

Feasts, Festivals, and Occasions

*Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version®
following Lutheran Service Book Feasts, Festivals, and Occasions Lectionary*

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St. Andrew (November 30)

*Lutheran Service Book Feasts, Festivals, and Occasions Lectionary
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Old Testament / First Reading

Ezekiel 3:16–21

At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me and said:

¹⁷Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, you must give them a warning from me. ¹⁸When I announce to a wicked man, “You shall surely die,” if you do not warn him, and you do not speak up to warn the wicked man against his wicked way so that he can live, then that wicked man will die because of his guilt, and I will hold you responsible for his blood. ¹⁹But you, if you warn the wicked man, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die because of his guilt, but you will have saved your own life. ²⁰Or when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and becomes unrighteous, and I place a stumbling block in front of him, he shall die. If you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he had done will not be remembered, and I will hold you responsible for his blood. ²¹But you, if you do warn that righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall certainly live because he heeded the warning, and you will have saved your own life.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 10:8b–18

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith that we are proclaiming. ⁹Certainly, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and it is with the mouth that a person confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

¹²So there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord is Lord of all, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³Yes, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴So then, how can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one about whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news of peace, who preach the gospel of good things!”

¹⁶But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who believed our message?” ¹⁷So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through the word of Christ.

¹⁸But I ask, did they not hear? Of course, they certainly did.

The sound of their voice went out to all the earth,
and their words to the farthest parts of the world.

Holy Gospel

John 1:35–42a

The next day, John was standing there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When John saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look! The Lamb of God!” ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸When Jesus turned around and saw them following him, he asked, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹He told them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying. They stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which is translated “the Christ”). ⁴²He brought him to Jesus.

St. Thomas (December 21)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Judges 6:36–40

Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have said, ³⁷look here, I am placing a woolen fleece on the threshing floor. If dew is found only on the fleece, but all the ground around it is dry, then I will know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said.”

³⁸And that is exactly what happened! Gideon got up early in the morning and squeezed the fleece and wrung out dew from it—a bowlful of water!

³⁹But again Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more. Please let me conduct just one more test with the fleece: This time let the fleece be dry, but let there be dew on the ground all around.” ⁴⁰That night God did that very thing! Only the fleece was dry, and there was dew on the ground all around.

Epistle / Second Reading

Ephesians 4:7, 11–16

But to each one of us grace was given, according to the measure of the gift from Christ.

¹¹He himself gave the apostles, as well as the prophets, as well as the evangelists, as well as the pastors and teachers, ¹²for the purpose of training the saints for the work of serving, in order to build up the body of Christ. ¹³This is to continue until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, resulting in a mature man with a stature reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴The goal is that we would no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, when people use tricks and invent clever ways to lead us astray. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we would in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶From him the whole body, being joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows in accordance with Christ’s activity when he measured out each individual part. He causes the growth of the body so that it builds itself up in love.

Holy Gospel

John 20:24–29

But Thomas, one of the Twelve, the one called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples kept telling him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶After eight days, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Take your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue to doubt, but believe.”

²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

St. Stephen (December 26)

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Old Testament / First Reading

2 Chronicles 24:17–22

After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king. Then the king began to listen to them. ¹⁸They abandoned the House of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherahs and the idols. Wrath fell upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their guilt.

¹⁹God sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. The prophets testified against them, but they did not listen.

²⁰The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood in front of the people and said to them, “This is what God says. Why do you disobey the commandments of the LORD? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.”

²¹But they conspired against him, and by the command of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the House of the LORD.

²²Thus King Joash did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada, his mentor, had shown to him. Instead, he killed Jehoiada’s son. As Zechariah was dying, he said, “The LORD will see and avenge.”

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 6:8–7:2a, 51–60

Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹Some men who were from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia) rose up and disputed with Stephen. ¹⁰But they were unable to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

¹¹Then they secretly induced some men to say, “We heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” ¹²They stirred up the people, the elders, and the experts in the law. They came, dragged Stephen away, and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹³They presented false witnesses who said, “This man never stops making threats against this holy place and the law. ¹⁴In fact, we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

¹⁵All those who were sitting in the Sanhedrin were looking intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

^{7:1}Then the high priest asked, “Are these things true?”

²Stephen said, “Gentlemen, brothers and fathers, listen!

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit! You are doing just what your fathers did. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who prophesied the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers—⁵³you who received the law as transmitted by angels, but did not keep it.”

⁵⁴When they heard these things, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed up into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶He said, “Look, I see heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷But they screamed at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and rushed at him with one purpose in mind. ⁵⁸They threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” ⁶⁰Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” After he said this, he fell asleep.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 23:34–39

“Look, this is why I am sending you prophets, wise men, and experts in the law. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town. ³⁵As a result, you will be held responsible for all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Amen I tell you: All these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will certainly not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

(December 27)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Revelation 1:1–6

The revelation from Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants the things that must soon take place. Christ expressed this revelation by means of symbols sent through his angel to his servant John. ²John spoke as a witness to the word of God and to the testimony about Jesus Christ, that is, to everything he saw. ³Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and hold on to the things written in it, because the time is near.

⁴John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits that are before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his own blood ⁶and made us a kingdom and priests to God his Father—to him be the glory and the power forever. Amen.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 John 1:1–2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have observed and our hands have touched regarding the Word of Life—the life appeared, and we have seen it. We testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We are proclaiming what we have seen and heard also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We write these things to you so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. ⁷But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

^{2:1}My children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate before the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.

Holy Gospel

John 21:20–25

Peter turned and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them. This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

²²“If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? You follow me.”²³ And so it was said among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say that he would not die, but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

²⁴This is the disciple who is testifying about these things and who wrote these things. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵Jesus also did many other things. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the world itself would not have room for the books that would be written.

Holy Innocents (December 28)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Jeremiah 31:15–17

This is what the LORD says.
A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel is weeping for her children.
She refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.
¹⁶This is what the LORD says.
Stop your crying.
Do not shed tears,
because your work will be rewarded, declares the LORD.
They will return from the land of the enemy.
¹⁷There is hope for your future, declares the LORD.
Your children will return to their own borders.

Epistle / Second Reading

Revelation 14:1–5

Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of a loud thunderclap. The sound that I heard was also like the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³They were singing a new song in front of the throne and the four living creatures and the elders. No one was able to learn that song except the 144,000, who had been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with women, because they are virgins. They continually follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb. ⁵And no lie was found in their mouths. They are blameless.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13–18

After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.”

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she refused to be comforted,
because they are no more.

New Year's Eve (December 31)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 30:(8–14) 15–17

Go and write it on a tablet for them.

Record it on a scroll,

so that in the future it may serve as a permanent witness.

⁹These are a rebellious people, lying children,
children unwilling to hear the law of the LORD,

¹⁰who tell the seers, “Stop seeing!”

who tell the prophets, “Stop prophesying what is right!

Tell us pleasant things. Prophecy illusions.

¹¹Leave the way! Turn from the path!

Stop getting in our face about the Holy One of Israel!”

¹²This is what the Holy One of Israel says:

Since you have rejected my word,
and you trust in oppression and deceit,
and you rely on them,

¹³your guilt will be like a crack in a wall,
bulging out and about to collapse.

It will suddenly fall without warning.

¹⁴It will crash like a broken clay pot,
smashed to pieces so violently that not one useful piece will be left,
not even a piece good enough to pick up a coal from the hearth
or to ladle water from a cistern.

¹⁵This is what the LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, says:

If you repent and wait quietly, you will be saved.

Your strength will depend on quietness and trust.

But you refused.

¹⁶You said, “No, we will flee on horseback!”

Yes indeed, you will flee.

You said, “We will ride away swiftly!”

Yes indeed, you will be pursued swiftly.

¹⁷A thousand will flee when just one threatens.

When five threaten, you will flee,

until you are like a single flag, fluttering on a mountaintop,
like a lonely banner on a hill.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 8:31b–39

If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?

