth.

When he had spent all that he had,
a severe famine spread throughout that country.

So he went and hired himself out
to one of the farmers in that country,
who sent him to feed the pigs;
and he would gladly have eaten the waste
that the pigs were eating.

Eventually he came to himself, thinking,
"Here I am, dying of hunger,
while my father's hired workers
have enough to eat, and more to spare.

I will go back to my father, and say,
'Father, I have sinned against heaven,
and before you;

I am no longer worthy to be called your son;
treat me like one of your hired workers.'"

So he set off, and went to his father.

While he was still far off, his father saw him,
and was filled with compassion.

His father ran,
and put his arms around him, and kissed him.

The son said,
"Father, I have sinned against heaven,
and before you;
I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

But the father said to his servants,
"Go quickly, and bring, for my son, the finest clothes,
a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet!
Bring the fatted calf, and kill it,
and let us celebrate with a feast,
for this son of mine was dead, and is alive again;
he was lost, and now he is found."

And the celebration began.

All this time, the elder son was working in the field.

When the elder son approached the house,
he heard music and dancing.

He called one of the servants,
and asked what was happening.

The servant explained,
"Your brother has returned, alive,
and your father has killed the fatted calf,
to celebrate."

The elder son became angry, and refused to go in.

His father came out and pleaded with him, but he said,

"For all these years,
I have worked like a slave for you,
and I have never
disobeyed your command;
and you have never given me
even a young goat
to celebrate with my friends.

But this son of yours has come back,
having squandered your wealth with harlots,
and you have killed the fatted calf for him!"

Then the father said to him,

"Son, you are always with me,
and all that is mine is yours.
But we must celebrate,
because this brother of yours was dead,
and has come to life;
he was lost, and is found."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

LENT 5

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 43.15-21*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord, your Redeemer,
the Holy One of Israel, says:

I am the Lord your God,
the Creator of Israel, your King.

I made for you
a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters.

I drew out the Egyptians behind you,
chariots and horses,
an army of warriors;
but now they lie down,
they cannot rise,
they are extinguished,
quenched like a wick.

Yet now I say:

recount this history no more,
nor dwell on events of the past;
for now I begin something new.

Already it springs up;
look, and see.

I will make a safe route
through the wilderness,
and rivers will flow
in the desert,
to refresh my chosen people,
the people I formed for myself,
that they might declare my praise;
and even the wild animals will honour me.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 126

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 was circumcised on the eighth day,
an Israelite,
of the tribe of Benjamin,
a Hebrew
born of Hebrews.

In the observation of the law,
I was a Pharisee.

In zeal,
I was a persecutor of the church.

In righteousness according to the law,
I was blameless.

I once thought these things were valuable -
but now I regard them as worthless;
indeed nothing has any value at all
compared to knowing
Christ Jesus as my Lord.

I have lost everything,
but I count it as no loss at all,
for what I have gained
is Christ.

United with Christ,

I depend no more
on a righteousness of my own,
derived from the law,

for I depend now, instead,
on a righteousness that comes from God,
through faith in Christ.

And now I press on
towards the goal
of knowing Christ more fully,
sharing in his sufferings,
and even becoming like him in his death,
in faith and trust
that I will also come to know
the power of his resurrection.

All this I choose,
just as Christ
has chosen me,
for this is God's high calling to us
in Christ Jesus.

So I forget all that lies behind,
and I press on to all that lies ahead,
in faith

that at the conclusion of it all
is the resurrection
from death to life.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 12.1-8*

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

Six days before the Passover,
Jesus came to Bethany,
to the home of Lazarus.

(Lazarus was the one
Jesus had raised from the dead.)

There they gave a dinner for Jesus.

Martha served,
and Lazarus was one of those
at the table with him.

Mary took a pound of costly perfume,
and used it to anoint Jesus's feet,
wiping his feet with her hair.

The house was filled
with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot
(the disciple who was about to betray Jesus)
complained, saying,

'This perfume could have been sold
for a year's wages,
and the money given to the poor!'

(He said this not because he cared about the poor,
but because he was a thief.

He looked after the disciples' funds,
and would steal from them.)

Jesus said,

'Let her alone.

She has kept this perfume
for the day of my burial.

You will always have the poor with you,
but you will not always have me.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PALM SUNDAY

Readings for Year C

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 foal to Jesus, and threw their cloaks across it.

As Jesus set off, riding the foal, down the Mount of Olives, people spread their cloaks on the road in front of him.

As they approached Jerusalem, the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God joyfully for all the deeds of power that they had seen, shouting out,

‘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 said,

‘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 wakens my ear that I may listen and learn.

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

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.

Psalms 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 – Luke 22.14 - 23.56 or Luke 23.1-49

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Institution of The Lord's Supper

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him.

Jesus said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’

Then Jesus took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, ‘Take this and divide it amongst yourselves; for I tell you

I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine again until the kingdom of God comes.’

Then Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’

And he did the same with the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.

For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!’

Then they began to ask one another, which one of them it could be who would do this.

Dispute about greatness

A dispute arose amongst the disciples
as to which one of them
was to be regarded as the greatest.
But Jesus said to them,
'The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them;
and those in authority over them
call themselves benefactors.
But it shall not be so with you.
The greatest amongst you
must become like the least,
and the leader
must become
like the one who serves -
just as I am amongst you
as one who serves.

Conferring the kingdom

You are the ones who have stood by me in my trials;
and I grant to you a kingdom -
the kingdom that my Father has granted to me.
You will eat and drink
at my table, in my kingdom,
and you will sit on thrones
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Peter's denial foretold

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

Purse, bag and sword

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

Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives

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

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus

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

Peter denies Jesus

Then they seized Jesus, and led him away,
delivering him to the house of the high priest;
and Peter was following at a distance.
They kindled a fire
in the middle of the courtyard,
and sat down together;
and Peter sat amongst them.
Then a servant-girl, seeing Peter in the firelight,
stared at him and said,
'This man also was with him.'

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

The mocking and beating of Jesus

Now the men who were holding Jesus
blindfolded him, and began to beat him;
and they mocked him, saying,
'If you are a prophet, tell us who struck you.'
And they heaped many other insults on him.

Jesus before the council

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

Jesus before Pilate

Then they rose
and took Jesus to Pilate
and began to accuse Jesus, saying,
'We found this man perverting our nation,
forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor,
and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.'
Pilate asked Jesus,
'Are you the king of the Jews?'
Jesus answered,
'You have said so.'

Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds,
'I find no basis for an accusation against this man.'
But they were insistent, and said,
'He stirs up the people
by teaching throughout all Judea,
from Galilee where he began, even to this place.'

Jesus before Herod

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

Jesus sentenced to death

Pilate then called together the chief priests,
the leaders, and the people,
and said to them,
'You brought me this man
as one who was perverting the people;
and here I have examined him in your presence,
and I have not found this man guilty
of any of the accusations
you make against him.
Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us.
Indeed, this man has done nothing to deserve death.
I will therefore have him flogged, and release him.'
Now Pilate was obliged to release someone for them
at the festival.
They all shouted out together,
'Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!'
(Barabbas had been put in prison
for an insurrection that had taken place in the city,
and for murder.)
Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again;
but they kept shouting, 'Crucify him!'
A third time, Pilate said to them,
'Why, what evil has he done?
I have found in him
no grounds for the sentence of death;
I will therefore have him flogged,
and then release him.'
But they kept shouting
that he should be crucified;
and their voices prevailed.

So Pilate gave his verdict:
that their demand should be granted.
He released the man they asked for,
(the one who had been put in prison
for insurrection and murder),
and he handed Jesus over, as they wished.

Simon of Cyrene

As they led Jesus away,
they seized Simon of Cyrene,
who was coming from the country,
and they laid the cross on him,
and made him carry it behind Jesus.

The women of Jerusalem

A great number of the people followed Jesus,
and amongst them were women
who were beating their breasts and wailing for him.
But Jesus turned to them and said,
'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me,
but weep for yourselves and for your children.
For the days are surely coming when they will say,
"Blessed are the barren,
and the wombs that never bore,
and the breasts that never nursed."
Then they will begin to say to the mountains,
"Fall on us"; and to the hills, "Cover us."
For if they do this when the wood is green,
what will happen when it is dry?'

The crucifixion

Two others also, who were criminals,
were led away to be put to death with him.
When they came to the place that is called The Skull,
they crucified Jesus there,
with the criminals,
one on his right, and one on his left.
Jesus said,
'Father, forgive them;
for they do not know what they are doing.'
And they cast lots to divide his clothing.
And the people stood by, watching;
but the leaders scoffed at him, saying,
'He saved others;
let him save himself,
if he is the Messiah of God,
God's chosen!'
The soldiers also mocked him,
coming up and offering him sour wine,
and saying,
'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!'
There was also an inscription over him,
'This is the King of the Jews.'
One of the criminals crucified with him
kept deriding him, saying,
'Are you not the Messiah?
Save yourself and us!'
But the other rebuked him, saying,
'Do you not fear God,
since you are under the same sentence
of condemnation?'

And we indeed have been condemned justly,
but this man has done nothing wrong.'
Then he said,
'Jesus, remember me,
when you come into your kingdom.'
Jesus replied,
'Truly I tell you,
today you will be with me in Paradise.'

The death of Jesus

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

The burial of Jesus

Now there was a good and righteous man
named Joseph,
from the Jewish town of Arimathea,
who was waiting expectantly
for the kingdom of God.
Though he was a member of the council,
had not agreed to their plan and action.
He went to Pilate
and asked for the body of Jesus.
He took it down,
wrapped it in a linen cloth,
and laid it in an unused tomb,
which had been hewn from the rock.
It was the day of Preparation,
and the sabbath was beginning.
The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee
followed, and they saw the tomb,
and how his body was laid.
They returned,
and prepared spices and ointments,
but on the sabbath day, they rested,
in accordance with the commandment.

The Passion of the Lord.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 14.18-20a*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

King Melchizedek of Salem

was a priest of God Most High.

He brought out bread and wine,

and blessed Abram, saying,

‘Blessed be Abram,

by God Most High,

the maker of heaven and earth.

And blessed be God Most High,

who has delivered you

from the hand

of your enemies.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 116.10-17

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 11.23-26*

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

Beloved,

I received from the Lord

what I also handed on to you,

that the Lord Jesus,

on the night he was betrayed,

took bread,

and when he had given thanks,

he broke it and said,

‘This is my body, broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.’

In the same way,

after they had eaten,

he took the cup, and said,

‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it,

in remembrance of me.’

So when you eat this bread,

and drink this cup,

you proclaim the Lord’s death,

until he comes.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 6.24-35*

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

When the crowd realised

that Jesus and his disciples

had left the place

where Jesus

had given the bread,

they got into the boats

and crossed the lake to Capernaum,

to look for him there.

When they found him,

they asked him,

‘Teacher, when did you come here?’

Jesus said,

‘You have come to find me

not because you understood the sign,

but because you ate your fill of bread!

Do not work for the food that perishes,

but work for the food

that endures for eternal life,

which the Son of Man will give you -

for it is on the Son of Man

that God the Father

has set his seal.’

They said to him,

‘What must we do

to be doing the work of God?’

Jesus said,

‘This is the work of God:

that you believe in the one

that God has sent.’

So they said to him,

‘What sign are you going to give us,

so that we may see it, and believe?

What work are you performing?

Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness;

it says, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

Jesus said to them,

‘It was not Moses

who gave you the bread from heaven;

it is my Father

who gives you the true bread from heaven.

The bread of God

is that which comes down from heaven

and gives life to the world.’

They said to him,

‘Sir, give us this bread always.’

Jesus said to them,

‘I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me

will never be hungry,

and whoever believes in me

will never be thirsty.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

GOOD FRIDAY – first two readings

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 confession.

For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses,
but we have one who
in every respect
has been tested as we are,
yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy,
and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications,
with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard
because of his reverent submission.

Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation
for all who 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 a band of guards and officials,
from the high priests and the Pharisees,
to the place, 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,
and cut off his right ear.
The servant's name was Malchus.
Jesus said to Peter,
'Put your sword back into its sheath.
Am I not to drink the cup
that the Father has given me?'
Then the guards and the officials,
arrested Jesus, and bound him.
After arresting Jesus,
they 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.
That 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
and warming themselves.
Peter also was standing with them
and warming himself.
Then the high priest questioned Jesus
about his disciples and his teaching.
Jesus answered,
'I have spoken openly to the world.
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 handed him over 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 tell you about me?'
Pilate replied,
'I am a Roman, not a Jew.
Your own nation and 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 asked him,
'So you are a king?'
Jesus answered,
'You are saying that I am a king.
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,
'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 them,
'Look, I am bringing him out to you
to let you know that I find no case against him.'
So Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns
and the purple robe.
Pilate said to them,
'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 him,
'We have a law,
and according to that law, he ought to die,
because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'
Now when Pilate heard this,
he was more afraid than ever.
He entered his headquarters again, and asked Jesus,
'Where are you from?'
But Jesus gave him no answer.
Pilate therefore said to him,
'Do you refuse to speak to me?
Do you not know
that I have the power to release you,
and the power to crucify you?'
Jesus answered him,
'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 people cried out,
'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,
(or in Hebrew Gabbatha).
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.
Then the chief priests said to Pilate,
'Do not write, "The King of the Jews,"
but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."
Pilate answered,
'What I have written, I have written.'
When the soldiers had crucified Jesus,
they took his clothes
and divided them into four parts,
one for each soldier.
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 clothes amongst 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 the disciple whom he loved standing beside her,
he said to his mother,
'Woman, here is your son.'
Then he said to the disciple,
'Here is your mother.'
And from that 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.
(He who saw this has testified,
so that you also may believe.
His testimony is true,
and he knows that he tells the truth.)
These things occurred
so that the scripture might be fulfilled:
'None of his bones shall be broken.'
And again, another passage of scripture says,
'They will look upon the one
whom they have pierced.'
Now Joseph of Arimathea
was a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly,
because of his fear
of the religious leaders.
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

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Isaiah 65.17-19

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

I will create new heavens,
and a new earth, says the Lord;
and the former things
will be remembered no more.

