

**MARCH READINGS 2016**  
**(only the first Sunday in March has introductory readings)**

March 6  
The Fourth Sunday in Lent

**THE COLLECT**

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

**A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE**

Joshua 5:9-12

*As the Israelites' wilderness wandering ends and they enter the new land, Joshua urges them to build a visible marker to remind themselves and future generations of this event, a sort of visible catechism that would prompt people to inquire about the marker's history and meaning. A reading from Joshua:*

The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

**PSALM 32** (responsively by whole verse)

**[634]**

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

**2 Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, \*  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

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

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

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, \*  
and did not conceal my guilt.

**6 I said," I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." \***  
**Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.**

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

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

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

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

11 Great are the tribulations of the wicked; \*  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

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

#### **THE EPISTLE**

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

*By the time Paul writes this particular letter to the congregation at Corinth (It is at least his fourth letter to them.), his patience with their small-mindedness has grown thin. He urges them to reconcile with one another and to live out their faith charitably. A reading from 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians:*

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

#### **THE GOSPEL**

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

*The famous parable about the prodigal son appears only in Luke's gospel. It is placed as Jesus' response to a group of Pharisees who have criticized him for sharing table fellowship with known sinners. The parable, like its parallel parables about a lost sheep and a lost coin, makes*

*two central points: God will not accept the permanent loss of anyone, and God experiences great joy in the recovery of one who has been lost.*

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

So Jesus told them this parable:

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

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

March 13  
The Fifth Sunday in Lent

**THE COLLECT**

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE**

Isaiah 43:16-21

Thus says the LORD,  
    who makes a way in the sea,  
    a path in the mighty waters,  
who brings out chariot and horse,  
    army and warrior;  
they lie down, they cannot rise,  
    they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:  
Do not remember the former things,  
    or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
    now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
    and rivers in the desert.  
The wild animals will honour me,  
    the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
    rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
    the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

**PSALM 126** (responsively by whole verse)

**[782]**

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
    then were we like those who dream.

**2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \***  
    **and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

3 Then they said among the nations, \*  
    "The LORD has done great things for them."

**4 The LORD has done great things for us, \*  
and we are glad indeed.**

5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, \*  
like the watercourses of the Negev.

**6 Those who sowed with tears \*  
will reap with songs of joy.**

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

**THE EPISTLE**

Philippians 3:4b-14

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

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

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

**THE GOSPEL**

John 12:1-8

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

March 20  
Palm Sunday

## THE LITURGY OF THE PALMS

### THE GOSPEL

Luke 19:28-40

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

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

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

**PSALM 118:1-2, 19-29** (responsively by whole verse)

**[760]**

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; \*  
his mercy endures for ever.

**2 Let Israel now proclaim, \***  
**"His mercy endures for ever."**

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; \*  
I will enter them;  
I will offer thanks to the LORD.

**20 "This is the gate of the LORD; \***  
**he who is righteous may enter."**

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

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

23 This is the LORD's doing, \*  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

**24 On this day the LORD has acted; \*  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

25 Hosannah, LORD, hosannah! \*  
LORD, send us now success.

**26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; \*  
we bless you from the house of the LORD.**

27 God is the LORD; he has shined upon us; \*  
form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

**28 "You are my God, and I will thank you; \*  
you are my God, and I will exalt you."**

29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; \*  
his mercy endures for ever.

### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

#### THE COLLECT

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

#### A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens--  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.  
The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.  
I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

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

**PSALM 31:9-16** (responsively by whole verse)

**[622]**

9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; \*  
my eye is consumed with sorrow,  
and also my throat and my belly.

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

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

**12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; \*  
I am as useless as a broken pot.**

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

**14 But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD. \*  
I have said, "You are my God.**

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

**16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, \*  
and in your loving-kindness save me."**

**THE EPISTLE**

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death--  
even death on a cross.  
Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**THE GOSPEL****Mark 11:1-11**

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Mar 27  
Easter Sunday

**THE COLLECT**

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE**

Acts 10:34-43

Peter began to speak to Cornelius and the other Gentiles: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

**PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24** (responsively by whole verse)

**[760]**

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

**2 Let Israel now proclaim, \***  
**"His mercy endures for ever."**

14 The LORD is my strength and my song, \*  
and he has become my salvation.

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

16 "The right hand of the LORD has triumphed! \*  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted!  
the right hand of the LORD has triumphed!"

**17 I shall not die, but live, \***  
**and declare the works of the LORD.**

18 The LORD has punished me sorely, \*  
but he did not hand me over to death.

**19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; \***  
**I will enter them;**  
**I will offer thanks to the LORD.**

20 "This is the gate of the LORD; \*  
he who is righteous may enter."

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

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

**23 This is the LORD's doing, \***  
**and it is marvelous in our eyes.**

24 On this day the LORD has acted; \*  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

#### **THE EPISTLE**

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

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

#### **THE GOSPEL**

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into

the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

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