³³Who will bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies! ³⁴Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God's right hand and who is also interceding for us! ³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written:

For your sake we are being put to death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Holy Gospel

Luke 12:35–40

“Be dressed, ready for service, and keep your lamps burning. ³⁶Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷Blessed are those servants, whom the master will find watching when he comes. Amen I tell you: He will dress himself and have them recline at the table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸Even if he comes in the second or third watch, they will be blessed if he finds them alert. ³⁹But know this: If the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you are not expecting him.”

Circumcision and Name of Jesus (January 1)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Numbers 6:22–27

The LORD told Moses ²³to speak to Aaron and to his sons and to tell them to bless the Israelites with these words:

²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you.

²⁵The LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.

²⁶The LORD look on you with favor
and give you peace.

²⁷In this way they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.

Epistle / Second Reading

Galatians 3:23–29

But before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. ²⁴So the law was our chaperone until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a chaperone.

²⁶In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. ²⁸There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise.

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:21

After eight days passed, when the child was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Confession of St. Peter (January 18)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 4:8–13

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, ⁹if we are being questioned today for a kind act that was done for the lame man, as to how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead! By him this man stands before you healed. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.

¹²“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

¹³When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and found out that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were astonished and took note of the fact that these men had been with Jesus.

Epistle / Second Reading

2 Peter 1:1–15

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained the same kind of faith as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. ⁴Through these he has given us his precious and great promises so that through them you may share in the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that sinful lust causes in the world.

⁵And, for this very reason, after applying every effort, add moral excellence to your faith. To moral excellence, add knowledge. ⁶To knowledge, add self-control. To self-control, add patient endurance. To patient endurance, add godliness. ⁷To godliness, add brotherly affection. And to brotherly affection, add love. ⁸For if you have these qualities and they are increasing, they are going to keep you from being idle or unfruitful in regard to your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹Indeed, the person who lacks these qualities is shortsighted and, in fact, blind, because he has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be more eager to make your calling and election sure for yourselves. For if you do these things, you will never stumble. ¹¹In fact, in this way you will be richly supplied with an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹²That is why I intend always to keep reminding you of these things, even though you already know them and are established in the truth you now have. ¹³I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to keep you wide awake by reminding you, ¹⁴because I know that the putting off of my tent is

going to happen soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵I will also make every effort so that after my departure you always have a reminder of these things.

Holy Gospel

Mark 8:27–35 (36–9:1)

Jesus went away with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

²⁸They told him, “John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others say one of the prophets.”

²⁹“But who do you say I am?” he asked them.

Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

³⁰Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. ³²He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men.”

³⁴He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, “If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

³⁶After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? ³⁷Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸In fact, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

^{9:1}He said to them, “Amen I tell you: There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

St. Timothy (January 24)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 16:1–5

Paul arrived in Derbe and in Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, who was the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. ²The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, so he took him and circumcised him on account of the Jews who lived in those places, because they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the resolutions decided by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to keep. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number day by day.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 Timothy 6:11–16

But you, O man of God, flee from these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life, to which you were called and about which you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who made a good confession as a witness before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep this command without spot and without fault, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which he will make known at the proper time—the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or is able to see. To him be honor and power forever! Amen.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 24:42–47

So be alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: If the master of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴You also need to be ready for this reason: The Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing this when he returns. ⁴⁷Amen I tell you: He will put him in charge of all that he has.

Conversion of St. Paul (January 25)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 9:1–22

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any men or women belonging to the Way, he might bring them to Jerusalem as prisoners.

³As he went on his way and was approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵He asked, “Who are you, Lord?”

He replied, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you need to do.”

⁷The men traveling with him stood there speechless. They heard the voice but did not see anyone.

⁸They raised Saul up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could not see anything. They took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he could not see, and he did not eat or drink.

¹⁰There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

He answered, “Here I am, Lord.”

¹¹The Lord told him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. In fact, at this very moment he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he can regain his sight.”

¹³Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many people about this man and how much harm he did to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has authority here from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

¹⁵The Lord said to him, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel. ¹⁶Indeed, I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

¹⁷Ananias left and entered the house. Laying his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, whom you saw on your way here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

¹⁸Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. ¹⁹And after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for several days. ²⁰Immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

²¹All who heard him were amazed and said, “Isn’t this the one who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? Didn’t he come here for this very purpose: to bring them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²²But Saul continued to get stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

Epistle / Second Reading

Galatians 1:11–24

But I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. ¹²For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹³Certainly you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God to an extraordinary degree and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my own people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵However, God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me, so that I would preach him among the Gentiles. At that time, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷and I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. Instead I went away into Arabia, and then I returned again to Damascus.

¹⁸Next, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to meet Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹But I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰(Now about the things I am writing to you—look, I assure you in the presence of God that I am not lying.) ²¹Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²²I was still personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³They heard only: “The one who was once persecuting us is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy.” ²⁴And they were praising God for what happened to me.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 19:27–30

Then Peter answered, “Look, we have left everything and followed you! What then will we have?”

²⁸Jesus said to them, “Amen I tell you: In the renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹Everyone who has left homes or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, because of my name, will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

St. Titus (January 26)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 20:28–35

“Always keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure savage wolves, who will not spare the flock, will come in among you. ³⁰Even from your own group men will rise up, twisting the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be always on the alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

³²“And now I entrust you to God and to the word of his grace, which has power to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I did not covet anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my needs and for those who were with me. ³⁵In every way I gave you an example that, by working hard like this, we need to help the weak and to remember the words that the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

Epistle / Second Reading

Titus 1:1–9

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God’s elect people and the knowledge of the truth that conforms to godliness, ²based on the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. ³At the proper time he revealed this in his word, in the preaching that was entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,

⁴To Titus, my true child in our common faith:

Grace and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

⁵The reason I left you in Crete was so that you would set in order the things that were left unfinished and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you. ⁶Such a man is to be blameless, the husband of only one wife, and to have believing children who are not open to a charge of wild living or disobedience. ⁷Indeed an overseer, since he is God’s steward, must be blameless, not arrogant, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, not eager for dishonest gain. ⁸Instead, he must be hospitable, loving what is good, self-controlled, upright, devout, and disciplined. ⁹He must cling to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he will be able both to encourage people by the sound teaching and also to correct those who oppose him.

Holy Gospel

Luke 10:1–9

After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

²He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. ³Go your way. Look, I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. ⁴Do not carry a money bag or traveler’s bag or sandals. Do not greet anyone along the way. ⁵Whenever you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ ⁶And if a peaceful person is there, your peace will rest on him, but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in that same house, eating and drinking what they give you, because the worker is worthy of his pay. Do not keep moving from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they welcome you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick who are in the town and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you.’ ”

Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord (February 2)

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Old Testament / First Reading

1 Samuel 1:21–28

When this man Elkanah and his entire household went up to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, ²²Hannah did not go up with them, because she said to her husband, “Not until the child is weaned. Then I will bring him, so that he can appear before the LORD and remain there permanently.”

²³Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do whatever you think is best. Wait until you have weaned him. Yes, then the LORD will establish his word.”

So the woman stayed at home, and she nursed her son until she was ready to wean him. ²⁴When she had weaned him, she took him up with her. She also took a three-year-old bull, twenty-five pounds of flour, and a container of wine, and she brought him to the House of the LORD in Shiloh. The boy was with them. And they brought him before the LORD, and his father killed the sacrifice as he regularly did before the LORD, and he brought the boy. ²⁵When they had killed the bull, they presented the child to Eli. ²⁶She said, “Excuse me, my lord. As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here next to you, praying to the LORD. ²⁷I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked for. ²⁸So now I have also dedicated him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is dedicated to the LORD.” So he worshipped the LORD there.

Epistle / Second Reading

Hebrews 2:14–18

Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil) ¹⁵and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. ¹⁶For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham’s offspring. ¹⁷For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:22–32 (33–40)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. ²³(As it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male will be called holy to the Lord.”) ²⁴And they came to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, ²⁸Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word,

³⁰because my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared before the face of all people,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

³³Joseph and the child's mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Listen carefully, this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there. She was a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then she was a widow of eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple complex, since she was worshipping with fasting and prayers night and day. ³⁸Standing nearby at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord. She kept speaking about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

St. Matthias (February 24)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 66:1–2

This is what the LORD says.

