

Northminster Daily Devotions

January 1-31, 2009

Vol. 36 No. 1



...Knock
and the
door will be
opened to you

Matthew 7:7

Northminster Devotionals

May these devotionals be a blessing to you as we are guided through the daily Scripture readings from *Daily Lectionary*.

This resource has come to you because people from NPC have offered their gifts, to be a blessing to the entire Northminster community, to Tucson and beyond. Don't forget... this entire resource is on our website at www.godmorning.com. So tell your friends!

If you would like to use your God-given talent to become a part of the devotional writing team, call the church at 520-327-7121 and talk to Publications Editor, Jim Peck. This is a very flexible ministry and can be done from anywhere!

The next issue of the Northminster Daily Devotions will be available on Sunday, February 1, 2009.

The grey boxes that appear on every page direct you to pray for a particular church, organization or group each day. These come from the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s 2009 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study, which are available in the Church Office.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 98:1-9

Gen 17:1-12a,15-16

Col 2:6-12

Jn 16:23b-30

Ps 99:1-9

God's Fruit

by Jennifer Hager

I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come before you. -Genesis 17:6

In the Old Testament Scripture reading for today, we find the story of God's covenant with Abraham. The Lord tells Abraham what he will do for Abraham and he will use him. The Lord gives Abram a new name to signify the new relationship God will have with Abraham and the people.

In the key passage I have chosen, we see God's promise to Abraham that he will be fruitful. Skipping ahead to Verse 19, we hear the Lord's promise to give Abraham a son. It is easy to stop there and think that "fruitful" refers only to Isaac and his descendants.

I think God is also telling us in this passage that he will make us, the Church, very fruitful. We, his church will bear fruit, produce seeds and grow. The true beauty of his word to us is that he says "I" will make you fruitful. The Lord has us bear fruit if we let him.

The Lord provides us the tools to be a fruitful church and if we rest in his promise and obey him, his work will be done.

Youth: Isn't it exciting when you plant a seed and it starts to grow? This is how Jesus feels about us.

Adults: Are we open to God's desire to work in us to be fruitful?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Almighty God, open our hearts to your desire. Let us use the promise and the tools you have given us to be your church and to be fruitful. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Synod of the Trinity (Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia)

Father Abraham

by Jennifer Monroe

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. -Genesis 12:1-3

When we think about Biblical characters of great faith, Abraham is often one of the first people who springs to mind. Almost out of the blue, an unfamiliar God comes to him and says, "Leave your country, everything you know and find familiar, and go to a completely foreign land. If you have faith and trust me, I will bless you." And, remarkably, Abraham (then known as Abram) goes! The writer of Hebrews admires Abraham's faith, pointing out that he "obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going," but notes that "he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God" (11:8,10).

It might be easy to admire Abraham's faith and miss a crucial second lesson that his story can teach. He needed to have faith in order to obey God's command, and his faithful obedience brought him a blessing. But, Abraham wasn't blessed so that once he had done what God asked him to do he could sit around, wallowing in the greatness of his own name and the blessings that God poured upon him. Rather, God blessed Abraham so that he would be a blessing to other people. When God gives us gifts, he doesn't intend for us to simply enjoy them ourselves. He wants us to use them to bless others around us. In fact, everyone on earth has benefited from Abraham's faithful obedience to God. That's why we can all sing together, "Father Abraham, had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you, so let's all praise the Lord!"

Youth: Do you think it would have been easy or difficult for Abram to follow God? Why?

Adults: Can you think of someone who has blessed you by their faithful obedience? How might you be a blessing to someone else?

Prayer: Father God, we boldly ask you for faith to follow where you lead and for the ability to share with others the blessings of our obedience. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler(Pennsylvania)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 111:1-10

Gen 28:10-22

Heb 11:13-22

Jn 10:7-17

Ps 107:1-43

Fill Me, O Lord

by John McKee

Fill me O Lord,
With your Holy Spirit
Fill me, my Lord, I pray.

Be the Light that directs me
Throughout my life
To do as you will every day.

Let me act as a lantern
Shining your light
On the evils that many call good.

Abortion, the lotteries,
Deviant sexual behavior;
And other wrongs for which people have stood.

Show the entertainment industry
The error of their ways
As they pollute the minds and souls of our youth.

With movies of sex,
Of murder, and violence
Using language that is foul and uncouth.