Be glad,
and rejoice for ever,
in what I am creating;
for I myself will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
and the sound of weeping
will be heard no more.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 118.15-25

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15.20-26

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

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

Just as death
came through a human being,
so also
the resurrection of the dead
has come through a human being:
for as in Adam, all die,
so in Christ, shall all be made alive;

Christ the first fruits,
then those who belong to Christ.

Then comes the conclusion,
when Christ shall hand over the kingdom
to God the Father,
after he has overcome every ruler
and every authority and power,
for he must reign until he has put
all his enemies under his feet.
And the final enemy to be destroyed
will be death itself.

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 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

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Acts 9.1-11,15,17-19a*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Saul, still breathing threats and murder
against the disciples of the Lord,
went to the high priest, and obtained letters
to the synagogues at Damascus,
allowing him to search for disciples there,
arrest them, and bring them to Jerusalem.
Now as Saul was approaching Damascus,
a light from heaven suddenly surrounded him.
He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him,
'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'
Saul asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'
and the reply came, 'I am Jesus,
the one you are persecuting.
Now get up, and enter the city,
and you will be told what to do.'
The men who were travelling with Saul
stood speechless,
because they heard the voice, but saw no one.
Saul got up from the ground,
and though his eyes were open,
he could see nothing;
so they led him, by the hand, into Damascus.
For three days, Saul was without sight,
and he neither ate nor drank.
Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias.
The Lord directed Ananias, in a vision,
to go to the place where Saul was staying.
The Lord said, 'Go to him, for I have chosen him
to lift up my name, before Gentiles, and kings,
and the people of Israel.'
So Ananias went, and entered the house
where Saul was staying.
He laid his hands on Saul, and said,
'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,
who appeared to you on your way here,
has sent me to you, that you may regain your sight,
and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'
Immediately, something like scales
fell from Saul's eyes, and his sight was restored.
And Saul got up, and was baptised;
and after taking some food, he regained his strength.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 30

SECOND READING – *Revelation 1.9-13,17-19*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

From John, your brother, sharing with you
in the persecution, the patient endurance,
and the promise of the kingdom,
that are ours in Jesus Christ.
I was on the island of Patmos, because of
the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus.
I was in the spirit, on the Lord's day,
and I heard, behind me, a loud voice, like a trumpet,
saying: 'Write, in a book, what you see,
and send it, to the seven churches of Asia.'

I turned to see whose voice it was, that spoke to me,
and on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of them,
I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed in a long robe,
with a golden sash across his chest.
When I saw him, I fell at his feet, as though dead.
But he placed his right hand on me, saying,
'Do not be afraid;
for I am the first and the last, and the living one.
I was dead, and see, I am alive for evermore;
and I hold the keys of death and the underworld.
Now write down all that you have seen,
all that you see now, and all that is still to take place.'
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
as they looked upon the Lord.
Jesus said to them again, '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.
If you forgive the sins of anyone, 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 have not seen,
and yet have come to believe.'
Now Jesus did many other signs
in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.
But these are written so that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,
and that through believing,
you may have life in his name.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 3

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Acts 9.19b-20,23,25-28

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

After several days with the disciples in Damascus,

Saul began to proclaim
in the synagogues there
that Jesus is the Son of God.

Soon, some of the leaders of the synagogues
were plotting against Saul, even to kill him,
but the disciples took Saul by night,
and let him down through an opening in the wall,
lowering him in a basket.

Saul returned to Jerusalem,
and there he attempted to join the disciples;
but they were all afraid of him,
for they did not believe that he was now a disciple.

So Barnabas took Saul to the apostles,
and described for them how, on the road,

Saul had seen the Lord,
and the Lord had spoken to Saul,
and how, in Damascus,

Saul had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

So Saul was accepted by the disciples in Jerusalem,
and Saul spoke boldly there
in the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 86.1-10

SECOND READING – Revelation 5.11-14

A reading from the book of Revelation.

As I looked,

I heard the voices of thousands angels,
and the living creatures, and the elders,
surrounding the throne, and singing in full voice:
'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
to receive all wisdom and power
and 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 who was seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb:

'Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours 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 21.1-19

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

Some of the disciples gathered by the sea of Galilee:

Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin,
Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee, and two others.

Simon Peter decided to go fishing,
and the others went with him -
but all night, they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach;
but the disciples did not know
that it was Jesus.

Jesus asked them whether they had any fish,
and they said 'no'.

He said to them, 'Cast the net
on the other side of the boat, and you will find some.'
So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in
because there were so many fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved
immediately said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'
On hearing this, Simon Peter jumped into the lake
and headed towards the shore.

The other disciples followed in the boat,
dragging the net full of fish.

Going ashore, they saw a charcoal fire,
with fish on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them,
'Bring some of the fish that you have caught.'

So Simon Peter went back to the boat
and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish,
a hundred and fifty-three of them;
and even though there were so many,
the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them,
'Come and have breakfast.'

None of the disciples doubted;
they knew it was the Lord.

Jesus took the bread, and gave it to them;
and then the fish.

This was now the third time
that Jesus appeared to the disciples
after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast,
Jesus said to Simon Peter,
'Simon son of John,
do you love me more than these?'

Simon Peter said to Jesus,
'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'
Then a second time, Jesus said to him,
'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

Simon Peter said to Jesus,
'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'

Then a third time, Jesus said to him,
'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

Peter was distressed that Jesus asked him
a third time, 'Do you love me?'

Peter replied to Jesus:
'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said to Peter,
'Feed my sheep.
Truly, I tell you,
when you were younger,
you used to fasten your own belt
and go wherever you wished.
But when you grow old,
you will stretch out your hands,
and someone else will fasten a belt around you
and take you where you do not wish to go.'

(Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death
by which Peter would glorify God.)

Then Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Follow me.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 4

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – Acts 11.19-23,25-26

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The disciples who fled

from the persecution in Jerusalem
travelled as far as Lebanon, Syria,
Antioch, and Cyprus,
preaching the word at first
only in the synagogues.

But amongst them

were some who came originally
from Cyprus, and North Africa.

On arriving in Antioch,

these disciples proclaimed the Lord Jesus
not only in the synagogues,
but also amongst the wider population.

The hand of the Lord was with them,

and a great number became believers,
turning to the Lord.

News of this reached the church in Jerusalem,

and they sent Barnabas to Antioch
to report back to them.

On arriving in Antioch,

Barnabas was delighted to see
the grace of God at work,
and he encouraged them all
to remain committed and faithful to the Lord.

Then Barnabas travelled on to Tarsus,

to look for Saul;
and when Barnabas found Saul,
Barnabas brought Saul back to Antioch.

And so it was, that for an entire year,

Barnabas and Saul
met with the church in Antioch,
and taught a great many people.

And it was in Antioch

that the disciples were first called Christians.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalms 23

SECOND READING – Revelation 7.9-12,14b-17

A reading from the book of Revelation.

After this, I looked,

and there before me
was a great multitude,
from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

They were standing before the throne,

and before the Lamb,
robed in white,
and with palm branches in their hands.

They were declaring, with one voice,

'Salvation belongs to our God,
and to the Lamb!'

The angels around the throne

fell on their faces
and worshipped God, singing,

'Glory and blessing and honour and power

and wisdom and praise
to our God for ever!'

One of the elders addressed me,
saying,

'These are the ones

who have come out of the great ordeal.

They have washed and purified their robes
in the blood of the Lamb.

Now they are now before the throne of God,

serving continually 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 on the throne

will be their shepherd,
and will guide them
to the spring of the water of life.

And God will wipe away

every tear from their eyes.'

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 10.22-30

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

It was the time

of the winter festival of Hanukkah,
and Jesus was in the temple.

The religious leaders gathered around Jesus,
and said to him,

'How long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.'

Jesus said,

'I have told you already.

And you see all that I do

in my Father's name.

And yet

still you do not believe.

My sheep listen to my voice.

I know them,
and they follow me.

I give them eternal life,

and they will never perish.

No one will snatch them

out of my hand.

My all-powerful Father

has given them to me.

No one can snatch them

out of the Father's hand -
and I and the Father are one.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 5

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Acts 16.9-15

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

During the night, Paul had a vision
of someone standing and pleading with him, saying,
'Come over to Macedonia, and help us.'

We immediately tried
to cross over to Macedonia,
convinced that God had called us
to proclaim the gospel there.

We sailed direct from Troas
to the island of Samothraki,
then the following day
to the coastal port
of Neapolis.

From there we went inland to Philippi,
which is a leading city of Macedonia,
and a Roman colony.

We remained in Philippi
for several days.

On the sabbath day,
we went out of the city
to a place of prayer by the river,
and we sat down,
and spoke to the women who had gathered there.

A woman named Lydia,
a worshipper of God,
was listening to us.

She was from the city of Thyatira,
a dealer in purple cloth.

The Lord opened her heart
to receive Paul's message,
and she and her household
were baptised.

She urged us to stay at her home,
if we judged her to be faithful to the Lord,
so that is where we stayed.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 67

SECOND READING – Revelation 21.1-7

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Then I saw a new heaven,
and a new earth;
for the first heaven, and the first earth,
had passed away.

And I saw the holy city,
the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven
from God,
prepared as perfectly
as a bride
adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice
from the throne, saying,
'See, the home of God
is amongst mortals.
They will be my people,
and I shall dwell amongst them.

I will wipe away
every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain
will be no more.

See, I am making all things new.
Write this,
for these words
are trustworthy and true.

It is done!
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty,
I will give water,
as a gift,
from the spring
of the water of life.

Those who conquer
will inherit these things,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my children.'
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 13.31-35

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

As soon as Judas left the supper,
Jesus said to his disciples:

'The time has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified,
to the glory of God,
and in the glory of God.

I am with you only a little longer.
and where I am going,
you cannot come.

But I give you a new commandment:
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

It is by this
that all will know
that you are my disciples -
if you love one another.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 6

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – Acts 16.16-34

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer,
we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination.

She brought her owners a great deal of money
by fortune-telling.

She followed us around, crying out,
'These men are servants of God Most High!
They proclaim the way of salvation!'

This went on for many days,
until Paul, in exasperation, turned and said,
'I order you, in the name of Jesus Christ,
to come out of her;'
and the spirit of divination immediately left her.

When her owners saw
that their hope of making money was gone,
they seized Paul and Silas,
and dragged them into the market-place,
and before the magistrates, saying,
'These men are disturbing our city;
they are Jews,
and they are advocating customs
that it is not lawful for us, as Romans,
to adopt or observe.'

The crowd joined in, until the magistrates
had Paul and Silas flogged, and imprisoned,
ordering the jailer to keep them securely.

The jailer put Paul and Silas in the innermost cell,
and fastened their feet in chains.

About midnight,
Paul and Silas were praying, and singing hymns,
and the prisoners were listening to them.

Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent
that the foundations of the prison were shaken;
and all the doors of the prison were opened,
and everyone's chains came undone.

The jailer awoke,
and saw that the prison doors were wide open.
Assuming that the prisoners had escaped,
he drew his sword, and was about to kill himself.

But Paul shouted out,
'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.'

The jailer called for lights, and rushed in,
falling down trembling before Paul and Silas.

Then he led them out, and asked them,
'What must I do to be saved?'

Paul and Silas answered, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus,
and you will be saved - you and your household.'
And they proclaimed the word of the Lord to the jailer,
and to all his household.

And there, that same night,
the jailer washed their wounds;
and the jailer, and his entire family, were baptised,
rejoicing at their new faith in God.

And they welcomed Paul and Silas
as guests in their home.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 97

SECOND READING – Revelation 21.10,22-27 & 22.1-2

A reading from the book of Revelation.

In the spirit, the angel carried me away
to a great high mountain,
and showed me the holy city, the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God.
I saw no temple in the city, for its temple
is the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb.
And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it,
for the glory of God is its light,
and its lamp is the Lamb.
All nations will walk by its light,
and the kings of the earth
will bring their glory into it.
The gates of the city will always be open by day -
and there will be no night.

People will bring into that city
the glory and honour of the nations.
There will be no evil or falsehood there,
for those who enter
will be the ones
whose names are written
in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river
of the water of life, bright as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb,
and on through the middle of the street of the city.

On each side of the river, I saw the tree of life,
with its twelve kinds of fruit,
one for each month of the year;
and the leaves of the tree
are for the healing of the nations.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.23-29

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I speak only the words
of the Father who sent me.