The heavens are my throne,
and the earth is a footstool under my feet.

Where, then, is the house that you could build for me?

Where, then, is a place that could serve as my resting place?

²For my hand made all these things,
so all these things came into existence,
declares the LORD.

Yet this is the person I will watch over:

the one who is afflicted and whose spirit is crushed,
the one who trembles at my word.

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 1:15–26

In those days, when the group there numbered about 120 people, Peter stood up among the brothers and said, ¹⁶“Gentlemen, brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David about Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷Judas was counted as one of us and was given a share in this ministry.

¹⁸“Now this man acquired a field with what he was paid for his wicked act. When he fell headfirst, his middle burst open, and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, and so in their own language that field was called Akeldema, which means Field of Blood.

²⁰Indeed, it is written in the book of Psalms:

May his residence be deserted.

Let there be no one dwelling in it.

And,

let someone else take his position.

²¹“Therefore it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us during the entire time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from his baptism by John until the day Jesus was taken up from us, become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

²³They proposed two: Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place.”

²⁶Then they assigned lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was counted with the eleven apostles.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 11:25–30

At that time, Jesus continued, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from clever and learned people and have revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, because this was pleasing to you. ²⁷Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.

²⁸“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

St. Joseph (March 19)

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Old Testament / First Reading

2 Samuel 7:4–16

But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan. He said, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David all these things.”

This is what the LORD says. Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house from the day I brought the people of Israel up from Egypt until today. I have been moving around in the Tent and the Dwelling. ⁷I have traveled everywhere with all the people of Israel. Did I ever speak a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, or ask them, “Why have you not built a house of cedar for me?”

⁸You are also to say the following to my servant David.

This is what the LORD of Armies says. I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel. ⁹I have been with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make your reputation great, like that of the great ones on the earth. ¹⁰I will set up a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them there. They will dwell there, and they will not be disturbed again. Violent men will not afflict them again as they did at the beginning ¹¹and ever since the day I appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD himself will make a house for you. ¹²When your days are complete and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your seed, who will come from your own body. I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he sins, I will discipline him with a rod used by men and with blows of the sons of men. ¹⁵My faithful mercy will not depart from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you. ¹⁶Your house will stand firm, and your kingdom will endure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 4:13–18

Indeed, the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not given to Abraham or his descendants through the law, but through the righteousness that is by faith. ¹⁴To be sure, if people are heirs by the law, faith is empty and the promise is nullified. ¹⁵For law brings wrath. (Where there is no law, there is no transgression.) ¹⁶For this reason, the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to grace and may be guaranteed to all of Abraham’s descendants—not only to the one who is a descendant by law, but also to the one who has the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”

In the presence of God, Abraham believed him who makes the dead alive and calls non-existing things so that they exist. ¹⁸Hoping beyond what he could expect, he believed that he would become the father of many nations, just as he was told: “This is how many your descendants will be.”

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.”

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus, Herod’s son, had succeeded his father as ruler in Judea, he was afraid to go there. Since he had been warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee. ²³When he arrived there, he settled in a city called Nazareth. So what was spoken through the prophets was fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 7:10–14

The LORD spoke to Ahaz again. He said, ¹¹“Ask for a sign from the LORD your God. Ask for it either in the depths below or in the heights above.”

¹²But Ahaz responded, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”

¹³So Isaiah said:

Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to test the patience of men? Will you test the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you. Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel.

Epistle / Second Reading

Hebrews 10:4–10

The fact is that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins.

⁵Therefore when he entered the world, Christ said:

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but you prepared a body for me.

⁶You were not pleased
with burnt offerings and sin offerings.

⁷Then I said, “Here I am.

I have come to do your will, God.

In the scroll of the book it is written about me.”

⁸First he said:

Sacrifices and offerings that were offered according to the law,
both burnt offerings and sin offerings,

you did not desire,

and you were not pleased with them.

⁹Then he said:

Here I am.

I have come to do your will.

He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰By this will, we have been sanctified once and for all, through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ.

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:26–38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The

virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

²⁹But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Listen, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age even though she was called barren, and this is her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible for God."

³⁸Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

St. Mark (April 25)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 52:7–10

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of a herald,
who proclaims peace and preaches good news,
who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God is king!”

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voices.

Together they shout for joy,
because with both eyes they will see it
when the LORD returns to Zion.

⁹Break out, shout for joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem,
because the LORD is comforting his people.

He is redeeming Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD lays bare his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from our God.

Epistle / Second Reading

2 Timothy 4:5–18

As for you, keep a clear head in every situation. Bear hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry.

⁶You see, I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will give it to me on that day, and not only to me but also to everyone who loved his appearing.

⁹Make every effort to come to me quickly, ¹⁰for Demas, because he loved this present world, has forsaken me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is useful to me for ministry. ¹²I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will pay him back for what he did. ¹⁵You be on your guard against him also, because he vehemently opposed our message.

¹⁶At my first hearing, no one came to my defense, but everyone deserted me. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles would hear it, and I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Holy Gospel

Mark 16:14–20

Later, he appeared to the Eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table. He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

¹⁷“These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons. They will speak in new languages. ¹⁸They will pick up snakes. And if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them. They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well.”

¹⁹Then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

²⁰Those who went out preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

St. Philip and St. James (May 1)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 30:18–21

But the LORD is eager to be gracious to you.

He waits on high to have mercy on you,
for the LORD is a God of justice.

Blessed are all those who long for him.

¹⁹So people will live in Zion. In Jerusalem you will weep no more. The LORD will be very gracious to you when he hears your cry. When he hears you, he will answer you. ²⁰Though the Lord has given you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, he is your teacher. He will not be hidden any longer. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. ²¹Whenever you are tempted to turn to the right or to the left, you will hear his voice behind you, saying, “This is the way. Walk in it.”

Epistle / Second Reading

Ephesians 2:19–22

So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household. ²⁰You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the Cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Holy Gospel

John 14:1–14

“Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. ⁴You know where I am going, and you know the way.”

⁵“Lord, we don’t know where you are going,” Thomas replied, “so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. ⁷If you know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸“Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that is enough for us.”

⁹“Have I been with you so long,” Jesus answered, “and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves.

¹²“Amen, Amen, I tell you: The one who believes in me will do the works that I am doing. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

The Visitation (May 31)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 11:1–5

A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse,
and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him:
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³He will be delighted with the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears,
⁴but with righteousness he will judge the poor,
and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death.

⁵Righteousness will be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his hips.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 12:9–16

Do not just pretend to love others. Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another with brotherly love. Think of others as deserving more honor than yourselves. ¹¹Do not be lagging behind in zeal, but be fervent in spirit, as you continue to serve the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope. Endure trials patiently. Persist in prayer. ¹³Share with the saints who are in need. Be quick to welcome strangers as guests.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping. ¹⁶Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves.

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:39–45 (46–56)

In those days Mary got up and hurried to the hill country, to a town of Judah. ⁴⁰She entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²She called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of

your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! ⁴⁵Blessed is she who believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled!”

⁴⁶Then Mary said,

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

⁴⁸because he has looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones.

He has lifted up the lowly.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.

⁵⁶Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

St. Barnabas (June 11)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 42:5–12

This is what the true God says,
the LORD who creates the heavens and stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth
and everything that it produces,
who gives breath to the people on it
and life to those who walk on it.

⁶I am the LORD.

I have called you in righteousness.

I will hold on to your hand,
and I will guard you.

I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people,
to be a light for the nations,

⁷to open the eyes of the blind,
to bring the prisoners out from the dungeon,
and to bring those who sit in darkness out of prison.

⁸I am the LORD; that is my name.

I will not give my glory to another,
nor my praise to idols.

⁹Look, the former things have taken place,
and I am declaring new things.

I am making them known to you before they spring forth.

¹⁰Sing to the LORD a new song.

Sing his praise from the end of the earth,
you people who go down to the sea
and everything that fills it,

you coastlands and those who inhabit them.

¹¹Let the wilderness and its towns lift up their voice,
along with the settlements where Kedar lives.

Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy.

Let them shout from the mountain tops.