Use me as your vessel
That I may do for others
The things you would have me to do.

Help me, O Lord,
To see what's important
Help me see it from *your* point of view.

Speak that I may hear you
Above the din, Lord,
Calm my heart and make it still

For my wish is to be
A good servant for you,
A quiet voice among the shrill.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Carlisle (Pennsylvania)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 20:1-9

Ex 3:1-5

Heb 11:23-31

Jn 14:6-14

Ps 93:1-5

You CAN Get There From Here

by Andy Ross

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." -John 14:6

I once worked for an owner of a gas station, who was either playful or mean (your call here!) when people would stop and ask for directions. He would look at them with a straight face and say, "Well, you know, you just *can't* get there from here!" And he was always entertained to see how they would react to that.

I am so glad, every time I read this gospel story from John, that Thomas was gutsy enough to ask the "dumb question" that was likely on everyone's mind: "Uh, Jesus ... exactly how do we find this 'Way'?"

And I'm struck, every time I read this story, that Jesus answers with such a big twist — "I AM the way ..."

Jesus was not just Mary's boy ... he wasn't simply God's Son ... he is also The Way we use ... to discover God's love and peace in our lives. Jesus was the way for Moses that led to a burning bush and exodus. Jesus was the way of faith for those marching around Jericho ... for Rahab ...

And yes, Jesus is the way to God ... a way that will lead you to hope, peace and strength ... if you will take a step of faith on that path, the Jesus Path. Friends, please understand: there is a way of hope and healing you can find — when you say "Yes" to the Spirit of Jesus in your life.

Youth: How does it make you feel to think of Jesus as a road? And how does that change your view of God, and eternity?

Adults: Where are you on the road called Jesus today? Moving right along? Pulled over and stopped? In need of repair? Needing to get moving again?

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for opening up for us a Way! Thank you Jesus for how you bring us across our scary seas of challenge and crisis, and for how you became our Bridge to a better place. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Texas)

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 99:1-9

Josh 1:1-9

Heb 11:32-12:2

Jn 15:1-16

Partners with Christ

by Marie Ruiz

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. -Joshua 1:7

Our Scripture in Joshua today sets the stage for the final acquisition of the promised land. I've thought a lot about this man Joshua and what he must have been thinking as the new leader of Israel. For forty years Joshua watched Moses as his leader, spiritual mentor and friend. Now it was Joshua's time in history to accept the God-given responsibility to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Joshua's assignment came with some simple and straightforward instructions: be strong, courageous and careful to obey the commandments that Moses had given him; meditate on the word of the Lord and the result would be prosperity and success.

We too have a calling, perhaps not as grandiose as Joshua, but nonetheless important in the eyes of God. When we are strong, courageous and commit God's word to our heart and mind meditating on it daily, our calling to be a witness to those around us is sure. We have no fear because when we carry out our part, God will assuredly do the rest. And his part is not only divine but completes the witness we bring to this world. Did you ever think about the partnership you have with Christ in bringing a lost world to completion in him?

Like Joshua, we have people in our lives who help point the way to Christ by their teaching or preaching or just by living out their Christian walk for us to see. Are you ready like Joshua to take the torch of the gospel to those around you and lead them into the kingdom of Heaven?

Youth: God is calling you to be a Christian example to your friends at school. Where can you learn how to be an example for Christ?

Adults: As we go through this life on earth, we must constantly remind ourselves of the witness that we are to others. Are you doing your part so that God can accomplish his will on earth?

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your Word that reminds us to be strong and courageous in this life walk, and commit to meditating on your Word every day. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Donegal(Pennsylvania)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 72:1-20

Is 52:7-10

Rev 21:22-27

Mt 12:14-21

Ps 100:1-5

Today's Shepherd

by Anne Price

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his, we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. -Psalm 100:3

My first thought when I read this verse was from an old advertisement for RCA Victor record players. There was a picture of a dog listening to his master's voice. I was not raised around sheep, but dogs have been an important part of my life. I can knock on the patio door and the Scotties come running in ready to get a treat or to go for a walk. Now let us think of our Lord calling us into safety.

Psalmist David tells us of his shepherding experience to the point of laying down his life for his sheep. We can fast forward this topic to today's parents. I recall during the 60s and 70s when I was raising my four children. They played outside in the neighborhood past dark until we moms called them home. Watching our children was much easier in those days. Today's parents have many more challenges keeping their children from harm. As we set down rules for our children to keep them safe, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments as a part of our fencing. When we break away from God's rules, we get in trouble.