Those who love me will live by my words;
and my Father will love them,
and we will come to them,
and make our home with them.

I say these things to you
while I am still with you,
but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything,
and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you -
a peace that the world cannot give.

Do not let your hearts be troubled,
and do not be afraid.

You have heard me say
that I am going away, and then I will come to you.

If you love me, you will rejoice
that I am going to the Father,
because the Father is greater than me.

And I tell you this now,
so that when it comes about, you may believe.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ASCENSION DAY

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Acts 1.1-11

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 them,
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.

‘This,’ he said, ‘is what you have heard from me:

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

So when they had come together,

they asked him,

‘Lord, is this the time

when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’

He replied,

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

While he was going,

and they were gazing up towards heaven,
there appeared two men in white robes,
standing by them,
who said to them,
‘Men of Galilee,
why do you stand looking up towards heaven?
This Jesus,
who has been taken up from you into heaven,
will return
in the same way
you saw him go.’

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Ephesians 1.17-23a

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Father of glory,

may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation
as you grow in knowledge of him,

that with all the saints,

you may know in your heart (filled with light)
the joyful confidence to which he has called you,
the riches of his glorious inheritance,
and the immeasurable greatness of his power
for all who believe.

God put this power to work in Christ

when he raised him from the dead,

and seated him at his right hand

in the heavenly places,

far above all rule and authority,

above all power and dominion,

and above every name that is named,

not only in this age,

but also in the age to come.

And he has put all things under his feet,

and has made him the head over all things,

for the sake of the church,

which is his body.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.44-53

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Luke.

Jesus said to the disciples,

‘Everything that is written about me,
in the law of Moses, in the prophets,
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled.’

And he opened their minds

to understand the scriptures, saying:

‘It is written

that the Messiah is to suffer,
and to rise from the dead,
on the third day;

and that repentance

and forgiveness of sins
will be proclaimed in his name
to all nations,
beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things.

And see,

I am sending upon you
what my Father promised;
so stay here in the city
until you have been clothed
with power from on high.’

Then he led them out as far as Bethany,

and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.

While he was blessing them,

he withdrew from them
and was carried up into heaven.

And they worshipped him,

and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;
and they were continually in the temple,
praising God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

EASTER 7

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – Acts 17.16-34

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Paul was disturbed to find
that Athens was full of idols.
Daily, in both the synagogue and the market-place,
he set out the good news
about Jesus and the resurrection.
Some of the philosophers accused him
of speaking nonsense,
or promoting foreign gods,
but some wanted to know more.
Indeed all those who gathered in Athens
were keen to hear all that was new.
So Paul stood before them, and said,
'People of Athens,
I see how extremely religious you are in every way;
for as I went through the city,
and looked carefully at the objects of your worship,
I found amongst them
an altar with the inscription:
"To an unknown god."
That which you worship as unknown,
I now proclaim to you.
The God who made the world, and everything in it,
the Lord of heaven and earth,
does not live in any shrine made by human hands,
or depend (like your idols) on human care,
but is the one who gives, to all human beings,
life, and breath, and all things.
From one ancestor, God made all nations
to inhabit the whole earth
(determining their various times and places in history)
so every nation equally
can search for God, reach out for God, and find God;
and indeed God is not far away from any one of us.
For as your own poets have said:
"In him we live, and move, and have our being",
"for we are his offspring."
As God's offspring, we should not think of God
as an image, in gold, or silver, or stone,
created by human art or imagination!
God has graciously overlooked
the times of human ignorance,
but God now calls upon all people everywhere
to repent.
God has set the date
on which the world will be judged, in righteousness,
by a human being God has appointed,
and raised from the dead, that all might believe.'
When they heard about the resurrection of the dead,
some scoffed; but others said,
'We will hear you again about this.'
Some joined Paul, and became believers,
including a member of the council,
and a woman named Damaris,
and others with them.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 66.7-18

SECOND READING – Rev 22.12-14, 16-17, 20-21

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I heard a voice saying:
'I, Jesus, sent my angel to you
with this vision, and this message, for the churches.
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.
I am both the root, and the descendant, of David,
and the bright morning star.
Blessed are those who wash their robes,
and enter the city by the gates,
for they will have access to the tree of life.'
And the voice said,
'See, I am coming soon,
bringing my reward for each,
according to their deeds.'
And now the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'.
Let everyone who hears say, 'Come'.
Let all who are thirsty
come to receive
the free gift of the water of life.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
And may the grace of the Lord Jesus
be with all the saints. Amen.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 17.20-26

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

Jesus said: 'Holy Father,
I ask not only on behalf of these,
but also on behalf of those
who will believe in me through their word.
May they all be one.
As you, Father, dwell in me,
and I dwell in you,
may they also dwell in us;
and by this, may the world come to believe
that you have sent me.
The glory that you have given me, I have given them,
that they may be one, as we are one;
and that I may dwell in them, as you dwell in me;
that the world may know that you sent me,
and that you have loved them, as you loved me.
Father, I pray also
that those you have given me
may continue to be with me,
to see the glory you have given me,
having loved me
since before the foundation of the world.
Righteous Father,
the world does not know you,
but I know you;
and these know that you have sent me.
I have made your name known to them,
and I will continue to make your name known,
so that the love
with which you have loved me
may be in them,
as I dwell in them.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PENTECOST

Readings for Year C

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 amongst 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, the 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 from Galilee.
How is it that we all hear them
speaking about God's deeds of power
in our own native languages,
from Asia, Arabia, Egypt and North Africa,
from Judea, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans,
from Crete and from Rome,
both Jews and converts?'

All were amazed and perplexed,
saying to one another,
'What can 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:
'Men 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 – 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 as children of God,
we inherit all
that Christ inherited -
not only his suffering,
but also his glory.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.8-17

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

Philip said to Jesus,

'Lord, show us the Father.'

Jesus said,

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

Whoever has seen me
has seen the Father,

for 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 you see other works of the Father in me,
so that you may believe
that I am in the Father
and the Father is 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.

If you love me,
you will keep my commandments,
and I will ask the Father,
and he will give you another Advocate,
to be with you for ever.

The world cannot receive this Spirit of Truth,
for the world
neither knows nor sees the Spirit of Truth;
but you will know the Spirit of Truth,
who will dwell with you,
and within you.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Proverbs 8.1-3, 22-31*

A reading from the book of Proverbs.

Wisdom calls out,

and Understanding raises her voice.

On the heights,

above the road,

and at the crossroads,

she takes her stand;

and at the city gates,

she declares:

'I was created

as the first

of the works of the Lord.

Before the beginning of the earth,

I was established.

Before the mountains and the hills

had been formed,

before there were springs of water,

before there was even

dust upon the ground,

I, Wisdom,

was brought forth.

When the Lord established the heavens,

I was there.

When the Lord drew a circle

on the face of the deep,

made firm the skies above,

and set the boundaries of the oceans,

I was the skilled apprentice

at his side.

I was daily

the Lord's delight,

rejoicing in the presence of the Lord,

and rejoicing

in the whole of creation,

and in the whole human race.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 8

SECOND READING – *Romans 5.1-5*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Having been reconciled with God by faith,

we now have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is by faith

in our Lord Jesus Christ

that we have obtained access

to the grace of God

in which we stand,

and the joyful confidence

that we shall share

in the glory of God.

We rejoice even in our sufferings,

knowing that suffering produces endurance,

and endurance produces character,

and character produces hope.

And we know

that this hope

will not be disappointed -

for God's love

has been poured into our hearts

through the gift

of the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 16.12-15*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I still have many things to say to you.

You cannot bear them now,

but the Spirit of truth will come to you,

and guide you into all truth:

receiving from me,

and giving to you;

disclosing to you

the things that are to come,

and honouring me,

by making my will

known to you.

All that the Father has is mine.

The Spirit of truth

will take what is mine

and make it known to you.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 24 AND 28 MAY
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – Isaiah 55.10-11, 13

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 it fruitful with grain,
producing bread to eat,
and new seed to sow.

In the same way,
says the Lord,
the word that I speak
will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish
all that I intend,
and succeed
in the purpose for which I sent it.

Where once
there were thorns and brambles,
tall and blossoming trees will grow,
and this will be a memorial,
an everlasting sign,
to honour the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 92.1-4, 11-14

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15.51-57

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

Listen! I will tell you a mystery!

We will not all die.
But we will all be changed,
in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised,
and we will be changed.

The mortal
will be raised immortal,
and the perishable
will be raised incorruptible.

Then the scripture will be fulfilled:
'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

The weapon of death was sin,
and the power of sin was the law,
but thanks be to God,
who has given us the victory
over sin and death,
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 6.39-49

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

Jesus taught them with these parables.

'If a blind person leads a blind person,
they will both fall into a pit.

The one who is following
can do no better
than the one who is leading;
the one who is taught
can reach no higher standard
than their teacher.

You cannot help
take the speck
from your neighbour's eye
until you have taken the log
from your own.

You do not find figs
on a thorn bush,
or grapes
on a bramble.

A bad tree
does not produce good fruit,
and a good tree
does not produce bad fruit.
You know the tree by its fruit.

And the good person
produces good words
and good deeds
from the good
stored up in their heart;
while the wicked person
produces wicked words and deeds
from the wickedness
stored up in their heart.

Now if you call me Lord,
you should surely act
on what I say.

If you come to me,
and you hear my words,
and you act on them,
you are building a house
on deep foundations,
dug down to the rock.

When the flood comes,
and the waves storm against it,
it stands secure.

But those who hear my words,
and do not act
on what they hear,
are building a house
without foundations,
and it crashes down
when the river
bursts out against it.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 29 MAY AND 4 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 8.41-43*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

From the prayer of Solomon,
at the dedication of the temple.

‘Even in distant lands, O Lord,
they shall hear
of your great name,
your mighty hand,
and your outstretched arm.

When the people of other nations
come to pray at this temple,
hear them in heaven, your dwelling-place,
O Lord,
and answer their prayer,
so that not only Israel,
but all the nations of the earth,
may know your name,
and honour you,
and may know
that your name is honoured
in this house
that I have built.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 96.1-9

SECOND READING – *Galatians 1.1-5*

A reading from the letter of Paul
to the Galatians.

From Paul,
made an apostle
not by human commission or authority,
but by Jesus Christ,
and God the Father,
who raised him from the dead;
and from all the members of God’s family
who are with me.

To the churches of Galatia
in Asia Minor.

Grace to you,
and peace,
from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ
gave himself up for us,
because of our trespasses,
to set us free
from this evil age;

fulfilling the will
of our God and Father,
to whom be glory
for ever and ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 7.1b-10*

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

A centurion
had a servant,
whom he held in high esteem.

This servant had become ill,
and was close to death.

When the centurion
heard about Jesus,
the centurion
sent some of the Jewish elders
to ask Jesus
to come and heal his servant.

When the elders came to Jesus,
they appealed to him earnestly, saying,

‘He is worthy
to have you do this
for him,
for he loves our people,
and built our synagogue.’

Jesus went with them;
but as they approached the house,
the centurion sent friends
to relay this message to Jesus:

‘Lord, do not trouble yourself;
for I am not worthy
to have you come under my roof;
and indeed

I did not presume to approach you;
but I know
that if you only say the word,
and my servant will be healed.

For I am under the authority of others,
and I also
have soldiers under my authority,
such that
I only have to say the word,
and it is done.’

When Jesus heard these words,
he was amazed,
and turning to the crowd that was following him,
he said,

‘I tell you,
not even in Israel
have I found such faith.’

When the centurion’s friends
returned to the house,
they found the servant fully recovered
and in good health.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 5 AND 11 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 17.17-24*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

There was a famine throughout the land,
and the prophet Elijah
was staying with the widow in Sarepta.

The son of the widow became ill
with an illness so severe
that there was no breath left in him.

The widow said to Elijah,
‘What do you have against me?
Have you come to accuse me of sin,
and to punish me
with the death of my son?’

Elijah took her son from her arms,
carried him up to his room,
and laid him down,
crying out to the Lord,
‘O Lord my God,
must you bring calamity
even upon the widow with whom I am staying,
by killing her son?’

Approaching the son, right by his side,
Elijah cried out, three times, to the Lord,
‘O Lord my God,
let his life return to him.’

And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah,
and the life of the son returned to him,
and he revived.

And Elijah took the son
down into the house,
and gave him to his mother,
saying, ‘See, your son is alive.’

And the woman said to Elijah,
‘Now I know
that you are a prophet of God,
and that the words you speak
are truly from the Lord.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 30

SECOND READING – *Galatians 1.11-19,21-24*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

I want you to know,
my brothers and sisters,
that the gospel I proclaim
is not some work
of human reasoning.

For I did not receive it
from anyone on earth,
nor was I taught it,
but I received it
through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

You will have heard how, previously,
I was persecuting the church of God,
and seeking to destroy it,
zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.

But God had determined, before I was born,
that I was to proclaim,
amongst the Gentiles,
the good news
of the Son of God.

When, by God’s grace,
the Son of God was revealed to me,
I did not confer with anyone else,
or go to see the apostles in Jerusalem,
but I went first into Arabia,
then returned to Damascus.