¹²Let them give glory to the LORD,
and let them declare his praise among the coastlands.

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 11:19–30, 13:1–3

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that took place at the time of Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰But there were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and also began to speak to the Greeks, preaching the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²A report about this reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to go on to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw God's grace, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with devoted hearts. ²⁴He was a good man who was full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a large number of people were added to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year they met with the church and taught a large number of people. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

²⁷In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them, named Agabus, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there was going to be a severe famine all over the known world. This took place during the time of Claudius. ²⁹Each of the disciples, according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea. ³⁰They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.

^{13:1}Now in the church at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas; Simeon, who was called Niger; Lucius of Cyrene; Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch; and Saul. ²While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then, after they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them off.

Holy Gospel

Mark 6:7–13

Jesus called the Twelve and began to send them out two by two. He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He instructed them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their money belts. ⁹They were to put on sandals but not to wear two coats. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that area. ¹¹Any place that will not receive you or listen to you, as you leave there, shake off the dust that is under your feet as a testimony against them."

¹²They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³They also drove out many demons. They anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 40:1–5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her.

Her warfare really is over.

Her guilt is fully paid for.

Yes, she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice is calling out:

In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD.

In the wasteland make a level highway for our God.

⁴Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The rugged ground will become level,
and the rough places will become a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all flesh together will see it.

Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 13:13–26

Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴But they went on from Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia. They went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Gentlemen, brothers, if you have a word of encouragement for the people, say it."

¹⁶Then Paul stood up, motioned with his hand, and said, "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers and made them a great people during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with his uplifted arm, he led them out of it. ¹⁸He put up with them for about forty years in the wilderness. ¹⁹Then he destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, and he gave their land to his people as an inheritance. ²⁰All this took about 450 years. After that, he gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.

²¹"Then the people asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²After removing him, he raised up David as their king. God testified about him: 'I have found David the son of Jesse to be a man after my own heart. He will do all that I want him to do.'

²³“From this man’s descendants God brought the Savior Jesus to Israel, in keeping with his promise. ²⁴Before he appeared publicly, John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not that One. But look! That One is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet.’

²⁶“Gentlemen, brothers, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, this message of salvation has been sent to you.”

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:57–80

When the time came for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they were rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. They wanted to call him Zechariah after the name of the father. ⁶⁰But his mother answered, “No. He will be called John.”

⁶¹They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.” ⁶²They made signs to his father, to see what he wanted to name him.

⁶³He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they were all amazed.

⁶⁴Immediately Zechariah’s mouth was opened, his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came on all who lived around them. In the entire hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶And everyone who heard this took it to heart, saying, “What then will this child be?” Clearly, the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel,

because he has visited us and prepared redemption for his people.

⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰just as he said long ago through the mouth of his holy prophets.

⁷¹He raised up salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,

⁷²in order to show mercy to our fathers by remembering his holy covenant,

⁷³the oath which he swore to Abraham our father,

⁷⁴to grant deliverance to us from the hand of our enemies,

so that we are able to serve him without fear,

⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,

because you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸because of God’s tender mercies,

by which the Rising Sun from on high will visit us,

⁷⁹to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.

⁸⁰The child continued to grow and became strong in spirit. He lived in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 15:1–12 (13–21)

Some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised according to the law handed down by Moses, you cannot be saved.”² Because this brought about a serious argument and debate between Paul and Barnabas and these men, they appointed Paul and Barnabas and some other men from the church to go up to Jerusalem, to see the apostles and the elders concerning this controversy.

³After they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they described in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and brought great joy to all the brothers. ⁴When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the apostles, and the elders, and they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵But some of the believers from the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.”

⁶The apostles and the elders gathered together to look into this matter. ⁷After there had been much discussion, Peter stood up and said to them, “Gentlemen, brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you, that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸God, who knows the heart, testified on their behalf by giving them the Holy Spirit, exactly as he gave him to us. ⁹He also showed that there is no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now then, why are you testing God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹On the contrary! We believe that we are saved in the same way they are—through the grace of our Lord Jesus.”

¹²The whole assembly fell silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul, who reported all the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

¹³After they finished speaking, James responded, “Gentlemen, brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon has reported how God for the first time has visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.

¹⁵The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written:

¹⁶After these things I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.

I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will restore it,

¹⁷so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord—
even all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the Lord who does these things.

¹⁸“Long ago he made these things known. ¹⁹So it is my judgment that we should not cause extra difficulty for those among the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead we should write a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled,

and from blood. ²¹For from ancient times Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, since he is being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Epistle / Second Reading

Galatians 2:1–10

Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, also taking Titus with me. ²I went up in keeping with a revelation, and I laid before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately before those who were considered important, in order to make sure that I was not running—or had not run—in vain. ³But Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, even though he is Greek. ⁴This was an issue because of the false brothers, who slipped in under false pretenses to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. Their goal was to make us slaves. ⁵We refused to give in to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would continue with you.

⁶But as for those who were considered to be important (what sort of people they once were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality), indeed, those who were considered to be important added nothing to my gospel. ⁷On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised. ⁸For God, who worked effectively in Peter to serve as an apostle to the circumcised, also worked effectively in me to serve as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹And because James, Cephas, and John, who were considered to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship. They agreed that we were to go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰The only thing they asked was that we remember the poor, the very thing that I was also eager to do.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 16:13–19

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴They said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵He said to them, “But you, who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

St. Mary Magdalene (July 22)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Proverbs 31:10–31

Who can find a wife with strong character?

Her value is greater than that of gems.

¹¹Her husband's heart trusts her,

and he never lacks wealth.

¹²She does good for him and not evil

all the days of her life.

¹³She obtains wool and flax.

She eagerly works it with her hands.

¹⁴She is like merchant ships.

She brings her food from far away.

¹⁵She rises while it is still night.

She gives food to her household.

She gives their share to her female servants.

¹⁶She considers a field and acquires it.

From her own income, she plants a vineyard.

¹⁷She wraps strength around her waist like a belt,

and she makes her arms strong.

¹⁸She realizes that she makes a good profit.

Her lamp does not go out at night.

¹⁹She stretches out her hands for the distaff,
and the palms of her hands grasp the spindle.

²⁰She opens the palm of her hand to the oppressed,
and she stretches out her hands to the needy.

²¹She does not fear for her household on account of snow,
because her entire household is clothed in scarlet clothing.

²²She makes bedspreads for herself.

Fine linen and purple cloth are her clothing.

²³Her husband is known at the city gates,
where he sits with the elders of the land.

²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them,
and she delivers belts to the merchants.

²⁵Strength and honor are her clothing,
and she laughs at the days to come.

²⁶She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and kind instruction is on her tongue.

²⁷She keeps a close eye on the conduct of her household,
and she does not eat bread that she did not work for.

²⁸Her children rise up and bless her.

Her husband rises up and praises her:

²⁹“Many daughters show strong character,
but you have surpassed all of them.”

³⁰Charm is deceptive, and beauty is vapor that vanishes,
but a woman who fears the LORD should be praised.

³¹Give her credit for the fruit of her hands,
and let her accomplishments praise her in the city gates.

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 13:26–31

“Gentlemen, brothers, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, this message of salvation has been sent to you. ²⁷The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize him, and by condemning him they fulfilled the statements of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸Though they found no grounds for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹When they carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and for many days he was seen by those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These same individuals are now his witnesses to the people.

Holy Gospel

John 20:1–2, 10–18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she left and ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she told them, “and we don’t know where they put him!”

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she bent over, looking into the tomb. ¹²She saw two angels in white clothes sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She told them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have laid him.”

¹⁴After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?”

Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, “Sir, if you carried him off, tell me where you laid him, and I will get him.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned and replied in Aramaic, “*Rabboni!*” (which means, “Teacher”).

¹⁷Jesus told her, “Do not continue to cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father—to my God and your God.’ ”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” She also told them the things he said to her.

St. James the Elder (July 25)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 11:27–12:5

In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them, named Agabus, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there was going to be a severe famine all over the known world. This took place during the time of Claudius. ²⁹Each of the disciples, according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea. ³⁰They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.