As a lost sheep is searched for by its shepherd, we would lay down our lives for our lost child. God gave us Jesus Christ who died for our sins when we were lost. That is why we call him The Good Shepherd. If we listen carefully we can hear our master's voice.

Youth: Can you picture God being with you to keep you safe?

Adults: Even though we are not children anymore can we feel God's love for us as his own?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I hear your voice when you call me to your side. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Open Roof International: Healing Burma (Myanmar) One Life at a Time

Metrics for Life

by Marshall Worden

I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.

-Revelation 2:2-5a

I gave an exam last night. After years of testing student performance, it's an exercise with which I am never completely satisfied. Sometimes it's as uncomfortable for me as it is tortuous for some students. You see it in their faces and behaviors: blank stares and desperate flipping through the exam looking for a question they can answer. Then there are the students who smile and offer a cheerful, "Thanks for the exam," as they hand it to me. Those typically are students who paid attention on the first night of classes when I explained the metrics I would use to gauge their success.

John has a message from God for the church at Ephesus. Their performance looks good in some regards and God has noticed. They have worked hard, done good deeds, endured hardship for Christ, tested and rejected false prophets and persevered. But on the most important metric they have fallen short. They aren't showing the type of love they did when they first encountered Christ and fell in love with him. They are told to repent. And they are told to listen and pay attention to God.

I often get too focused on self and the tasks that look successful in my work, the community and the church. But what I've found is that Jesus daily gives me fresh opportunities to fall in love with him again and again.

Youth: How are you showing love and kindness to your friends and family? Do you think Jesus is pleased with how you are living this day?

Adults: What would you say are your strengths and weaknesses as a follower of Jesus? Of what do you need to repent?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me and help me to love others more boldly and in ways that they will know they are loved. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Huntingdon(Pennsylvania)

God is Our Refuge

by Ralph Comey

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. -Psalm 46:1-11

The book of Psalms has long been considered one of the finest collections of writing about the inner life of man. Many of the earliest ones have an inconsistent quality and speak of the harshness of life, the expressions of a troubled soul living in a difficult world. There are even doubts about God. Psalm 46, however, is an eloquent expression of God's power and source of help. It is beautiful and inspiring, and is even the basis for a stirring choral anthem.

There are many expressions of prayer found throughout the Bible. Prayers are an important form of worship and can be for devotion, thanks, confession, or for a humble request. There seems to be a universal need for prayer, because it can be found in all religions and cultures. Prayer is man's way of facing the unknown.

I have heard testimony to the power of prayer. I once heard a woman tell of her family's misfortunes. Her son was in trouble and missing, and there was nothing more that she could do but pray. She said that praying helped.

Youth: Do you ask God for help? Sometimes when you feel lost and alone, and when everything is going wrong, it helps to pray to God. He will always answer in some way, and you will feel better.

Adults: Do we need to pray? All of us seem to have this need. Some of us may pray regularly while others only occasionally. We seem especially drawn to prayer when trouble comes to our lives or to the world outside. Sometimes prayer is all we have.

Prayer: Dear Lord, please help someone I know who needs help, and please help me. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Kiskiminetas (Pennsylvania)

Do You Want to Get Well?

by Jennifer Monroe

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” -John 5:1-6

At first glance, Jesus' question to the crippled man at the pool seems odd at best, perhaps even a bit demeaning or rude: “Do you want to get well?” “What do you mean do I want to get well?” we can almost hear the man replying, “Do you think I like laying here, day in and day out? Don't you think thirty-eight years is long enough to be paralyzed? Of course I want to get well!” The man's actual answer to Jesus is a polite request for help rather than the sarcastic rebuff that many of us might have been tempted to give.

Jesus' question, however, is a perfectly legitimate one. My study Bible points out that this man might have lost a profitable and relatively easy income from begging if he were cured. He might, after thirty-eight years, simply have lost the will to be healed at all. It's also possible that his identity had become so bound up in his sickness that the thought of being well might have been a scary one; if he really could stand up and walk, how would he know who he was? No longer the crippled beggar at the pool, he would have to assume a different, perhaps more frightening and demanding role. Jesus realized that some of us value our sickness more than we desire health. He wasn't going to force healing on someone who would rather stay sick. Fortunately for the man, his simple desire to be well was enough, and Jesus heals him on the spot. Notice though, that right away along with his healing comes responsibility — he becomes a proclaimer of the gospel, even though he has no idea who Jesus is. His newly-healed legs carry the good news everywhere he goes.