It was only after three years
that I went up to Jerusalem
to visit Peter,
and I stayed with him fifteen days;
but I did not see any other apostle
(apart from James, the Lord’s brother).

When I then went to Syria,
and to the regions around Tarsus,
I was still unknown (by sight)
to the churches of Judea -
but they glorified God
when they heard of it, saying,
‘The one who was previously persecuting us
is now proclaiming
the very faith
he once tried to destroy.’
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 7.11-17*

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

As Jesus approached a town called Nain,
with his disciples and a large crowd,
a funeral procession
was coming out through the town gate
with a large crowd
surrounding the mother of the man who had died.

She was already a widow,
and she had no other son.

When the Lord saw her,
he had compassion for her
and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’

Then he approached
the wooden frame
on which the body was being carried,
and touched it, saying,
‘Young man, I say to you, arise!’

And the man sat up,
and began to speak,
and Jesus presented him
to his mother.

All were astounded,
and glorified God, saying,
‘God is with us,
and a great prophet has arisen amongst us.’

And the news about Jesus
spread throughout Judea
and all the surrounding country.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 12 AND 18 JUNE
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *2 Samuel 12.1-9, 13*

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to king David,
with this message.

‘There were two men in a city,
one rich and one poor.

The rich man had many flocks and herds,
but the poor man had nothing,
apart from one little lamb,
which he had bought.

And he raised it alongside his own children.

It used to eat

from the little he had,
and drink from his cup.

It was like a daughter to him.

Now a traveller came to visit the rich man,
and the rich man did not take any animal
from his own flock or herd
to prepare for the traveller,
but instead took the poor man’s lamb,
and prepared that for the guest
who had come to him.’

Hearing this, David immediately

became angry against the rich man,
and said to the prophet Nathan, ‘As the Lord lives,
the man who has done this deserves to die.
He must restore the lamb fourfold,
because he did this thing -
and because he had no pity!’

Nathan said to David, ‘You are that very man!

And now the Lord, the God of Israel, says this:

I anointed you king over Israel,
and I rescued you from the hand of Saul;

I gave you your master’s house,
your master’s wives,
and the whole of Israel and Judah;
and if that had been too little,
I would have added as much again.

And yet you have despised the word of the Lord,
and done what is evil in the sight of the Lord!

You have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite
and have had Uriah himself
struck down and killed
by the sword of the Ammonites.’

And King David said to the prophet Nathan,
‘I have sinned against the Lord.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 32

SECOND READING – *Galatians 2.16,19-21*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

We know that a person is reconciled to God
not by keeping the law,
but through faith in Jesus Christ.

Indeed, I have died

to that destructive code of law,
that I might be fully alive to God.

I have been crucified with Christ -
and it is no longer I who live,
but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in this body,
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me.

If reconciliation with God
could be achieved through the law,
then Christ would have died in vain -
but we know that reconciliation with God
is achieved,
not by any law,
but by God’s grace alone.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 7.36-50*

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

Simon, the Pharisee, invited Jesus to eat with him;
so Jesus entered his house,
and took a place at the table.

A notorious woman of that city
heard that Jesus was there,
and entered the house,
bringing an alabaster jar of fragrant oils.

She knelt at Jesus’s feet, weeping,
and began to bathe his feet with her tears,
and to dry them with her hair.

She kissed his feet,
and anointed them with the perfume.

When the Simon the Pharisee saw it, he said to himself,
‘If this man were a prophet,
he would know what kind of woman this is,
who is touching him.’

Jesus said to Simon the Pharisee,
‘A money-lender had two clients who could not pay.
And he cancelled both their debts.
One had owed five hundred coins, and the other fifty.
Which of them will love him more?’

Simon answered, ‘I suppose the one
who had the greater debt.’

Jesus said to him, ‘You are right.’

Then turning towards the woman, Jesus said to Simon,
‘Do you see this woman?’

When I entered your house,
you gave me no water for my feet,
but she has bathed my feet with her tears
and dried them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in
she has not stopped kissing my feet.

You did not anoint my head with oil,
but she has anointed my feet with fragrant oils.
Her sins, which were many, have been forgiven,
so she has shown great love.

But the one who is forgiven less, loves less!’

Then he said to the woman, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’

Those who were at the table with Jesus
began to say amongst themselves,
‘Who is this, who even forgives sins?’

And Jesus said to the woman,
‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 19 AND 23 JUNE ONLY
(if after Trinity Sunday)

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 65.2-5, 8b*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

I hold out my hand to them, all day long,
even though they are a rebellious people,
says the Lord.

For they walk in wicked ways,
provoking me continually,
offering sacrifices in their gardens
offering incense on bricks,
dwelling amongst the tombs,
eating forbidden foods,
then calling themselves holy
as they banish others from their presence.

They are like smoke in my nostrils
from a fire that burns all day long!
And yet, for the sake of the righteous amongst them,
I will not destroy them all, says the Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 63

SECOND READING – *Galatians 3.21-29*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

The law can bring
neither life nor righteousness;
yet it served as our guardian,
until Christ came,
to reconcile us to God
not by law, but by faith.
But now we are no longer subject to the law
as our guardian,
for by faith in Christ Jesus,
we are all alike made children of God.

And amongst those who are baptised into Christ,
there is no longer Jew or Greek,
slave or free, male and female,
for all are one in Christ Jesus,
and all inherit together
the promises made to Abraham.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 8.1-3,26-39*

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

Jesus travelled, through towns and villages,
proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God,
Amongst those who accompanied him
were the twelve,
and some women
who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities,
including Mary Magdalene
(from whom seven demons had gone out),
Joanna
(the wife of a leading member of Herod's court),
Susanna,
and many others,
who provided for them
from their own means.

Jesus and the disciples travelled by boat
to the eastern side
of the sea of Galilee.

As Jesus stepped out on land,
he was met by a man of the city
who was tormented by demons.
He was kept under guard,
bound with chains and shackles,
but he would break out
and live wild amongst the tombs.
When Jesus commanded
the unclean spirit
to come out of him,
the man fell down before Jesus,
and shouted, at the top of his voice,
'What business have you with me,
Jesus,
Son of God Most High?
I beg you,
do not torment me.'

Jesus asked,
'What is your name?'
and the man said,
'Legion';
for many demons had entered him;
and they begged Jesus
repeatedly
not to order them
into the abyss.
A large herd of pigs
was feeding there
on the hillside,
and the demons begged Jesus
to let them enter these instead,
and Jesus permitted them.
So the demons came out of the man,
and entered into the pigs,
and the entire herd
rushed down the steep bank
into the lake,
and was drowned.
When those who were responsible for the pigs
saw what had happened,
they fled,
telling everyone,
in the town
and in the surrounding countryside,
what had happened.
When people came to see,
they found the man
sitting at the feet of Jesus,
clothed, and calm.
Overcome with fear,
they asked Jesus to leave.
The man begged
that he might go with Jesus,
but Jesus returned to the boat to leave,
saying,
'Return to your home,
and tell everyone
all that God has done for you.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

when celebrated on 24 or 25 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 C

FIRST READING – Isaiah 40.1-8

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.

Let her know

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has already received
from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

Now 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 the Lord declares

that all who live

shall see the glory of the Lord revealed.'

Declare to the people

they they are like grass,

and their faithfulness

like the flower of the field:

the grass withers, and the flower fades,

when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;

but the word of our God

will stand for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Galatians 3.21-29

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

The law can bring

neither life nor righteousness;

yet it served as our guardian,

until Christ came,

to reconcile us to God

not by law, but by faith.

But now we are no longer subject to the law

as our guardian,

for by faith in Christ Jesus,

we are all alike made children of God.

And amongst those who are baptised into Christ,

there is no longer Jew or Greek,

slave or free, male and female,

for all are one in Christ Jesus,

and all inherit together

the promises made to Abraham.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 1.57-66, 80

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

The time came for Elizabeth to give birth,
and she bore a son.

Her neighbours and relatives

heard that the Lord

had shown her great mercy,

and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day, at the temple,

they all expected

that the boy would be named Zechariah,

after his father,

but Elizabeth said, 'No,

he is to be called John.'

They said to her,

'None of your relatives has this name.'

And they began motioning

to the boy's father, Zechariah,

to find out what name

he wanted to give to the boy.

Zechariah asked for a writing-tablet,

and wrote,

'The boy's name is John' -

and all of them were amazed.

Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened,

and his tongue was freed,

and he began to speak,

praising God.

They were all overwhelmed,

and soon

this was being talked about

through the entire hill country of Judea.

All who heard it

wondered, saying

'What will this child become?' -

for indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

The child grew

and became strong in spirit.

And he was in the wilderness

until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

when celebrated between 26 and 30 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 C

FIRST READING – Isaiah 40.1-8

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.

Let her know

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has already received
from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

Now 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 the Lord declares
that all who live
shall see the glory of the Lord revealed.'

Declare to the people
they they are like grass,
and their faithfulness
like the flower of the field:

the grass withers, and the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
but the word of our God
will stand for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Galatians 5.1, 13-25

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

It is for freedom

that Christ has set us free,
so take care, my brothers and sisters,
that you do not become enslaved
once again.

Do not use your freedom
as an opportunity for self-indulgence,
but in love,
choose to serve one another;

for the whole law is summed up
in a single commandment:
'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

If instead

you are constantly
biting and devouring one another,
take care
that you are not consumed by one another!

When you find the spirit,
and the desires of the flesh,
to be in conflict with each other,
choose to live by the spirit,
because it is when you are truly led by the spirit
that you are freed from all law.

The desires of the flesh,
in opposition to the spirit,
are obvious:
sexual immorality and excess,
idolatry, sorcery, conflict, hatred, discord,
jealousy, anger, rivalry, division,
factions, and drunkenness and the like.

I say again: those who do such things
are not inheriting the kingdom of God!
By contrast, the fruit of the spirit
is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There is no law against these!
Those who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires.

We live by the spirit.
Let us be led by the Spirit.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 1.57–66, 80

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

The time came for Elizabeth to give birth,
and she bore a son.

Her neighbours and relatives
heard that the Lord
had shown her great mercy,
and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day, at the temple,
they all expected
that the boy would be named Zechariah,
after his father,
but Elizabeth said, 'No,
he is to be called John.'

They said to her,
'None of your relatives has this name.'

And they began motioning
to the boy's father, Zechariah,
to find out what name
he wanted to give to the boy.

Zechariah asked for a writing-tablet, and wrote,
'The boy's name is John' -
and all of them were amazed.

Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened,
and his tongue was freed,
and he began to speak,
praising God.

They were all overwhelmed,
and soon
this was being talked about
through the entire hill country of Judea.

All who heard it
wondered, saying
'What will this child become?' -
for indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

The child grew
and became strong in spirit.
And he was in the wilderness
until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 1 JULY or 2 JULY only

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – 1 Kings 19.15a, 16b, 19-21

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The Lord said to Elijah,

‘Go on your way, once again,
to the wilderness of Damascus.

When you arrive,
you shall anoint Elisha,
son of Shaffat,
as prophet in your place.’

So Elijah set out from there,
and found Elisha, son of Shaffat,
ploughing in a field,
with twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him;
he was with the twelfth.

Elijah passed by Elisha,
and threw his cloak over him.

Elisha left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, saying,
‘Let me bid farewell
to my father and my mother,
and then I will follow you.’

Elijah said to him,
‘Go back then; for what have I done to you?’

Returning to the field,
Elisha slaughtered the oxen,
and used the wooden yoke to light a fire
on which he cooked them.

Elisha gave the meat to the people,
and they ate.

Then Elisha set out and followed Elijah,
and became his servant.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 16

SECOND READING – Galatians 5.1, 13-25

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

It is for freedom

that Christ has set us free,
so take care, my brothers and sisters,
that you do not become enslaved
once again.

Do not use your freedom
as an opportunity for self-indulgence,
but in love,
choose to serve one another;

for the whole law is summed up
in a single commandment:

‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’

If instead

you are constantly
biting and devouring one another,
take care
that you are not consumed by one another!

When you find the spirit,
and the desires of the flesh,
to be in conflict with each other,
choose to live by the spirit,

because it is when you are truly led by the spirit
that you are freed from all law.

The desires of the flesh,
in opposition to the spirit,
are obvious:

sexual immorality and excess,
idolatry, sorcery,
conflict, hatred, discord,
jealousy, anger, rivalry, division,
factions, and drunkenness
and the like.

I say again: those who do such things
are not inheriting the kingdom of God!

By contrast, the fruit of the spirit
is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There is no law against these!

Those who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires.

We live by the spirit.

Let us be led by the Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 9.51-62

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

When the days were drawing near
for Jesus to be taken up,
he set his face towards Jerusalem,
sending messengers ahead of him.

On their way, ahead of Jesus,
they entered a village of the Samaritans,
but the Samaritan villagers would not receive him,
because his face was set towards Jerusalem.

Hearing of it, the disciples James and John said,

‘Lord, do you want us to command fire
to come down from heaven
and consume them?’

But Jesus turned and rebuked them,
and they went on to another village.

As they were travelling along the road,
someone said to Jesus,
‘I will follow you wherever you go.’

Jesus said to him,

‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests;
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’

To another Jesus said,

‘Follow me.’