^{12:1}At about that time, King Herod laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter during the days of Unleavened Bread.

⁴After arresting Peter, Herod put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of four soldiers each to guard him. Herod intended to bring him before the people for trial after the Passover. ⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church earnestly offered up prayer to God for him.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 8:28–39

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose, ²⁹because those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called. Those he called, he also justified. And those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?

³³Who will bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies! ³⁴Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God's right hand and who is also interceding for us! ³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written:

For your sake we are being put to death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Holy Gospel

Mark 10:35–45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, “Teacher, we wish that you would do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶He said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³⁷They said to him, “Promise that we may sit, one at your right and one at your left, in your glory.”

³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am going to be baptized with?”

³⁹“We can,” they replied.

Jesus told them, “You will drink the cup that I am going to drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am going to be baptized with. ⁴⁰But to sit at my right or at my left is not for me to give; rather, these places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they were angry with James and John.

⁴²Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³But that is not the way it is to be among you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord (August 15)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 61:7–11

In place of your shame, you will receive a double portion.

Instead of dishonor, they will rejoice in their share of the land.

In fact, in their land they will inherit a double portion.

Everlasting joy will be theirs.

⁸Yes, I am the LORD. I love justice.

I hate robbery in a burnt offering.

I will repay them in faithfulness,

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their offspring will be known among the nations,

and their descendants in the midst of the peoples.

All who see them will recognize

that they are offspring whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will rejoice greatly in the LORD.

My soul will celebrate because of my God,

for he has clothed me in garments of salvation.

With a robe of righteousness he covered me,

like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful headdress like a priest,

and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry.

¹¹For as the earth produces its growth,

and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up,

so God the LORD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up

in the presence of all the nations.

Epistle / Second Reading

Galatians 4:4–7

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons.

⁶And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, “*Abba*, Father!”

⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ.

Holy Gospel

Luke 1: (39–45) 46–55

In those days Mary got up and hurried to the hill country, to a town of Judah. ⁴⁰She entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²She called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! ⁴⁵Blessed is she who believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled!"

⁴⁶Then Mary said,

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

⁴⁸because he has looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones.

He has lifted up the lowly.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.

St. Bartholomew (August 24)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Proverbs 3:1–8

My son, do not forget my teaching.
Let your heart keep my commands,
²because they will add long days and many years to your life,
and peace and prosperity will come to you.
³Do not allow mercy and truth to leave you.
Fasten them around your neck.
Write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴Then you will find favor and approval
in the eyes of God and man.
⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding.
⁶In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.
⁷Do not consider yourself wise.
Fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
⁸Then your body will be healed,
and your bones will be refreshed.

Epistle / Second Reading

2 Corinthians 4:7–10

We hold this treasure in clay jars to show that its extraordinary power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not despairing; ⁹persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

Holy Gospel

Luke 22:24–30

A dispute arose among the disciples about which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵But he told them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors. ²⁶But it is not to be that way with you. Instead, let the greatest among you become like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, one who reclines at the table or one who serves? Isn’t it the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸You are those who have remained with me in my trials. ²⁹I am going to grant a

kingdom to you, just as my Father granted to me, ³⁰so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Or

John 1:43–51

The next day, Jesus wanted to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.

⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

“Come and see!” Philip told him.

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, “Truly, here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered, “Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

⁴⁹Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

⁵⁰Jesus replied, “You believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that!” ⁵¹Then he added, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

(August 29)

Lutheran Service Book Feasts, Festivals, and Occasions Lectionary
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Old Testament / First Reading

Revelation 6:9–11

When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, under the incense altar I saw the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰And they called out with a loud voice, saying, “O Lord, holy and true, how long until you judge and exact justice for our blood from those who live on the earth?” ¹¹A white robe was given to each one of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until their number would be complete, when their fellow servants and their brothers would be put to death as they were.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 6:1–5

What shall we say then? Shall we keep on sinning so that grace may increase? ²Absolutely not! We died to sin. How can we go on living in it any longer? ³Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him by this baptism into his death, so that just as he was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too would also walk in a new life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.

Holy Gospel

Mark 6:14–29

King Herod heard about this because Jesus’ name had become well known. Herod was saying, “John the Baptizer has been raised from the dead! That is why these powers are at work in him.”

¹⁵But others were saying, “He is Elijah.” Still others were saying, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

¹⁶When Herod heard this, he said, “This is John, the man I beheaded. He was raised.” ¹⁷For it was Herod who had sent men to arrest John. He had him bound in prison because Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. ¹⁸Indeed, John had been telling him, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”

¹⁹Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to put him to death, but she could not, ²⁰because Herod feared John. He knew that John was a righteous and holy man, so he kept him safe. When Herod listened to John, he was perplexed in many ways, yet he gladly kept listening to him.

²¹An opportune day came when it was Herod’s birthday. He gave a banquet for his nobles, the military officers, and the prominent men of Galilee. ²²When the daughter of Herodias came in and

danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." ²³With an oath he promised her, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom."

²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?"

Herodias said, "The head of John the Baptizer."

²⁵The girl hurried right back to the king and made her request: "I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter right now."

²⁶The king was very sad. But because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷The king sent an executioner at once and ordered him to bring John's head. He went, beheaded John in prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.

²⁹When John's disciples heard about this, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Holy Cross Day (September 14)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Numbers 21:4–9

They set out from Mount Hor along the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, but the people became very impatient along the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Look, there is no food! There is no water! And we are disgusted by this worthless food!”

⁶The LORD sent venomous snakes among the people, and the snakes bit the people. As a result many people from Israel died. ⁷The people went to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD to take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed on behalf of the people.

⁸The LORD said to Moses, “Make a venomous snake and put it on a pole. If anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live.” ⁹Moses made a bronze snake and put it on the pole. If a snake had bitten anyone, if that person looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18–25

For 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. ¹⁹In fact, it is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.

²⁰Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Jewish law? Where is the probing thinker of the present age? Has God not shown that the wisdom of this world is foolish? ²¹Indeed, since the world through its wisdom did not know God, God in his wisdom decided to save those who believe, through the foolishness of the preached message. ²²Yes, Jews ask for signs, Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified—which is offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵We preach Christ crucified, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Holy Gospel

John 12:20–33

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Festival. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went to tell Andrew. Andrew came with Philip and told Jesus.

²³Jesus answered them, “The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it continues to be one kernel. But if

it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵Anyone who loves his life destroys it. And the one who hates his life in this world will hold on to it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, this is the reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!”

A voice came from heaven: “I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.”

²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said it thundered. Others said an angel talked to him. ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice was not for my sake but for yours.

³¹“Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate what kind of death he was going to die.

St. Matthew (September 21)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Ezekiel 2:8–3:11

But you, son of man, listen to what I am telling you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.”

⁹Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out toward me, and in it there was a rolled-up scroll. ¹⁰He unrolled it in front of me, and there was writing on both sides. Written on it was: Laments, Groaning, and Woe.

^{3:1}Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat what you have received. Eat this scroll, and then go, speak to the house of Israel.” ²I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll.

³Then he said to me, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll that I am giving you.” I ate, and in my mouth it was sweet like honey.

⁴He then said to me, “Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. ⁵For you are not being sent to a people who have incomprehensible speech or a difficult language, but you are being sent to the house of Israel. ⁶Nor are you being sent to many peoples who have incomprehensible speech and difficult languages, whose words you cannot understand. Certainly, if I were to send you to such people, they would listen to you. ⁷But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, because the whole house of Israel is hard-headed and hard-hearted. ⁸Look, I have made your face just as hard as their faces and your forehead just as hard as their foreheads. ⁹I have made your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not fear them, and do not be intimidated by their looks, for they are a rebellious house.”

¹⁰Then he said to me, “Son of man, receive into your heart all my words that I will speak to you, and hear them with your ears. ¹¹Go now to the exiles, to your own people. You shall speak to them and say to them, ‘This is what the LORD God says,’ whether they listen or they do not.”