Youth: What do you think it would be like to be crippled for thirty-eight years and then well again? How would you feel?

Adults: Do you want to get well?

Prayer: Jesus, you are our healer. Give us the courage to want to get well and then the joy to carry your good news to everyone we meet. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Lackawanna (Pennsylvania)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 46:1-11

Is 65:1-9

Rev 3:1-6

Jn 6:1-14

Fear Not

by John McKee

“Fear not for I am with you...”

Are God’s comforting words
Found in Isaiah 41:10.

In times of great danger
These encouraging words
Strengthen the resolve of good men

To confront the evil
Perpetrated by despots
Diabolically seeking to gain

Domination of others
Through violence and fear
Spreading death, destruction and pain.

Evil must be confronted,
For it does not seek peace
And a one-sided peace is surrender.

To allow evil its way
Is a disservice to God,
But many lack the courage to hinder.

“Peace at any price!”
Is their rallying cry
“No blood for oil!” They shout.

Their fear rages unchecked
They would surrender to *Satan*
Without thinking what it’s really about.

During these troubled times
Keep your heart fixed on God
Just ask and he’ll show you the way.

Good will triumph over evil,
For God is working his plan
And his army grows stronger each day.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Lake Erie (Pennsylvania)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 104:1-35

Is 40:1-11

Heb 1:1-12

Jn 1:1-7,19-20,29-34

Ps 29:1-11

Even the Bugs Under the Rocks

by Pete Seiferth

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures! Psalm 104:24

A favorite thing to do when I was a boy — and something I can now relive with my boys — was to lift up a rock and see what scurries out from the dark dampness. Just out of sight, but eagerly witness by small hands around stone is another world of roly-polies, earthworms, millipedes, and beetles. Amid the screams of delight is the sound of glory given to God for caring enough to even fill the area under rocks with abundant life.

Psalm 104 is a creation hymn giving God all glory for the amazing beauty and complexity of his creation and creatures. As breath enters and recedes from the living, God in holy wisdom is present and providential, receiving praise as constant as the tide. We must not make the mistake that places God within the creation that causes us to praise the tree and flower themselves.

The glory of creation points us to the one who out of darkness created the light to shine in the hearts of humanity. Though we get confused, and are led astray from offering our thanks and worship to God alone, the incarnation of Jesus Christ displays true glory revealed in the Word made flesh. As the prophet Isaiah testifies, *The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.*

Youth: Can you believe God made the whole earth and all the creatures in it! What do you think about volcanoes, beaches, mountains, and deserts? What is your favorites place in nature? What about lizards, elephants, sharks, and praying mantises? What animal is coolest or most mysterious? What does God's creation show us about God?

Adults: Find a flower and study it hard. What do you see? Look into the face of a loved one or a stranger. What do you see? Read the Bible selections for today? Close your eyes — what do you see?

Prayer: Creator of all — in love and care you made us and all there is around us. Help us to see you in the movement of the wind, the colors of creation, in the personalities of those who live around us. May we worship you in healthy fear and honor, not even knowing the fullness of your grace and mercy. As we wither and fade, may our eternity be found in the crucified and risen Christ. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Reconciliation House (North Carolina)

His Baptism and Ours

by Dick Leon

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

-Mark 1:9-11

In those churches that carefully follow the ancient Liturgical Calendar the celebration of the baptism of our Lord on the second Sunday of January marks the close of Christmastide. So it is timely to think about Jesus' baptism today.

I want to mention three strong truths that emerge from Jesus' baptism.

- First, Jesus identifies with all humanity by sharing in the cleansing water of baptism. Though he was without sin, nevertheless he stands with us in our sin by this act of solidarity.
- Second, Jesus' baptism establishes the new "sign of the covenant" with people of every race, tribe and gender. The old sign was circumcision performed only on male children of Jewish birth. That sign is now superseded by baptism for infants born into a believing family or as an adult when making a confession of faith in Christ.
- What happens to Jesus happens to us in our baptism: we are filled with the Spirit and God tells each of us: "I love you!"

Knowing we have been baptized is to know we are loved by God and gifted with the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther, when tempted, used to stop and say firmly and confidently: "But I've been baptized!" In other words: I am loved by God, God has claimed me as his own, and I have his power to resist temptation!