But he said,

‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’

Jesus said to him,

‘Let the dead bury their own dead;
but you go
and proclaim the kingdom of God.’

Another said,

‘I will follow you, Lord;
but let me first say farewell to those at my home.’

Jesus said to him,

‘No one who puts a hand to the plough
and looks back
is fit for the kingdom of God.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 3 AND 9 JULY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 66.10-14a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Rejoice with Jerusalem,

and be glad for her,

all you who love her!

Rejoice with Jerusalem,

and mourn for her no longer,

for you will see her prosperity restored,

and you will be comforted

like a child

at its mother's breast.

For the Lord now declares:

I will extend peace to Jerusalem like a river,

and the wealth of the nations

like an overflowing stream.

You shall be carried on her arm,

and held in her lap.

As a mother comforts her child,

so I will comfort you

in Jerusalem.

When you see it,

your heart will rejoice,

and you will flourish like the grass,

and all who serve the Lord will know

that the hand of the Lord

is with them.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 66.1-8

SECOND READING – *Colossians 1.3-4,9-14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

In our prayers for you, we always thank God,

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,

and the love that you have for all the saints.

And we pray for you,

asking that you may be filled

with spiritual wisdom and understanding,

and with the knowledge of God's will,

so that you may lead lives

worthy of the Lord,

and fully pleasing to the Lord,

as you bear fruit in every good work,

and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

May you be made strong

with all the strength

that comes from God's glory and power.

And may you be prepared

to endure everything with patience,

always giving thanks, joyfully, to the Father,

who has enabled you to share

in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has rescued us from the power of darkness

and transferred us into the kingdom

of his beloved Son,

who bought our freedom

and forgiveness.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 10.1-11, 17-20, 23-24*

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

The Lord appointed seventy more,

and sent them on ahead of him, in pairs,

to every town and place

where he himself intended to go.

He said to them:

'The harvest is plentiful,

but the workers are few.

May the Lord of the harvest bless you

as you go now to work in the harvest fields.

As you go, remember

that you will be like lambs amongst wolves.

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals;

and greet no one on the road.

Whatever house you enter,

first say, "Peace to this house!"

If anyone is there who shares in peace,

your peace will rest upon them -

and if not, your peace will return to you.

Remain in the same house,

eating and drinking whatever they provide,

for the labourer deserves to be paid.

Do not move from house to house.

Whenever you enter a place,

and its people welcome you,

eat whatever is set before you.

Cure the sick who are there,

and say to them,

"The kingdom of God

has come near to you."

When you enter a place

and they do not welcome you,

go out into its streets and say,

"Even the dust of this place,

that clings to our feet,

we wipe off in protest against you.

Yet know this:

the kingdom of God has come near."

The seventy returned with joy, saying,

'Lord, in your name

even demons submit to us!'

Jesus said to them,

'I watched Satan fall

like a flash of lightning from the sky;

for I have given you authority

over all the power of the enemy,

and nothing can hurt you.

And the greater joy is this:

that your names are written in heaven.

Blessed are the eyes

that see what you have seen!

For prophets and kings

longed to see what you see,

and to hear what you hear.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 10 AND 16 JULY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Deuteronomy 30.10-14*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Return to the Lord your God

with all your heart, and with all your soul.

Trust in the Lord your God,

and observe

the commandments and decrees

that are written

in this book of the law.

The word that I bring to you today

is not too hard for you,

or too far away.

You do not need to say,

‘Who will go up to heaven,

or cross the ocean,

to bring it to us,

that we may hear it and observe it?’

No, the word is very near to you.

It is on your lips, and in your heart.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 25.1-10

SECOND READING – *Colossians 1.15-20*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Christ is the image

of the invisible God;

and the firstborn,

from before all creation.

In Christ, all things

in heaven and on earth

were created,

both the visible and the invisible

(the thrones, rulers, dominions and powers).

All things were created through Christ,

and for Christ.

Christ existed before all things,

and it is in Christ

that all things hold together.

Christ is also the head

of the body which is the church -

its beginning,

as the firstborn from the dead.

Christ has first place in everything,

for in Christ,

all the fullness of God

is pleased to dwell,

and through Christ,

God reconciles all things

in heaven and on earth

to God,

making peace

through the sacrifice of the cross.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 10.25-37*

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

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus.

‘Teacher,’ he said,

‘what must I do

to inherit eternal life?’

Jesus said to him,

‘What is written in the law?

What do you read there?’

The lawyer answered,

‘You shall love the Lord your God

with all your heart, with all your soul,

with all your mind, and with all your strength;

and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.’

Jesus said to him,

‘You have given a good answer;

do this, and you will live.’

But wanting to justify himself,

he asked Jesus,

‘And who is my neighbour?’

Jesus replied,

‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,

and fell into the hands of robbers,

who stripped him, beat him, and went away,

leaving him half dead.

Now by chance

a priest was going down that road;

and when he saw the wounded man,

he passed by on the other side.

In the same way,

when a Levite came to the place,

seeing the wounded man,

he also passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, while travelling,

came near the wounded man;

and when he saw him,

he was moved with pity.

The Samaritan went to the wounded man,

and poured oil and wine on his wounds,

and bandaged them.

Then the Samaritan put the wounded man

on his own animal,

brought him to an inn,

and took care of him.

The next day,

the Samaritan took out two coins,

gave them to the innkeeper,

and said,

‘Take care of him;

and when I come back,

I will repay you

whatever more you spend.’

Which of these three, do you think,

was a neighbour

to the man

who fell into the hands of the robbers?’

The lawyer said,

‘The one who showed him mercy.’

Jesus said to him,

‘Go and do likewise.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 17 AND 23 JULY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 18.1-10a*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord appeared to Abraham

by the oaks of Hebron,
as Abraham sat
at the entrance of his tent
in the heat of the day.

Abraham looked up

and saw three men
standing near him.

He ran to meet them,

and bowed down to the ground, saying,

'My Lord,

if I have found favour in your sight,
do not pass by your servant.

Rest here under the tree,

and let me bring water to wash your feet,
and bread,

that you may eat,
and be refreshed

before you continue on your way.'

Abraham hurried

into the tent

to Sarah, saying,

'Prepare three measures

of the best flour;
and knead it quickly
to make bread.'

Abraham ran to the herd,

and took a calf, tender and good,
and gave it to the servant,
who hastened to prepare it.

Then Abraham took butter, and milk,

and the meat of the calf,
and set it before the three men;
and he stood by them
under the tree
while they ate.

They said to Abraham,

'Where is Sarah, your wife?'

And Abraham said,

'Here, in the tent.'

And one of them said,

'I will surely return to you
this time next year,
and your wife Sarah
shall have a son.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Colossians 2.12-14, 3.1-2*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

When we were buried with Christ in baptism,

we were also raised with him,
through faith in the power of God
who raised Christ from the dead.

We had been dead in our trespasses,

and in the corruption of our flesh,

but God raised us to life, together with Christ,

when he forgave us all our trespasses,

and erased the record that stood against us

(with its legal demands),

setting it aside,

nailing it to the cross.

Now that you have been raised with Christ,

set your minds

not on the things of earth,

but on the things that are above,

where Christ is,

seated at the right hand of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 10.38-42*

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

Jesus and his disciples

entered a certain village,

where a woman named Martha

welcomed him into her home.

Martha had a sister named Mary,

who sat at the Lord's feet,

and listened to what he was saying.

But Martha was distracted by her many tasks;

so she came to Jesus, and said,

'Lord, do you not care

that my sister has left me

to do all the work by myself?

Tell her

that she is to help me!'

But the Lord answered her,

'Martha, Martha,

you are worried and distracted by many things.

There is need of only one thing.

Mary has chosen the better part,

which will not be taken away from her.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Psalm 15

SUNDAY BETWEEN 24 AND 30 JULY

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 18.20-21,23-32*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said to Abraham,
‘How great is the outcry
against Sodom and Gomorrah,
and how very grave their sin!
I must go down and see
whether they have indeed done
according to the outcry that has come to me.’

Then Abraham approached and said,
‘Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
Suppose there are fifty righteous in the city.
Will you sweep the whole place away,
including the fifty righteous who are in it?
Far be it from you to do such a thing,
to slay the righteous with the wicked!
Surely the Judge of all the earth will do what is just?’

And the Lord said,
‘If I find fifty righteous in the city,
I will forgive the whole place for their sake.’

Abraham answered,
‘Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord,
even though I am but dust and ashes.
Suppose there are only forty-five
righteous in the city?
Will you destroy the whole city
for the lack of five?’

And the Lord said,
‘I will not destroy the city
if I find forty-five righteous there.’

Again Abraham spoke to the Lord,
for forty, and thirty, and twenty, concluding:
‘Oh do not let the Lord be angry
if I speak just once more.
Suppose ten righteous are found there.’

The Lord answered,
‘For the sake of ten righteous
I will not destroy the city.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 138

SECOND READING – *Colossians 3.12-17*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Bear with one another,
and if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other.

Just as the Lord has forgiven you,
so you also must forgive.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together
in perfect harmony.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Always be thankful.

And let the word of Christ dwell richly within you.

Teach and encourage one another in all wisdom,
and with grateful hearts,
sing to God

with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 11.1-13*

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

Jesus was praying in a certain place,
and when he had finished,
one of his disciples said to him,
‘Lord, teach us to pray,
as John taught his disciples.’

Jesus said to them,

‘When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we ourselves

forgive everyone

who trespasses against us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.’

And Jesus said to them,

‘Suppose one of you has a friend,

and you go to him at midnight,

and you say to him,

“Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;

for a guest has arrived,

and I have nothing to set before him.”

And your friend answers from within,

“Do not bother me;

the door is already locked,

and we are all in bed;

I cannot get up and give you anything.”

I tell you,

even though he will not get up and give you anything

because he is your friend,

eventually, because of your persistence,

he will get up and give you whatever you need.

So I say to you: ask, and it will be given to you;

search, and you will find;

knock, and the door will be opened for you.

For everyone who asks receives,

and everyone who searches finds,

and for everyone who knocks,

the door will be opened.

If your child asks for a fish,

would you give a snake?

Or if your child asks for an egg,

would you give a scorpion?

If you then, who are evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more

will the heavenly Father

give the Holy Spirit

to those who ask him!’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 31 JULY AND 6 AUGUST

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Ecclesiastes 1.12-14; 2.18-23*

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes.

When I, the Teacher,
was king over Israel
(in Jerusalem),
I applied my mind,
to seek, to search out,
and to understand, by wisdom,
all that is done under heaven.

And it is a tiresome burden
that God has given
to occupy humankind.

I saw all the deeds
that are done
under the sun;
and look,
this is what I saw:
that all is vanity,
and a chasing after wind.

I came to despise
all that I had done,
and all that I had laboured to achieve,
seeing that I must leave it all
to those who come after me -
not knowing
whether they will be wise,
or foolish.

Yet they will be master
over everything for which I laboured -
everything to which
I applied by my wisdom;
this also is vanity.

So I gave up my heart to despair
concerning all my toil,
because even one who has laboured
with wisdom and knowledge and skill
must leave it all
to be enjoyed by another
who did not work for it.
This also is vanity,
and a great injustice.

What do mortals have
for all the work they have done
under the sun?

For their days are full of pain,
and their tasks are a burden;
and even at night,
their minds do not rest;
this also is vanity.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 49.1-12

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 10.32-36*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

In those early days,
when you first received the light of Christ,
you endured great suffering,
with slanders, and persecutions.
And through it all, you stood side by side
with those who were suffering the same.
You had compassion on those who were in prison,
and you cheerfully accepted
the loss of your possessions,
knowing that you have a greater possession
that does not pass away.
Hold fast to this faith
with confidence,
for it brings a great reward.
Persevere in doing the will of God,
and you will receive
all that God has promised.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 12.13-21*

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

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus,
'Teacher, tell my brother
to divide the family inheritance with me.'

But Jesus said to him,
'Who appointed me
to judge between you?'

And turning to the crowd, Jesus said
'Take care!
Be on your guard against all kinds of greed!
For the richness of your life
is not found
in the quantity of your possessions!'

And he told them a parable:

'The land of a rich man
produced a great harvest.

And he wondered,
"What shall I do,
for I have no place to store my crops?"

Then he said to himself,
"I know what I will do.
I will pull down my barns and build larger ones,
and there I will store
all my grain and all my possessions.
And having goods laid up
for many years,
I will relax, eat, drink, and be merry."

But God said to the rich man,
"You fool!

This very night
your life is being taken from you.
And the things you have acquired -
whose will they be?"

This is how it will be
for those who store up
treasure for themselves on earth,
but before God
have no riches at all.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 7 AND 13 AUGUST

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 12.1-7*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said to Abram,

‘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,
to be a blessing.

I will raise up those who speak well of you,
and bring down those who dishonour you;
and through you,
all the world shall be blessed.’

So Abram went,
as the Lord had told him.

He was seventy-five years old
when he departed from Haran.

He took his wife Sara,
and his nephew Lot,
and all their possessions,
and all the people of their household.

When they came to the land of Canaan,
they passed through the land
and its people
to a great oak in the centre of the land.

There the Lord appeared to Abram, saying,
‘To your offspring, I will give this land.’

And Abram built an altar there, to the Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 33.12-22

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 11.1, 8-10*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for;
and confidence, in things not yet seen.