Epistle / Second Reading

Ephesians 4:7–16

But to each one of us grace was given, according to the measure of the gift from Christ. ⁸That is why it says, “When he ascended on high, he took captivity captive and gave gifts to his people.” ⁹Now what does it mean when it says “he ascended,” other than that he also had descended to the lower parts, namely, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things. ¹¹He himself gave the apostles, as well as the prophets, as well as the evangelists, as well as the pastors and teachers, ¹²for the purpose of training the saints for the work of serving, in order to build up the body of Christ. ¹³This is to continue until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, resulting in a mature man with a stature reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴The goal is that we would no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, when people use tricks and invent clever

ways to lead us astray. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we would in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶From him the whole body, being joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows in accordance with Christ's activity when he measured out each individual part. He causes the growth of the body so that it builds itself up in love.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 9:9–13

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting in the tax collector's booth. He said to him, "Follow me." Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰As Jesus was reclining at the table in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners were actually there too, eating with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹²When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "The healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. ¹³Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' In fact, I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

St. Michael and All Angels (September 29)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Daniel 10:10–14, 12:1–3

Then a hand touched me and pulled me up, trembling, to my hands and knees. ¹¹He said to me, “Daniel, you are a highly valued man. Understand the words that I am speaking to you. Stand up where you are, because now I have been sent to you.” When he spoke this word to me, I stood up, shaking.

¹²He said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, because from the first day that you began to commit your heart to gaining understanding and to humbling yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come in response to your words. ¹³However, an officer of the kingdom of Persia was standing against me for twenty-one days. Yet Michael, one of the chief officers, came to help me, for I had been left there against the kings of Persia. ¹⁴I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the latter days, because the vision concerns days still to come.”

^{12:1}Then at that time, Michael, the great prince who stands over your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress that has not happened from the first time that there was a nation until that time.

At that time your people will be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. ²Many who are sleeping in the dusty ground will awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, to everlasting contempt. ³Those who have insight will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who bring many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever.

Epistle / Second Reading

Revelation 12:7–12

There was also a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon. The dragon fought back along with his angels, ⁸but he was not strong enough. There was no longer a place for them in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, the one called the Devil and Satan, the one who leads the whole inhabited earth astray—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying:

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ,
because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down,
the one who accuses them before our God day and night.

¹¹They conquered him
because of the blood of the Lamb and
because of the word of their testimony.

They did not love their lives in the face of death.

¹²For this reason, rejoice, you heavens and those who dwell in them.

Woe to the earth and the sea,
for the Devil has gone down to you.
He is full of rage, because he knows that his time is short.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 18:1–11

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and asked, “Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² Jesus called a little child, had him stand in the middle of them,³ and said, “Amen I tell you: Unless you are turned and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵ And whoever receives a little child like this one in my name receives me.

⁶“But, if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.⁷ Woe to the world because of temptations to sin. Temptations must come, but woe to that person through whom the temptation comes!

⁸“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to be thrown into the eternal fire with two hands or two feet.⁹ If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to be thrown into hell fire with two eyes.¹⁰ See to it that you do not look down on one of these little ones, because I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.¹¹ For the Son of Man came to save what was lost.

Or

Luke 10:17–20

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!”

¹⁸He told them, “I was watching Satan fall like lightning from heaven.¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing will ever harm you.²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names have been written in heaven.”

St. Luke (October 18)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 35:5–8

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
and the ears of the deaf will be unplugged.

⁶The crippled will leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy.

Waters will flow in the wilderness,
and streams in the wasteland.

⁷The burning sand will become a pool,
and in the thirsty ground there will be springs of water.

There will be grass, reeds, and rushes where the haunts
of jackals once lay.

⁸A highway will be there,
a road that will be called the holy way.

The impure will not walk there.

It will be reserved for those who walk in that holy way.

Wicked fools will not wander onto it.

Epistle / Second Reading

2 Timothy 4:5–18

As for you, keep a clear head in every situation. Bear hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry.

⁶You see, I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will give it to me on that day, and not only to me but also to everyone who loved his appearing.

⁹Make every effort to come to me quickly, ¹⁰for Demas, because he loved this present world, has forsaken me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is useful to me for ministry. ¹²I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will pay him back for what he did. ¹⁵You be on your guard against him also, because he vehemently opposed our message.

¹⁶At my first hearing, no one came to my defense, but everyone deserted me. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles would hear it, and I was rescued from the

lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Holy Gospel

Luke 10:1-9

After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

²He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. ³Go your way. Look, I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. ⁴Do not carry a money bag or traveler's bag or sandals. Do not greet anyone along the way. ⁵Whenever you enter a house, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' ⁶And if a peaceful person is there, your peace will rest on him, but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in that same house, eating and drinking what they give you, because the worker is worthy of his pay. Do not keep moving from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they welcome you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick who are in the town and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near you.'

St. James of Jerusalem (October 23)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Acts 15:12–22a

The whole assembly fell silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul, who reported all the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

¹³After they finished speaking, James responded, “Gentlemen, brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon has reported how God for the first time has visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.

¹⁵The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written:

¹⁶After these things I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.

I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will restore it,

¹⁷so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord—
even all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the Lord who does these things.

¹⁸“Long ago he made these things known. ¹⁹So it is my judgment that we should not cause extra difficulty for those among the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead we should write a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood. ²¹For from ancient times Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, since he is being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

²²Then the apostles and the elders, together with the whole church, thought it would be best to choose men from their group to send to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas.

Epistle / Second Reading

James 1:1–12

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad:
Greetings.

²Consider it complete joy, my brothers, whenever you fall into various kinds of trials, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces patient endurance. ⁴And let patient endurance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

⁵If any one of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives it to all without reservation and without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, without doubting, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷In fact, that person should not expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. ⁸He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹Let the brother of humble circumstances boast in his high position, ¹⁰and the rich one in his humble position, because he will pass away like a flower of the grass. ¹¹Indeed, the sun rises with burning heat and dries up the grass. Its blossom falls off, and its beauty perishes. In the same way also, the rich person will wither away in his busy pursuits.

¹²Blessed is the man who endures a trial patiently, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God promised to those who love him.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 13:54–58

Jesus entered his hometown and taught in their synagogue. As a result, the people were amazed and said, “Where did this fellow get this wisdom and these miracles? ⁵⁵Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother named Mary? And aren’t James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? ⁵⁶And aren’t all of his sisters here with us? Where then did this fellow get all of these things?” ⁵⁷And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own hometown and in his own house.” ⁵⁸He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Jeremiah 26:1–16

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, the following word came from the LORD.

²This is what the LORD says. Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house, and speak to people from the cities and towns of Judah who have come to worship at the House of the LORD. Tell them everything I have commanded you to tell them. Do not hold back a single word. ³Maybe they will listen, and everyone will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring about the disaster that I was planning because of the evil things they have done.

⁴You are also to say this to him.

This is what the LORD says. If you will not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, ⁵and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (but you have not listened), ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make the name of this city a curse word for all the nations of the earth.

⁷The priests, the prophets, and all the people listened as Jeremiah spoke these words at the House of the LORD. ⁸When Jeremiah had finished saying everything the LORD had commanded him to say to all the people, then the priests, the prophets, and all the people seized him and said, "You must die! ⁹Why do you prophesy in the name of the LORD that this house will be like Shiloh and that this city will be desolate with no one living here?" All the people crowded around Jeremiah in the House of the LORD.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they came up from the king's house to the House of the LORD and sat in the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's house.

¹¹Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death because he has been prophesying against this city, as you heard with your own ears."

¹²Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and to all the people, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the things that you have heard. ¹³Now reform your ways and your actions, and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring about the disaster he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴But as for me, look, I am in your hands. Do with me whatever seems good and right in your eyes. ¹⁵But you can be certain of this. If you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live here, for it is true that the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

¹⁶Then the officials and the people said to the priests and to the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. He has spoken in the name of the LORD our God."

Epistle / Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3–9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵Through faith you are being protected by God's power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

⁶Because of this you rejoice very much, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various kinds of trials ⁷so that the proven character of your faith—which is more valuable than gold, which passes away even though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet by believing in him, you are filled with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Holy Gospel

John 15:(12–16) 17–21

“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this: that someone lays down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you continue to do the things I instruct you. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will endure, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

¹⁷These things I am instructing you, so that you love one another.