Youth: Do you know that you are loved by God? Your baptism is your reminder!

Adults: What does your baptism mean to you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you were baptized to show us that you have chosen to be with us in our weakness. Thank you, gracious Savior, for that solidarity with us all. Keep us safe in your care and lift us up by the power of your Holy Spirit who has come to us in our baptism! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Lehigh Presbytery (Pennsylvania)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 42:1-11

Is 40:25-31

Eph 1:15-23

Mk 1:14-28

Ps 102:1-28

The Kingdom is Near!

by Jennifer Monroe

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" -Mark 1:14-15

You've probably seen the cartoons: A strange-looking man with long scraggly hair, wearing something that looks like a monk's habit, marching down the street with a sign on a stick that says something like "Repent! The End is Near!" One cartoon I saw pictured one character holding just such a sign, followed closely by another one whose sign read "The End." Such a character is designed to make us laugh, and were we to see someone like it in real life, most of us probably wouldn't take him very seriously. In today's culture, it's doubtful that walking down the street with a sign, or even a bullhorn, calling people to repent and "believe the good news" would ultimately be very effective in encouraging people to follow Christ.

The question is, then, how do we 21st-century Christians proclaim that the kingdom of God is here? Not all of us are called to be preachers. Some are called to be carpenters, policemen, cooks, teachers, lawyers, janitors, or stay-at-home moms. How can the rest of us live in such a way as to declare this really good news, that God's kingdom has come? Maybe a way to start answering that question is to ask yourself, do you believe it? Do you believe that God really is in charge, that Jesus Christ really is the king of this world, not any political party or economic force, not random chance or biology? Then, if you do believe it, ask yourself, how can I declare Jesus' lordship in the way I go about my day-to-day activities? Maybe this means treating everyone you meet with dignity and respect. Maybe this means being honest and conscientious about the way you do your job. And maybe it means starting to re-think some of your very foundational assumptions about what it means to be a carpenter, policeman, cook, teacher, lawyer, janitor or stay-at-home mom. Then maybe everyone around you will hear your "preaching" loud and clear!

Youth: What is one message you wish everyone around you knew? How can you let them know?

Adults: Do you believe Jesus is Lord? How might that fact impact the way you live?

Prayer: Jesus, you are the Lord of this world. May we play a part in proclaiming that good news to everyone we meet. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Northumberland (Pennsylvania)

Alive with Christ

by Karen Foss

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. -Ephesians 2:1-5

Years ago, when our children were young, we quit attending church on a regular basis. We didn't even bring the kids to Sunday School. Therefore, while they remembered some of the teachings from classes with Jean Rowley, they didn't get to know Christ Jesus as their savior.

One of the greatest joys in our lives has been the transformation of our oldest daughter since she's been attending NPC this past year. Always a "hands on" person, she volunteered to go on the adult mission trip to Mexico to build houses and started helping in the kitchen on Wednesday nights and for some of the special events. Then she made the decision to take the ALPHA class and started reading the Bible. With the help of the wonderful people in our congregation, she has seen Christ in action through them and has learned what it means to be a Christian. Not just to talk the talk, but to put the words into action.

Where once she thought of "church people" as "holier than thou" people, she has learned that we're all in the same boat. Each with our own set of problems and things in our past that we would like to forget. Each of us striving to be more like Jesus every day and each of us knowing that through the grace of God, we can be alive in Christ.

Youth: Who is the biggest influence in your life? Are they a Christian?

Adults: Do you have someone in mind that needs to hear about the love that Jesus has for us?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us so very much that you forgive us and invite us to live through your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)

The Dividing Wall of Hostility

by Jerry Smith

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to those who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

-Ephesians 2:14-18

As I read this passage and meditated upon it I began to realize that what Christ destroyed I had the tendency to reconstruct. That tendency kept rebuilding that barrier between myself and people of the Jewish faith, illegal immigrants, non-heterosexuals, militant Islamic, ultra liberals. Need I go on. My responsibility is to look upon people of different beliefs, backgrounds, circumstances with love as God sees them. Isn't that what walking across the room is all about? I have to leave my "sphere of comfort" and with the help of God's Spirit walk through that barrier of animosity and offer the hand of friendship in Christian love.

Youth: Do you have trouble being friendly to people who are different than you?