It was by faith
that Abraham obeyed
when he was called to set out
for a place
that would become his inheritance.

It was by faith
that he set out,
not knowing where he was going.

It was by faith
that he stayed in that land,
as if in a foreign land,
living without any settled home,
as did Isaac and Jacob after him.

For by faith, they looked forward, in expectation,
to the city that has a true foundation,
whose architect and builder is God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 12.22-36*

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

Jesus said to his disciples,
‘Do not worry about your life,
what you will eat,
or about your body,
what you will wear.

There is more to life than food,
and there is more to the body
than clothing!

Consider the birds:
they do not plant, or harvest,
they have no storehouse or barn,
and yet God feeds them.

Surely you are more valuable
than the birds of the air!

Worrying will not add
a single hour
to your span of life.

Or consider the wild flowers,
how they grow:
they do not weave or sew,
and yet not even Solomon
in all his glory
was clothed
as finely as these!

If God clothes
the grass of the field
in this way -
grass which is alive today, and dried up tomorrow -
how much more
will God clothe you!

So have faith!
So do not be anxious
for what you will eat
or what you will drink.

Do not worry about these things,
for your Father knows that you need them.

Work instead
for the kingdom of God,
and all these other things
will be given to you as well.

Do not be afraid,
for your Father longs
to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions,
and give to those in need.

Put your heart
into storing up
treasure in heaven,
where nothing decays,
and no thief can come near.

And be ready to serve,
like those who are waiting faithfully
for their master to return.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 14 AND 20 AUGUST

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 23.25-29*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

I have heard the false prophets,
who speak lies and delusions in my name,
says the Lord.

Like those who went before them,
they make my people
forget my name,
by the lies
that they tell one another.

Let the prophets who have delusions
tell their delusions -

but let the prophets who have my word
proclaim it with confidence.

They differ

like straw from grain;
for my word is powerful,
like fire,
or like a hammer
that breaks a rock.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 82

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 12.1-3*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Let us run with perseverance
the race that is set before us,
inspired by all the saints
who have gone before,
throwing off every burden
that would hold us back,
and looking to Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Confident in the greater joy
that lay beyond,
Jesus endured the cross,
disregarding its shame;
and now he seated in glory
at the right hand of God.

May his patient endurance
of such hostility from sinners
be our inspiration,
that we may never grow weary
or lose heart.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 12.49-56*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I came to bring fire to the earth,
and how I long
to see it burning.

I have a baptism
to undergo,
and I am distressed
until it is completed.

You think
that I have come
to bring peace
to the earth.

But I tell you -
also division.

Even households
will be divided,
three against two, and two against three;
father against son,
mother against daughter,
members of the household against each other.

When you see clouds in the west,
you know that rain is on its way.
And when you see wind from the south,
you know there will be scorching heat.

You know how to interpret
the appearance of earth and sky,
and yet you do not know
how to interpret the present time!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 21 AND 27 AUGUST

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 58.9-14*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

If you remove the burdens
from from the weary amongst you,
and refrain from
pointing of the finger,
and speaking evil -
if you offer food to the hungry,
and attend to the needs of the suffering -
then your light
shall rise in the darkness,
your gloom
will become
like the brightness
in the middle of the day,
and when you cry for help,
the Lord will answer.
The Lord will guide you,
provide for you,
and strengthen you.
You will flourish like a garden
by a stream
that never runs dry.
You will rebuild the city from its ruins,
restoring its streets and its homes.
Then if you refrain from
trampling the sabbath -
from pursuing your own interests
on God's holy day -
if you call the sabbath 'a delight',
and honour it,
not going your own ways,
or serving your own interests,
or pursuing your own affairs,
then you shall find true joy in the Lord,
and in all the gifts
the Lord has given.
This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 103

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 12.14,22-24,28-29*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Pursue peace with everyone,
and holiness,
without which none can see the Lord.
For we have come to Mount Zion,
the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.
We have come to the place
where angels, beyond number, gather to rejoice;
where those who have gone before
are enrolled into heaven,
and the spirits of the righteous
are made perfect.
We have come to God, the judge of all,
and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,
and to redemption by his blood.
As we enter into a kingdom
that cannot be shaken,
let us offer our worship
with reverence, thanksgiving, and holy fear,
for our God is a consuming fire.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 13.10-17*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues
on the sabbath.
A woman was there, who had a spirit
that had crippled her for eighteen years.
She was bent over,
and unable to stand up straight.
When Jesus saw her,
he called her over to him, and said to her,
'Woman, you are set free from your illness.'
As he spoke, he laid a hand upon her,
and immediately, she stood fully upright,
and began praising God.
But the leader of the synagogue
was indignant
because Jesus had cured on the sabbath.
The leader of the synagogue
kept saying to the crowd,
'There are six days
on which work should be done.
Let healing be done on those six days,
not on the sabbath.'
The Lord said,
'You hypocrites!
Every one of you, on the sabbath,
unties your ox or your donkey,
and leads it to water.
Should not this woman,
a daughter of Abraham,
bound by Satan for eighteen years,
be set free from her bondage
on the sabbath day?'
His opponents were put to shame;
and the entire crowd was rejoicing
at the wonderful things
that he was doing.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**SUNDAY BETWEEN
28 AUGUST AND 3 SEPTEMBER**

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING - Deuteronomy 16.9-12

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

From the time when the first of the harvest is cut,
you shall count seven weeks.

Then you shall keep the Festival of Weeks
to the Lord your God,
making a freewill-offering
in proportion to the blessing that you have received
from the Lord your God.

Then you shall celebrate before the Lord your God:
you,
and your sons and daughters,
and your servants,
and the descendants of Levi resident in your towns,
and the foreigners,
and the orphans,
and the widows,
who are amongst you.

Celebrate at the place
that the Lord your God will choose
as a dwelling for his name.

Remember that you were a slave in Egypt,
and diligently observe these laws.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 119.33-40

SECOND READING – Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Keep on loving one another
as brothers as sisters in Christ.

Show hospitality also
to the foreigner, the stranger and the outsider,
for by doing this,
some have hosted prophets and angels
without knowing it.

Remember those who are in prison,
as though you were in prison alongside them.

Remember those who are being tortured,
as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Be content with what you have.
Keep your lives free from the love of money;
and let the marriage bed kept undefiled.

God has said,
'I will never leave you, nor forsake you',
so we can say with confidence,
'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.'

Remember your leaders,
who spoke the word of God to you.
Consider the outcome of their way of life,
and imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday, today, and for ever.

Through him, then,
let us continually offer to God,
with our voices,
a sacrifice of praise;
and be diligent in doing good,
sharing all that we have,
for this also
is a worthy offering.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 14.1, 7-14

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

One sabbath day,
Jesus was dining, as a guest,
in the house
of a leader of the Pharisees.

When Jesus noticed
how the guests chose the places of honour,
he told them a parable.

'When you are invited by someone
to a wedding banquet,
do not sit down at the place of honour,
in case someone
more distinguished than you
has been invited by your host;
and the host who invited both of you
may come and say to you,
"Give this person your place,"

and then in disgrace
you would have to move
to the lowest place.

But when you are invited,
go and sit down at the lowest place,
so that when your host comes,
he may say to you,
"Friend, move up higher";

then you will be honoured
in the presence of all
who sit at the table with you.

For all who exalt themselves
will be humbled,
and those who humble themselves
will be exalted.'

And to the one who had invited him,
Jesus said:

'When you give a lunch or dinner,
do not invite your friends, or your brothers,
or your relatives, or rich neighbours,
in case they may invite you in return,
and you would be repaid.

But when you give a banquet,
invite the poor, the crippled,
the lame, and the blind;
and you will be blessed,
because they cannot repay you;
and you will be repaid
at the resurrection of the righteous.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 4 AND 10 SEPTEMBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Deuteronomy 30.15-20*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

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

Psalm 1

SECOND READING – *Philemon 10,12-17*

A reading from the letter of Paul to Philemon.

I appeal to you for Onesimus,
who has become like a son to me
during my imprisonment.
In sending him
back to you,
I am sending my own heart.
I wanted to keep him with me,
so that he might be of service to me
during my imprisonment for the gospel;
but I preferred to do nothing
without your consent,
in order that your good deed
might be voluntary,
and not out of necessity.

Perhaps he was separated from you
for a while
so that you might have him back
for ever,
no longer as a servant,
but as a brother -
both as a fellow human being,
and as a brother in the Lord.
So I ask you to welcome him
as you would welcome me.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 14.25-33*

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

Large crowds were now following Jesus.

He turned to them, and said,

'Whoever comes to me,
to be my disciple,
must be ready to forsake
father and mother,
wife and children,
brothers and sisters,
and even life itself.

Whoever wishes to be my disciple
must be ready to carry their cross
and follow me.

If you intend to build a tower,
you first sit down
and estimate the cost,
to see whether you have enough
to complete it.

Otherwise,
when you have laid a foundation,
and you are then unable to finish,
all who see it will mock,
saying, "They began to build,
and were not able to finish."

And you know that a king,
going to war,
will first sit down and consider
whether he is able,
with ten thousand,
to oppose the one
who comes against him
with twenty thousand.

If he cannot,
then while the other is still far away,
he will send a delegation
to ask the terms for peace.

In the same way,
you cannot be my disciple
unless you are ready
to give up
all that you have.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 11 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Exodus 32.7-8,10-11,13-14*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

At the top of Mount Sinai,
the Lord said to Moses,

‘Go down at once,
for your people -
the people you led
out of the land of Egypt -
have corrupted themselves.

They have been quick to turn aside
from the way that I commanded them.

They have cast for themselves
an image of a calf,
and have worshipped it,
and sacrificed to it,
even declaring that this is the god
who brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Now let me alone,
so that my wrath
may burn hot against them
and I may consume them;

and of you alone

I will make a great nation.’

But Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, saying,

‘O Lord, why does your wrath
burn hot against your people,
whom you brought
out of the land of Egypt
with great power
and with a mighty hand?

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants,
how you swore to them, by your own self,
that you would multiply their descendants
like the stars of heaven,
and give them this land
as their inheritance for ever.’

And the Lord drew back
from the disaster
that he had planned
to bring upon them.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 51.1-10

SECOND READING – *1 Timothy 1.12-17*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to Timothy.

I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord,
for he has appointed me to his service,
he has judged me faithful,
and he has given me the strength to endure,
even though I was formerly
a persecutor, blasphemer, and aggressor.

But I received mercy
because I had acted
in ignorance and unbelief,
and the grace of our Lord
overflowed for me,
with the faith, and the love,
that are in Christ Jesus.

The saying is sure,
and worthy of acceptance by all:
that Christ Jesus
came into the world
to save sinners.

I was surely the worst of them all,
and for that very reason,
I received mercy,
so that in me (the worst of sinners),
Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience,
making me an example
to all those who would come to believe in him,
and in so doing, receive eternal life.

To the King of the ages,
immortal, invisible, the only God,
be honour and glory for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 15.1-10*

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

Tax-collectors and sinners
were amongst those
who gathered around Jesus
to listen to him,

and the Pharisees and the scribes
were grumbling and saying,

‘This fellow welcomes sinners
and eats with them.’

So Jesus told them this parable:

‘Which one of you,
having a hundred sheep,
and losing one of them,
does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness
and go after the one that is lost
until you find it?

When you have found it,
you lay it on your shoulders and rejoice,
and when you come home,
you call together your friends and neighbours,
saying “Rejoice with me,
for I have found my sheep
that was lost.”

In the same way, I tell you,
there will be more joy in heaven
over one sinner who repents
than over ninety-nine righteous persons
who need no repentance.

Or what woman, having ten silver coins,
if she loses one of them,
does not light a lamp,
sweep the house,
and search carefully
until she finds it?

When she has found it,
she calls together her friends and neighbours,
saying, “Rejoice with me,
for I have found the silver coin that I had lost.”

In the same way, I tell you,
there is joy in the presence of the angels of God
over one sinner who repents.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 18 AND 23 SEPTEMBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Amos 8.4-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Amos.

Hear this,

you that trample on the needy,

and bring to ruin

the poor of the land!

You long for the new moon festival to be over

so that you may return to selling grain.

You long for the sabbath to be over,

so that you may return to selling wheat.

You make dishonest measures,

balances, and weights.

You buy the poor for silver,

and the needy

for a pair of sandals,

and you sell

the sweepings of the wheat.

The Lord has sworn,

by the pride of Jacob:

Surely I will never forget your deeds.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 113

SECOND READING – *1 Timothy 2.1-8*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to Timothy.

I urge that supplications,

prayers, intercessions,

and thanksgivings

be made for everyone:

including for kings

and all who are in authority,

so that we may lead

a quiet and peaceable life

in all godliness and dignity.

This is right, and is acceptable

in the sight of God our Saviour,

who longs for everyone to be saved

and to come

to the knowledge of the truth.

There is one God,

and one mediator

between God and humankind -

Christ Jesus, himself human,

who gave himself as a ransom for all.

For this I was appointed

a herald and an apostle,

a teacher of the Gentiles

in faith and truth.

And I long that in every place,

everyone will be able to pray,

lifting up holy hands,

without argument or dissent.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 16.1-13*

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

Jesus told this parable to the disciples.