¹⁸“If the world hates you, you know that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, for that very reason the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the saying I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too. If they held on to my word, they will hold on to yours as well. ²¹But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me.”

Reformation Day (October 31)

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Old Testament / First Reading

Revelation 14:6–7

Then I saw another angel flying in the middle of the sky. He had the everlasting gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth, to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷He said with a loud voice:

Fear God and give him glory,

because the hour of his judgment has come.

Worship him who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 3:19–28

Now we know that whatever the law says is addressed to those who are under the law, so that every mouth will be silenced and the whole world will be subject to God's judgment. ²⁰For this reason, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by works of the law, for through the law we become aware of sin.

²¹But now, completely apart from the law, a righteousness from God has been made known. The Law and the Prophets testify to it. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all and over all who believe.

In fact, there is no difference, ²³because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God publicly displayed as the atonement seat through faith in his blood. God did this to demonstrate his justice, since, in his divine restraint, he had left the sins that were committed earlier unpunished. ²⁶He did this to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so that he would be both just and the one who justifies the person who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷What happens to boasting then? It has been eliminated. By what principle—by the principle of works? No, but by the principle of faith. ²⁸For we conclude that a person is justified by faith without the works of the law.

Holy Gospel

John 8:31–36

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples. ³²You will also know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

³³“We are Abraham's descendants,” they answered, “and we have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be set free?’”

³⁴Jesus answered, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: Everyone who keeps committing sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵But a slave does not remain in the family forever. A son does remain forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

Or

Matthew 11:12–19

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been advancing forcefully and forceful people are seizing it. ¹³In fact, all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴If you are willing to receive it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

¹⁶“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces who call to others, ¹⁷‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance. We sang a dirge, but you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸John did not come eating or drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹But the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘See, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her actions.”

All Saints' Day (November 1)

*Lutheran Service Book Feasts, Festivals, and Occasions Lectionary
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Old Testament / First Reading

Revelation 7:(2–8) 9–17

And I saw another angel coming up from the east, who had the seal of the living God. He called out with a loud voice to the four angels who were given power to harm the earth and the sea. He said, ³“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees until we have placed a seal on the foreheads of God’s servants.”

⁴And I heard the number of those sealed:

144,000 sealed from all the tribes of the people of Israel:

⁵from the tribe of Judah, 12,000, who were sealed,

from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000,

from the tribe of Gad, 12,000,

⁶from the tribe of Asher, 12,000,

from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000,

from the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000,

⁷from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000,

from the tribe of Levi, 12,000,

from the tribe of Issachar, 12,000,

⁸from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000,

from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000,

from the tribe of Benjamin, 12,000, who were sealed.

⁹After these things I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing in front of the throne and of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They called out with a loud voice and said:

Salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb.

¹¹All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures. They fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹²saying:

Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and might belong to our God forever and ever. Amen.

¹³One of the elders spoke to me and said, “These people dressed in white robes, who are they and where did they come from?”

And I answered him, “Sir, you know.”

¹⁴And he said to me:

These are the ones who are coming out of the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵Because of this they are in front of the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple.

He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶They will never be hungry or thirsty ever again.

The sun will never beat upon them, nor will any scorching heat,

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd.

He will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 John 3:1–3

See the kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are! The world does not know us, because it did not know him. ²Dear friends, we are children of God now, but what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he is revealed we will be like him, and we will see him as he really is. ³Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as Jesus is pure.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 5:1–12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them. He said these things:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
because they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the gentle,
because they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
because they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful,
because they will receive mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
because they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
because they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. In fact, that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Anniversary of a Congregation

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Old Testament / First Reading

1 Kings 8:22–30

Then Solomon stood in front of the altar in the presence of the whole congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. ²³He said:

O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in the heavens above or on the earth below. You keep the covenant of mercy and faithfulness with your servants who walk before you with all their heart. ²⁴You have kept the word which you spoke to your servant, my father David. What you have said with your mouth you have fulfilled with your hand, as it is today.

²⁵Now, LORD God of Israel, guard for your servant, my father David, the promise you made to him when you said, “You will never fail to have a man sitting on the throne of Israel in my presence, if your sons guard their ways by walking in my law just as you have walked before me.”

²⁶Now, O God of Israel, let the words which you spoke to your servant, my father David, be confirmed.

²⁷But will God really dwell on the earth? In truth, the heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this house, which I have built! ²⁸But turn your face toward the prayer of your servant and toward his plea for mercy. O LORD my God, listen to the cry and the prayer which your servant offers before you today.

²⁹Let your eyes be open toward this house night and day, toward this place where you said, “My Name will be there,” to hear the prayer which your servant offers toward this place.

³⁰When you hear the plea for mercy of your servant and of your people Israel, which they pray toward this place, then hear in your dwelling place in heaven—hear and forgive.

Epistle / Second Reading

Revelation 21:1–5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer existed. ²And I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³And from the throne I heard a loud voice that said, “Look! God’s dwelling is with people. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, because the former things have passed away.”

⁵The one who was seated on the throne said to me, “Look, I am making everything new!” He also said, “Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Holy Gospel

Luke 19:1–10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ²A man named Zacchaeus was there. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but since he was short, he could not see because of the crowd. ⁴He ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Jesus, because he was about to pass by that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶He came down quickly and welcomed Jesus joyfully. ⁷When the people saw it, they were all grumbling because he went to be a guest of a sinful man.

⁸Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I am going to give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”

⁹Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Mission Observance

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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 62:1–7

For the sake of Zion I will not be silent.

For the sake of Jerusalem I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth shining brightly,
and her salvation burns like a torch.

²Nations will see your righteousness,
and all kings will see your glory.

You will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will assign to you.

³Then you will be a beautiful crown in the LORD's hand,
and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.

⁴You will never again be called Abandoned,
and your land will never again be called Desolation,
for you will be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land will be called Married,
because the LORD delights in you,
and your land will be married.

⁵For just as a young man marries a virgin,
your sons will marry you,
and just as a bridegroom rejoices over a bride,
your God will rejoice over you.

⁶Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I appointed watchmen.
All day and all night they will never be silent.
You who keep reminding the LORD, do not rest!

⁷Do not give him rest
until he establishes Jerusalem,
and he causes her to be praised on the earth.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 10:11–17

For Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

¹²So there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord is Lord of all, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³Yes, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴So then, how can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one about whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news of peace, who preach the gospel of good things!”

¹⁶But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who believed our message?” ¹⁷So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through the word of Christ.

Holy Gospel

Luke 24:44–53

He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹And while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²So they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³They were continually in the temple courts, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Christian Education

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Old Testament / First Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4–15

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is one! ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶These words that I am commanding you today are to be on your heart. ⁷Teach them diligently to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as a sign on your wrists, and they will serve as symbols on your forehead. ⁹Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰When the LORD your God brings you to the land about which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give it to you, he will bring you to great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹to houses full of all kinds of good things that you did not fill, to wells that you did not dig, and to vineyards and olives that you did not plant. Then, when you eat and are full, ¹²watch yourself, so that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves. ¹³Fear the LORD your God, serve him, and swear by his name. ¹⁴Do not go after other gods from among the gods of the peoples around you. ¹⁵If you do, the LORD your God will be a jealous God in your midst, and the anger of the LORD your God will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the earth.

Epistle / Second Reading

Acts 2:37–41

Now when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Gentlemen, brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸Peter answered them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰He testified solemnly with many other words and was appealing to them, saying, “Escape from this crooked generation.”

⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added.