Adults: Can you pray for and ask for God's help to love those people who have a tendency to irritate you?

Prayer: Father, you sent your Son to walk from Heaven to earth and leave your fellowship to die on the cross, that we who were so undeserving might have a blessed relationship with you. Help us to take just a few steps to share that relationship to those to whom your Spirit directs us. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Pittsburgh Presbytery (Pennsylvania)

Doctor's Visit

by Jennifer Monroe

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the “sinners” and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners?’” On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” -Mark 2:16-17

You've never felt better in your life. You breathe deeply and feel your lungs expanding as clean, clear air rushes through your body. After stretching your arms out high above your head and doing a few jumping jacks, you take stock and discover not an ache or a pain anywhere. In fact, you've just lost those last ten pounds and found out that you've lowered your blood pressure and cholesterol into the “perfect” range. You had a great night of sleep last night. “All right then!” you say merrily to yourself, “I'd better go to the doctor this morning!”

Obviously, this is ridiculous. None of us would visit a doctor if we knew that we were completely healthy. Doctors exist to help sick people get well again; therefore, they have to hang out with people who are ill. Jesus uses this figure of speech to explain to the Pharisees why he spends so much time with the “sick” people in his culture, the “sinners and tax collectors.” They are mystified why such a great teacher would spend so much of his time with society's low-lives, the downtrodden, the poor, and even the despicable. However, do you catch the irony here? Who in this story is actually the “sickest” and who might need him the most? The Pharisees, the ones who are standing on the outside, shaking their heads, clicking their tongues, and watching the party going on inside. They are so full of their own self-righteousness that they cannot see their own need for Jesus and that they are really no better than any tax collector or sinner. None of us is so healthy that we don't need the healing powers of the Great Physician.

Youth: How is Jesus like a doctor?

Adults: Who in this story do you identify with most? The “sinners” or the Pharisees?

Prayer: Jesus, save us from our own self-righteousness and give us the grace to accept our righteousness from you. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Redstone (Pennsylvania)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 104:1-35

Is 42:18-25;43:1-13

Eph 3:14-21

Mk 2:23-3:6

Ps 138:1-8

Lift High the Cross

by John McKee

Lift high the cross
That all may see
The symbol of our salvation.

The rough wooden beams
Upon which Jesus died
In shame and stark degradation.

Lift high the cross
That the Light of God
In it's awesome glory may shine

Throughout every continent
To brighten this world
With his undying love so divine.

Lift high the cross
That those in despair
Will be given a fresh hope anew.

Hold it on high
Without being ashamed,
For he's not ashamed of you.

Lift high the cross
Is the rallying cry
During Northminster's fiftieth year;

Signifying redemption
For all who believe
In the Savior whom we hold so dear.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Shenango (Pennsylvania)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 19:1-14

Is 43:14-44:5

Heb 6:17-7:10

Jn 4:27-42

Ps 81:1-16

An Anchor Called Hope!

by Andy Ross

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. -Hebrews 6:19

When I was on a house-boat at Lake Powell, I learned the value of having a good anchor. It was so hard finding good strong rocks to put our anchor ropes around! It was sweaty, difficult work — for you had to jam the anchors deep into the rocks and crevices of the shore; tie them securely around giant rocks — even *move* the giant rocks so the boat could sit just right in the inlet. It wasn't fun. It was difficult. *It was work!*

But that night, as I fell asleep on the roof of that boat, gently rocking on the water, staring up into the billions of stars overhead — I realized how important a good anchor is! I was at peace, because I knew our boat was secure. I could sleep well, knowing that we were tied with strong lines, and we wouldn't go drifting off while I slept.

You could say the cross, for Jesus, was hard work. In fact, it was excruciatingly the hardest thing he would have to do for us ... But in his dying for us, he offered us an anchor line that will hold strong in any storm or gale you might face. Jesus died for you and me, so that his sacrifice would be the anchor of hope that will hold us strong — no matter what we face.

Sleep well tonight. And *live well today* ... knowing that in Jesus, you are secure!

Youth: When have you faced times in which you needed an anchor of help? When have you felt like you were drifting? How does Jesus help you get through those times?

Adults: Can you name a place in your life's navigation where you need to throw down the Anchor line of Christ? Can you share that out loud, and ask for prayer?