‘There was a rich man,

whose manager was accused

of wasting his possessions.

So the rich man summoned the manager,

and said to him,

‘What is this that I hear about you?

Finalise all your accounts,

because you cannot be my manager any longer.’

The manager said to himself,

‘What will I do,

now that my master

is taking my employment away from me?

I am not strong enough to dig;

and I would be too ashamed to beg.

I need to decide what to do,

so that when I am dismissed as manager,

people will still welcome me into their homes.’

So he summoned his master’s debtors, one by one.

He asked the first,

‘What do you owe my master?’

And the answer was,

‘One hundred jugs of olive oil.’

So the manager said to him,

‘Take your account, sit down quickly,

and change it to fifty.’

Then the manager asked another,

‘And how much do you owe?’

And the answer was,

‘One hundred containers of wheat.’

The manager said to him,

‘Take your account, and change it to eighty.’

And the rich man was impressed

by the dishonest manager,

because he acted shrewdly.

See how the children of this age

are more shrewd than the children of light

in dealing with their own generation!

So I tell you, use worldly wealth

to make friends for yourselves,

so that you have friends that will still welcome you

into their homes

when all your worldly wealth is gone.

For whoever is faithful with minor things

will be faithful also with greater things;

and whoever is unfaithful in minor things

will be unfaithful also with greater things.

Do what is right with worldly wealth,

and you will be entrusted with true riches.

Do what is right for others,

and they will do what is right for you.

You cannot serve two masters;

for either you will hate the one, and love the other,

or you will be devoted to the one,

and despise the other.

In the same way,

you cannot serve

both God and worldly wealth.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MICHAELMAS

when celebrated on 24 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 C

FIRST READING – Exodus 3.1b-6, 9-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Moses led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
There the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses,
in a flame of fire, out of a bush.
Moses looked, and the bush was blazing,
yet it was not consumed.
Moses said, 'I must turn aside,
and look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up.'
When the Lord saw
that Moses had turned aside to see,
God called to Moses out of the bush:
'Moses, Moses!'
Moses said, 'Here I am.'
And the Lord said, 'Come no closer!
Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing
is holy ground.
I am the God of your father,
the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob.'
And Moses hid his face,
for he was afraid
to look at God.
Then the Lord said,
'The cry of the Israelites has come to me;
I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them.
So come, I will send you to Pharaoh,
to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'
But Moses said to God,
'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh,
and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'
God said, 'I will be with you;
and this shall be the sign for you,
that it is I who sent you:
when you have brought the people out of Egypt,
you shall worship God on this mountain.'
But Moses said to God,
'If I come to the Israelites and say to them,
"The God of your ancestors has sent me to you",
and they ask me, "What is his name?"
what shall I say to them?'
And God said to Moses, 'I am who I am,
and this is my name, for ever,
my title for all generations.
You shall say to the Israelites,
"I am' has sent me to you -
the Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob".'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Timothy 2.1-8

A reading from the first letter of Paul to Timothy.

I urge that supplications,
prayers, intercessions,
and thanksgivings
be made for everyone:
including for kings
and all who are in authority,
so that we may lead
a quiet and peaceable life
in all godliness and dignity.
This is right, and is acceptable
in the sight of God our Saviour,
who longs for everyone to be saved
and to come
to the knowledge of the truth.
There is one God,
and one mediator
between God and humankind -
Christ Jesus, himself human,
who gave himself as a ransom for all.
For this I was appointed
a herald and an apostle,
a teacher of the Gentiles
in faith and truth.
And I long that in every place,
everyone will be able to pray,
lifting up holy hands,
without argument or dissent.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.1-9

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
On the first day of the week,
at early dawn,
the women who had accompanied Jesus
came to the tomb,
bringing the spices that they had prepared.
They found the stone
rolled away from the tomb,
but when they went in,
they did not find the body.
While they were perplexed about this,
suddenly two men in dazzling clothes
stood beside them.
The women were terrified
and bowed their faces to the ground,
but the men said to them,
'Why do you look for the living amongst the dead?
He is not here, but has risen.
Remember how he told you,
while he was still in Galilee,
that the Son of Man
must be handed over to sinners,
and be crucified,
and on the third day, rise again.'
Then they remembered Jesus' words,
and returning from the tomb,
they told all this to the eleven
and to all the others.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MICHAELMAS

when celebrated between 25 and 30 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 C

FIRST READING – Exodus 3.1b-6, 9-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.
Moses led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
There the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses,
in a flame of fire, out of a bush.
Moses looked, and the bush was blazing,
yet it was not consumed.
Moses said, 'I must turn aside,
and look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up.'
When the Lord saw
that Moses had turned aside to see,
God called to Moses out of the bush:
'Moses, Moses!'
Moses said, 'Here I am.'
And the Lord said, 'Come no closer!
Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing
is holy ground.
I am the God of your father,
the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob.'
And Moses hid his face,
for he was afraid
to look at God.
Then the Lord said,
'The cry of the Israelites has come to me;
I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them.
So come, I will send you to Pharaoh,
to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'
But Moses said to God,
'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh,
and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'
God said, 'I will be with you;
and this shall be the sign for you,
that it is I who sent you:
when you have brought the people out of Egypt,
you shall worship God on this mountain.'
But Moses said to God,
'If I come to the Israelites and say to them,
"The God of your ancestors has sent me to you",
and they ask me, "What is his name?"
what shall I say to them?'
And God said to Moses, 'I am who I am,
and this is my name, for ever,
my title for all generations.
You shall say to the Israelites,
"I am' has sent me to you -
the Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob".'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Timothy 6.6-12a, 17-19

A reading from the first letter of Paul to Timothy.
There is great gain in godliness
combined with contentment.
We brought nothing into the world,
and we can take nothing out of it,
so if we have food and clothing,
let us be content with these.
Those who want to be rich
fall into temptation, and are trapped
by many senseless and harmful desires
that plunge people into ruin and destruction.
For the love of wealth
is the root of all manner of evil,
and in their eagerness to be rich
some have wandered away from the faith
and pierced themselves with many pains.
You, seeking to be godly, should flee from all this,
to pursue righteousness, godliness,
faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.
Work to be strong in the faith,
taking hold of the eternal life
to which you were called.
As for those who, in the present age, are rich,
command them not to be haughty,
or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches,
but rather to set their hopes on God
who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.
They are to do good, to be rich in good works,
and to be generous, and ready to share,
thereby storing up for themselves
the treasure of a good foundation for the future,
and knowing the life that is truly life.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.1-9

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.
On the first day of the week, at early dawn,
the women who had accompanied Jesus
came to the tomb,
bringing the spices that they had prepared.
They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
but when they went in, they did not find the body.
While they were perplexed about this,
suddenly two men in dazzling clothes
stood beside them.
The women were terrified
and bowed their faces to the ground,
but the men said to them,
'Why do you look for the living amongst the dead?
He is not here, but has risen.
Remember how he told you,
while he was still in Galilee,
that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners,
and be crucified, and on the third day, rise again.'
Then they remembered Jesus' words,
and returning from the tomb,
they told all this to the eleven
and to all the others.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

HARVEST FESTIVAL
the Sunday between 1 and 7 October
Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron:

'If only we had died,
by the hand of the Lord,
in the land of Egypt,
where we ate our fill of meat and bread;
but you have brought us out into this wilderness
to die of hunger.'

Then the Lord said to Moses,

'I am going to rain down bread from heaven for you;
and each day, the people shall go out,
and gather enough for that day.

In this way I will test them,
whether they will follow my instruction or not.'

Moses said to Aaron,

'Say to the whole gathered people of Israel,
"Draw near to the Lord,
for the Lord has heard your complaining."

And as Aaron spoke to the people,
they looked towards the wilderness,
and the glory of the Lord
appeared in a cloud.

The Lord said to Moses,

'Say to the people,
"At twilight you shall eat meat,
and in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread;
then you shall know
that I am the Lord your God."

In the evening,
quails came up and covered the camp;
and in the morning
there was a layer of dew around the camp.

When the layer of dew lifted,
there on the surface of the wilderness
was a fine flaky substance,
as fine as frost on the ground.

When the Israelites saw it,
they said to one another, 'What is it?'
for they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them,
'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 78.23-29

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 – *John 6.27-35*

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

Jesus said,

'Do not work for the food that perishes,
but work for the food
that endures for eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you -
for it is on the Son of Man
that God the Father
has set his seal.'

They said to him,

'What must we do
to be doing the work of God?'

Jesus said,

'This is the work of God:
that you believe in the one
that God has sent.'

So they said to him,

'What sign are you going to give us,
so that we may see it, and believe you?
What work are you performing?
Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness;
it says, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus said to them,

'It was not Moses
who gave you the bread from heaven;
it is my Father
who gives you the true bread from heaven.
The bread of God
is that which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world.'

They said to him,

'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them,

'I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me
will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER only

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Habakkuk 1.2-4; 2.2-4*

A reading from the book of the prophet Habakkuk.

I cried out to the Lord, saying,

‘How long, O Lord,
must I cry to you
for help?

All around, there is destruction and violence.

All around, there is conflict and strife.

Justice and law have broken down,
and the wicked overpower the righteous.’

The Lord answered me and said:

‘Announce the message
in letters so large
that even a runner may see:

Keep the faith,
for there will be justice
at the appointed time!

The arrogant and the powerful shall fall!

The righteous and faithful shall live!’

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 37.1-10

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 1.1-14*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

From Paul,

by God’s grace
an apostle
of the promise of life
that is in Christ Jesus.

To Timothy,

my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace to you,
from God our Father
and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to God
as I remember you constantly in my prayers
night and day,
recalling the tears that you shed
as we parted,
and longing for the joy
of seeing you again.

I give thanks to God
for your sincere faith -
the faith that lived
first in your grandmother Lois
and your mother Eunice,
and now, I know, lives in you.

Keep the flame
of the gift of God
burning brightly within you -
the gift that you received when I was with you,
when I commissioned you to God’s service.

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice,
but a spirit of love, and power, and wisdom.

So do not be ashamed to speak about our Lord,
or about me, a prisoner for the sake of our Lord,
but join with me in suffering for the gospel,
trusting in the power of God.

For God saved us, and called us,
not on account
of anything we had done,
but on account
of God’s own purposes
and grace.

This grace was given to us
in Christ Jesus
before the world began,
and now it has been made known to us
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who abolished death,
and by the light of the gospel
opened for us
the way to everlasting life.

For this gospel of grace

I was appointed herald, apostle, and teacher -
and it is for this gospel of grace
that I also suffer.

But I have nothing to fear,
for I know
that the one I trust
will protect me
to the very end.

So hold fast to all that you learned from me,
and hold fast to the faith and love
that are in Christ Jesus.

And treasure the gift
that you have received
by the Holy Spirit
who dwells within us.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 17.5-10*

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

The apostles asked the Lord
to increase their faith.

The Lord said to them,
‘If you had faith the size of a mustard seed,
you could tell this tree
to move from here
and plant itself in the sea,
and it would!

When a servant comes in
from ploughing the field,
or tending the sheep,
he is not invited
to take his place for dinner.

He prepares and serves
his master’s supper,
both food and drink,
before making his own -
and he receives no thanks.

In the same way,
when you have done
all that you are commanded to do,
you should have the humility of a servant,
and say, “we have only done
what we ought to have done.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 9 AND 15 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – 2 Kings 5.1-3, 5b, 9-15b

A reading from the second book of Kings.

Naaman was the commander
of the army of Aram.

He was highly respected,
because by him
the Lord had given victory to Aram.

And yet this mighty warrior
suffered from leprosy.

Now the army of Aram,
on one of their raids,
had taken a young girl captive
from the land of Israel,
and she was now a servant
to Naaman's wife.

This servant girl
told her mistress
that there was a prophet in Samaria
who could cure Naaman of his leprosy.

So with the consent of the king,
Naaman travelled
to see the prophet in Samaria.

When Naaman arrived,
with his horses and chariots,
and silver, and gold, and fine garments,
at the entrance of the place,
the prophet Elisha
sent out a messenger, saying,
'Go, wash in the river Jordan seven times,
and your flesh shall be restored
and you shall be clean.'

But Naaman became angry, saying,
'Surely he could at least have come out of his house,
and called on the name of the Lord his God,
and waved his hand over the leprosy, to cure it!
We have rivers of our own in Aram
as good as any in Israel!
And he turned to leave in anger.

But his servants approached and said to him,
'Sir, if the prophet had commanded you
to do something difficult,
would you not have done it?
So surely you can do as the prophet commands
when all he says is
"Wash and be clean".'

So Naaman went
and washed seven times
in the river Jordan,
as Elisha, the prophet of God, had instructed.

And Naaman's flesh was restored
like the flesh of a child,
and he was clean.

Then Naaman returned, with all his servants,
and stood before Elisha, and said,
'Now I know
that there is no God
in all the earth
except in Israel.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 111

SECOND READING – 2 Timothy 3.11b-17

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

I have endured so many persecutions,
and yet the Lord has rescued me
from all of them.

All who seek to live a godly life in Christ Jesus
will be persecuted.

Wickedness and deception
will increase.