Holy Gospel

Luke 18:15–17

People were bringing even their babies to Jesus, so that he would touch them. When the disciples saw this, they began to rebuke them. ¹⁶But Jesus invited them, saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷Amen I tell you: Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Harvest Observance

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Old Testament / First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:1–11

When you enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you take possession of it and settle in it, ²take some of the first ripe produce that you harvest from the soil of the land that the LORD your God is giving you. Put it in a basket, and go to the place where the LORD your God will choose to establish his name. ³Go to the priest who is presiding at that time and say to him, “Today I declare before the LORD your God that I have come to the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give to us.” ⁴The priest will take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵Then you will respond and say in the presence of the LORD your God, “My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt and lived there as an alien with just a few people, but there he became a great, strong, and populous nation. ⁶The Egyptians mistreated and afflicted us. They imposed hard labor on us. ⁷We cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and he saw our affliction, our labor, and oppression. ⁸The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and with great awe-inspiring acts and signs and wonders. ⁹He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰So now, look as I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you have given me, LORD.”

Then set the basket down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹Then you, as well as the Levite and the alien who resides among you, will rejoice in all the good things that the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

Epistle / Second Reading

2 Corinthians 9:6–15

This is what I mean: The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. The one who sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each one should give as he has determined in his heart, not reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will overflow in every good work. ⁹As it is written:

He scattered; he gave to the poor.

His righteousness remains forever.

¹⁰And he who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed for sowing, and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous in every way, which produces thanksgiving to God through us.

¹²To be sure, the administration of this service is not only making up for what is lacking among the saints, but it is also overflowing in many prayers of thanksgiving to God. ¹³By proving yourselves in this service, many people are glorifying God, as they see the obedience shown in your confession

of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity shown in your sharing with them and all people. ¹⁴At the same time as they pray for you, they also express their longing for you, because of the extraordinary measure of God's grace given to you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Holy Gospel

Luke 12:13–21

Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But Jesus said to him, "Man, who appointed me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you?"

¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because a man's life is not measured by how many possessions he has."

¹⁶He told them a parable: "The land of a certain rich man produced very well. ¹⁷He was thinking to himself, 'What will I do, because I do not have anywhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. ¹⁹And I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry." '

²⁰"But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your soul will be demanded from you. Now who will get what you have prepared?'

²¹"That is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Day of Thanksgiving

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Old Testament / First Reading

Deuteronomy 8:1–10

Be conscientious about carrying out the entire body of commands that I am giving you today so that you may thrive and increase and you may go in and possess the land that the LORD promised by oath to give to your fathers. ²Remember the whole journey on which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you and to test you, in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. ³So he humbled you and allowed you to be hungry. Then he fed you manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known before, in order to teach you that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴The clothes you wore did not wear out, and your feet did not swell these forty years. ⁵So know in your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. ⁶Therefore you are to keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by revering him.

⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of gullies filled with water, a land with springs and groundwater that flows out into the valleys and down the mountains, ⁸a land with wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees for oil, and honey, ⁹a land where you can eat bread and not be poor, where you will not lack anything, a land whose rocks are iron and from whose mountains you can mine copper.

¹⁰Then you will eat, and you will be filled, and you will praise the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you.

Epistle / Second Reading

Philippians 4:6–20

Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if anything is excellent, and if anything is praiseworthy, think about these things. ⁹The things that you learned, received, heard, and saw in me: Keep doing these things. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I rejoice greatly in the Lord now that you have revived your concern for me once again. Actually, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I lack anything; in fact, I have learned to be content in any circumstances in which I find myself. ¹²I know what it is to live in humble circumstances, and I know what it is to have more than enough. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, while being full or hungry, while

having plenty or not enough. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. ¹⁴Nevertheless, you did well by becoming partners with me in my affliction.

¹⁵You Philippians know that in the beginning of your experience with the gospel, when I left Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. ¹⁶Even while I was in Thessalonica, you sent help more than once for my needs. ¹⁷Not that I am seeking a gift, but I am seeking the fruit that adds to your account. ¹⁸I have been paid in full, and I have more than enough. I am fully supplied since I've received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, a sweet-smelling fragrance, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will fully supply your every need, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever! Amen.

Or

1 Timothy 2:1–14

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all those who are in authority, in order that we might live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this testimony, I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I speak the truth; I am not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument. ⁹Likewise, I also want women to adorn themselves with respectable clothing, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹A woman should learn in a quiet manner with full submission. ¹²And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. Instead, she is to continue in a quiet manner. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived, but it was the woman who was deceived and became a transgressor.

Holy Gospel

Luke 17:11–19

On another occasion, as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²When he entered a certain village, ten men with leprosy met him. Standing at a distance, ¹³they called out loudly, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

¹⁴When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they went away they were cleansed.

¹⁵One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus responded, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹Then he said to him, “Get up and go your way. Your faith has saved you.”

Day of Supplication and Prayer

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Old Testament / First Reading

Joel 2:12–19

Even now, declares the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and grief.
¹³Tear your heart and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in mercy,
and he relents from sending disaster.

¹⁴Who knows?

He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

¹⁵Blow the ram's horn in Zion.

Set aside a day for fasting.

Call a solemn convocation.

¹⁶Gather the people.

Consecrate the assembly.

Bring together the elders.

Gather the children, even those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the temple porch and the altar.

Let them say:

Have compassion on your people, O LORD.

Do not subject the inheritance you have given us to the scorn of the nations.

Do not make us notorious among the nations as an object of ridicule.

Why should they say among the peoples,

“Where is their God?”

¹⁸The LORD is zealous for his land,
and he will take pity on his people.

¹⁹The LORD will respond to them:

I am sending you grain, new wine, and fresh oil,
enough to satisfy you fully.

Never again will I subject you to scorn among the nations.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 John 1:5–2:2

This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. ⁷But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

^{2:1}My children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate before the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 6:16–21

“Whenever you fast, do not make yourself look sad like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show everyone that they are fasting. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it is not apparent to people that you are fasting, but only to your Father who sees what is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Day of National or Local Tragedy

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Old Testament / First Reading

Job 30:16–24

Now my soul is being poured out within me.

Days of suffering have seized me.

¹⁷Night pierces my bones with pain.

The pain gnawing at me never stops.

¹⁸God tugs violently at my clothing.

He chokes me like the collar of my robe.

¹⁹He has thrown me into the mud,

and I have become like dust and ashes.

²⁰I cry to you for help, but you do not answer me.

Whenever I stand up, you pay no attention to me.

²¹You have become cruel to me.

With a strong hand you assault me.

²²You lift me up with the wind, and it carries me away.

You scatter me in the raging storm.

²³Yes, I know that you are bringing me down to death,

to the home where all the living meet.

²⁴Will he really stretch out his hand against a pile of ruins,

when the ruined man screams for help?

Or

Revelation 7:13–17

One of the elders spoke to me and said, “These people dressed in white robes, who are they and where did they come from?”

And I answered him, “Sir, you know.”

¹⁴And he said to me:

These are the ones who are coming out of the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵Because of this they are in front of the throne of God,

and they serve him day and night in his temple.

He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶They will never be hungry or thirsty ever again.

The sun will never beat upon them, nor will any scorching heat,

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd.

He will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Epistle / Second Reading

Romans 8:31–39

What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?

³³Who will bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies! ³⁴Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God's right hand and who is also interceding for us! ³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written:

For your sake we are being put to death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Or

Hebrews 12:4–13

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood in your fight against sin. ⁵Have you also forgotten the encouragement that addresses you as sons?

My son, do not regard the Lord's discipline lightly,
and do not become weary of his correction.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one whom he loves,
and he corrects every son he accepts.

⁷Endure suffering as discipline. God is dealing with you as sons. Is there a son whose father does not discipline him? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and all of us have received it), then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹In addition, we have earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Should we not submit even more to the Father of the spirits and live? ¹⁰They disciplined us for a little while, according to what seemed best to them, but God disciplines us for our good, so that we may have a share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant when it is happening, but painful, yet later it yields a peaceful harvest of righteousness for those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore strengthen your weak hands and feeble knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but rather healed.

Holy Gospel

Luke 13:1–9

At that time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²He answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? ³I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all perish too. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse sinners than all the people living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all perish too.”

⁶He told them this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it, but he did not find any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down. Why even let it use up the soil?’ ⁸But the gardener replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it. ⁹If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down.’ ”

Or

Matthew 24:32–35

“Learn this lesson from the fig tree. When its branch has become tender and produces leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things, know that he is near, right at the doors. ³⁴Amen I tell you: This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.