But hold fast
to all that you have learned
and firmly believed,
trusting those who taught you,
and trusting in the holy scriptures
that you have known from childhood,
which gave you the wisdom
to be ready
for salvation
through faith in Jesus Christ.

All scriptures, inspired by God,
are useful not only
for teaching and learning,
but for growing in righteousness,
strengthening and equipping us
for all that God calls us to do.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 17.11-19

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

On the way to Jerusalem,
Jesus was going through the region
between Samaria and Galilee.

In one village,
ten lepers approached him,
keeping their distance,
and calling out,
'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'

When Jesus saw them,
he said to them,
'Go and show yourselves to the priests.'

And as they went,
they were made clean.

One of them,
when he saw that he was healed,
turned back,
praising God with a loud voice.

He fell at Jesus' feet,
and thanked him.

And he was a Samaritan.

Jesus said,
'Were there not ten made clean?
Where are the other nine?
Has none returned
to give glory to God
except this foreigner?'

And he said to the Samaritan,
'Get up, and go on your way;
your faith has made you well.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 16 AND 22 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Genesis 32.22-30*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

While it was still dark,
they got up,
and Jacob led
his two wives,
his two maids,
and his eleven children,
to the place
where they could ford the Jabbok river.

Jacob sent them all across,
ahead of him,
carrying everything they had,
until Jacob was left alone.

And there,
someone wrestled with Jacob
until daybreak.

Still failing to overpower Jacob,
he struck Jacob on the hip,
putting Jacob's hip out of joint,
and said to Jacob,
'Let me go,
for the day is breaking.'

But Jacob said,
'I will not let you go,
unless you bless me.'

The one who had been wrestling with Jacob
asked Jacob's name,
and then said,
'You shall no longer be called Jacob,
but Israel
(which means, "wrestling with God"),
for you have wrestled
with God,
and with mortals,
and have prevailed.'

Jacob said,
'Please tell me your name.'

But the one who had been wrestling with Jacob
said, 'Why would you ask my name?'
and blessed Jacob.

So Jacob called the place Peniel
(which means, 'the face of God'),
saying,
'I have seen God face to face,
and yet my life is preserved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 121

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 4.2-5*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

Proclaim the message;
and be persistent,
whether the time is favourable or not.

Argue, debate,
teach, and encourage,
with the utmost patience,
for the time is coming
when people will no longer listen
to sound teaching,
but having itching ears,
will choose to take instruction
from teachers
who suit their own purposes,
turning away from the truth,
and chasing after fantasies.

So fulfil your ministry
by keeping a clear mind in every situation,
enduring through every hardship,
and proclaiming the good news!
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 18.1-8a*

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

Jesus told this parable to his disciples,
about the need to pray,
and not lose heart.

'In a city,
there was a judge,
who neither feared God
nor cared for the people.
In the same city,
there was a widow,
who kept coming to the judge, and saying,
"Grant me justice against my opponent."

At first, the judge refused;
but later he said to himself,
"I have no fear of God
and no respect for anyone,
but because this widow keeps bothering me,
I will grant her justice,
before she wears me out
with her constant demands."

And surely, so much more,
God will grant justice,
and quickly,
for God's chosen ones,
when they call out to God
night and day.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY BETWEEN 23 AND 29 OCTOBER

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 14.7-8a,21,22b*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Our offences cry out to you, O Lord,
and our trespasses are many,
for we have rebelled against you.

Even so, help us, O Lord,
for the sake of your name,
O hope of Israel,
our saviour in time of trouble.

Do not reject us,
or dishonour your glorious throne,
but remember the covenant you made.

We set our hope on you,
O Lord our God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 84.1-7

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 4.6-8, 17-18*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

For my part,
I am already
being poured out
like an offering,
and the time for my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith.

Having been reconciled with God,
what lies ahead
is to receive the crown
which the Lord,
the righteous judge,
will present to me
on that day -

and not only to me

but to all

who have longed

for the Lord's appearing.

The Lord has stood by me,

rescued me,

and strengthened me,

so that the message

might be fully proclaimed

to the Gentiles.

And the Lord will surely protect me

from every assault,

and deliver me safely

to his heavenly kingdom.

To the Lord be the glory

for ever and ever!

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 18.9-14*

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

Jesus told this parable

to some
who had great confidence
in their own righteousness,
and regarded others
with contempt.

Two men
went up to the temple
to pray.

One was a Pharisee,
the other was a tax-collector.

The Pharisee,
standing by himself, said:

“O God, I thank you
that I am not like other people -
all thieves and adulterers -
or even like this tax-collector!

For I fast twice a week,
and give a tenth of all my income!”

The tax-collector,
standing far off,
would not even look up to heaven,
but beat his breast, and said,
“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

I tell you,
it is the tax-collector,
not the Pharisee,
who returned home
righteous in God's eyes;
for all who raise themselves up
will be brought down,
and all who remain humble
will be raised up.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

4 BEFORE ADVENT – ALL SAINTS SUNDAY
Sunday between 30 October and 5 November
Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 25.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Here on this holy mountain,
the Lord of Hosts
will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food
and fine wine.

The Lord will destroy
the shroud
that is cast over the peoples,
the shadow
that hangs over the nations.

The Lord God
will swallow up death for ever,
and wipe all tears away.

And the disgrace of the Lord's people
will be taken away.

They will say on that day,
'We trusted in God to save us.
And now we rejoice,
for the day of the Lord's salvation is here.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 24

SECOND READING – *2 Thessalonians 1.1-4, 11-12*

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

From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
To the church in Thessalonika.

Grace to you, and peace,
from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God
for you, always,
brothers and sisters,
for your strong and growing faith,
and for the love you have
for one another.

Indeed we tell others of your example
of faith remaining steadfast
in the face of
hardships and persecutions.

We also pray for you,
asking that God will make you
worthy of your calling;
that God may powerfully fulfil
your every desire
to do good,
and strengthen you
in every work of faith.

In this way,
may the name of our Lord Jesus
be glorified in you.

And may you be glorified in him,
by the grace of our God,
and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 19.1-10*

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

Jesus was passing through Jericho
on his way to Jerusalem.

Zacchaeus,
a wealthy chief
tax-collector,
was trying to see who Jesus was,
but because he was short in stature,
he could not see
through the crowds.

So he ran ahead,
and climbed into a tree
on the route
that Jesus was following.

When Jesus reached the place,
he looked up, and said,
'Zacchaeus,
come down at once,
for I must stay at your house today.'

So Zacchaeus
came down quickly
from the tree,
and was delighted
to welcome Jesus
into his home.

All who saw this
began to complain,
saying that Jesus
had gone
to be the guest
of someone
completely unworthy.

But Zacchaeus
stood before Jesus, and said,
'My Lord,
half of my possessions
I will give to the poor;
and if I have cheated anyone of anything,
I will pay back four times over.'

And Jesus said,
'Today, salvation has come to this house,
because this man also
is a son of Abraham,
and the Son of Man came
to seek out
and to save the lost.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

3 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday between 6 and 12 November

Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *Job 19.23-27a*

A reading from the book of Job.

Let this be written down -

recorded in a book,
and engraved in stone:

'I know that my Redeemer lives.

And I know that the day will come
when he will stand upon the earth.

And I know

that when the suffering
of this present age
is ended,

with my own eyes

I shall see God."

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 17

SECOND READING – *2 Thessalonians 2.16 - 3.5*

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

God our Father,

and the Lord Jesus Christ,
in their love for us,

have given us confidence and trust
for the future.

I pray that they may now

give you peace in your hearts,
and strengthen you

in every good word that you speak,
and in every good work that you do.

And I ask you also,

my brothers and sisters,
to pray for us.

Pray that the word of the Lord

may continue to spread,
so that God may be glorified everywhere,
just as God is glorified amongst you.

Pray also

that we may be protected
from any who would do us harm,
for not all have faith.

But the Lord is faithful.

And we are confident

that as you continue
in all that we taught you,

the Lord will strengthen you,

and protect you from evil,
and lead you on
in the love of God

and in faithfulness to Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 19.41-48*

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

As Jesus approached Jerusalem,

and saw the city,

he wept over it, saying,

'O Jerusalem,

if only you had recognised
the things that make for peace!

But now they are hidden from your eyes!

And the day will come

when your enemies

will surround you on every side!

They will crush you to the ground -

you, and your children within you -

and there will not be one stone

left upon another,

because you did not recognise the time

when God would call you to account.'

Then he entered the temple

and began to drive out

those who were trading there,

saying,

'Scripture says

"My house shall be a house of prayer" -
but you have made it a den of thieves!'

Every day, he was teaching in the temple;

and the chief priests, the scribes,

and the leaders of the people,

kept looking for a way to destroy him;

but they did not find

anything they could do,

because the people were eager

to hear his every word.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

2 BEFORE ADVENT

Sunday between 13 and 19 November

Readings for *Year C*

FIRST READING – *Malachi 4.1-2a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

See, the day is coming, says the Lord,
when the arrogant,
and all evildoers,
will be burned up like stubble.

But for you,
who honour my name:
on you,
the sun will rise -
the sun of righteousness.

There will be healing
in its light,
and you shall play
like young calves in the field.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 98

SECOND READING – *2 Thessalonians 3.6-13*

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

My brothers and sisters,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
keep away from those
who are being idle and disruptive,
departing from the tradition
that you received from us.

We were not idle
when we were with you.

We did not eat anyone's bread
without paying for it.

We worked night and day,
so that we might not be a burden
to any of you.

We may have had the right
to ask you to support us,
but we preferred
to set an example
for you to imitate.

Indeed, even when we were with you,
we made it a rule
those those who expect to eat
should be willing to work!

And yet we hear
that some amongst you
are being both idle and disruptive -
not working themselves,
and interfering
with everybody else's work.

Our instruction and appeal to them,
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
is to do their work quietly,
and to earn their own living!

Brothers and sisters,
never be weary
in doing what is right.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 21.5-19*

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

Some of the disciples
were admiring the temple,
with its fine stones,
and many gifts and offerings.

Jesus said,
'The day will come
when not one of these stones
will be left upon another.
They will all be thrown down.'

The disciples asked Jesus,
'When will this be?
And what will be the sign
to show that this is about to take place?'

Jesus said,
'Beware that you are not led astray.
Many will come in my name, saying,
"I am the one," and "the time is near".
Do not follow them.

And when you hear of wars and rebellions,
do not be afraid,
for these things must happen,
but they do not mean
that the end is near.

Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be earthquakes,
famines, and plagues;
and terrifying sights in the sky.

Even before all this,
they will arrest you
and persecute you.

They will hand you over
to courts, and prisons,
and to kings, and governors,
because of my name.

There,
you will be my witnesses.

Do not worry in advance
about your defence,
for I will give you words,
and a wisdom,
that no one
will be able
to oppose or contradict.

You will be betrayed
even by parents, brothers,
relatives, and friends.

Some of you
will be put to death.

But even when you are hated by all
because of my name,
you will come to no harm,
for by your patient endurance,
you will gain your soul.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CHRIST THE KING
Last Sunday before Advent
Sunday between 20 and 26 November
Readings for Year C

FIRST READING – *2 Samuel 5.1-3*

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

All the tribes of Israel

came to David at Hebron,
and said,

‘Look, we are your own flesh and blood.

Even while Saul has been king over us,
you have been the one
who has led us out
and brought us in.

And we know that the Lord has spoken to you,
declaring that you will be
the shepherd and leader
of Israel.’

So King David

made a covenant with them,
at Hebron, before the Lord,
and they anointed David
king over Israel.

This is the word of the Lord.

Psalm 46

SECOND READING – *Colossians 1.13-20*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

God has rescued us

from the power of darkness
and has transferred us
into the kingdom
of God’s beloved Son.

It is here in Christ

that we find
the forgiveness of sins.

And it is to Christ

that we now belong.

Christ is the image

of the invisible God;
and the firstborn,
from before all creation.

In Christ, all things

in heaven and on earth
were created,
both the visible and the invisible
(the thrones, rulers, dominions and powers).

All things were created through Christ,
and for Christ.

Christ existed before all things,

and it is in Christ
that all things hold together.

Christ is also the head

of the body which is the church -
its beginning,
as the firstborn from the dead.

Christ has first place in everything,

for in Christ,
all the fullness of God
is pleased to dwell,

and through Christ,

God reconciles all things
in heaven and on earth
to God,
making peace
through the sacrifice of the cross.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 23.33-43*

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

When they came to the place

that is called The Skull,
they crucified Jesus there,
with the criminals,
one on his right, and one on his left.

Then Jesus said,

‘Father, forgive them;
for they do not know
what they are doing.’

And they cast lots

to divide his clothing;
and the people stood by, watching.

But the leaders mocked him, saying,

‘He saved others;
let him save himself,
if he is the Messiah,
God’s chosen one!’

The soldiers also taunted him,

offering him bitter wine,
and saying, ‘If you are
the King of the Jews,
save yourself!’

There was also an inscription over him,

which read,
‘This is the King of the Jews.’

One of the criminals crucified with him

also mocked him, saying,
‘Are you not the Messiah?
Save yourself and us!’

But the other said to him,

‘Have you no fear of God?
And we are being punished for our crimes,
but this man has done nothing wrong.’

Then he said,

‘Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.’

Jesus replied,

‘Truly I tell you,
today you will be with me in Paradise.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.