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you, Jesus, for being our strong anchor! Thank you that, as we face storms and fears, we can hold on to you, and know that your grip of love on us ... is even stronger! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Race Relations Sunday

Growing Together as a Body

by Marie Ruiz

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

-Ephesians 4:16

A couple semesters ago, I was immersed in anatomy and physiology classes learning about how our body works and all the many facets of chemical reactions that allow the cells to work together for the good of the body so that it can function. This passage in Ephesians uses picturesque examples of how we, as the body of Christ, can work together for the building up of the body to completion.

When we are born our bodies are fragile and depend upon proper nutrition and exercise to be able to grow the cells needed for proper function and maturity. So too, our spiritual mind and body needs the necessary food (the Word) and other Christians (other parts of the body) to grow and be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God, becoming mature so that we can attain the full measure of Christ. You see, each of us is an important part of the whole body (meaning the church at large). When we do our part by living out our calling, our body as a whole can grow to maturity. In helping each other by supporting each others stand for Christ and building each other up, love abounds.

As we begin this new year, make it your goal to immerse yourself in the Word of God, feeding yourself and exercising your faith. The result will be maturity in Christ and a building up of the body of Christ, his church. Make it your goal to join together in unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

Youth: We need proper food for our bodies to grow and we need the Word of God for us to grow as Christians. What book can give you the words of God?

Adults: What part of the body are you? Every part is just as important for the proper functioning of the body.

Prayer: Lord help us to prepare rightly for the works of service you have called us to do so the body of Christ may be built up. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Upper Ohio Valley Presbytery (Ohio, West Virginia)

Without Malice

by Anne Price

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. -Ephesians 4:31-32

After reading over and over again this verse, the word malice jumped out for my attention. The Apostle Paul viewed the Church as a brotherhood, having its members to be considerate of one another and respecting the rights of others.

The word malice in the dictionary means a desire to harm others or see others suffer. It comes from the Latin word malitia, from malus-bad. If I am to walk with God I need to avoid the temptation to even speak against another. It is easy to justify words such as “we need to pray for Jane’s problem with her marriage.” Gossip is found even in churches behind closed doors. It does not build, but tears down relationships with God and others.

If I take the last of the verse: to be kind and considerate of others, as God has forgiven me, I won’t be tempted to go against another person with malice. Many recovery programs see the importance of this verse. To heal from addictions one must look at our relationships with ourselves and others.

In my own prayer time early in the morning and before bed I sit quietly listening to the voice of my mind. Do I like what it speaks? If I see good in others, I try to imitate it, if I have faults, I ask God to remove them from me.

Youth: Have you ever told a friend something bad about another friend and then had to face that you may have hurt someone?

Adults: When we speak of another, remember that words can burn, words can soothe, how can we use them wisely?

Prayer: Our Father, help me to see others as members of one family. May we live in love and peace. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Washington Presbytery (Pennsylvania)

The Good, the Right and the True

by Dick Leon

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth). -Ephesians 5:8-9

Darkness is dangerous.

Have you noticed that when we read crime stories in the paper they are almost always about incidents that happened late at night, in the dark? Darkness carries the illusion to us of secrecy and helps us think we can do nasty things and not be seen.

Paul uses this imagery of being in the dark to describe what life was like for us before we came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And then he gives three great marks of what it is to live in the light of Jesus Christ:

- What is Good ... the quality of doing kind and thoughtful things that build up others, family, friends and even strangers.
- What is Right ... the quality of having the wisdom and courage to serve the cause of justice in our world.
- What is True ... the quality of speaking the truth at all times and always being true to our word.

These three qualities find their polar opposites in the dark: what is Bad ... Wrong ... and False. What happens in the dark destroys and hurts and tears down. What happens in the light heals and helps and builds up.

Paul gives us a wonderfully simple three-way test for what it means to walk in the light as a follower of Jesus Christ: is it good ... right ... and true? When we do this we will indeed be followers of him who said he was the Way, the Truth and the Life ... for he is the only one in all history who always was Good, always was Right and always was True!

Youth: Here is a simple code of conduct that leads to happiness: ask yourself each day: is this good ... is this right ... is this true?

Adults: What would be different in our community, church and world if Christians lived by this simple creed of the good the right and the true?

Prayer: Great God, you have come to deliver us from darkness and transfer us to the kingdom of your beloved Son who is the Light of the world. Grant each of us the strength, the courage and the faith in you and your way to walk in the light every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of West Virginia

Make the Most of It!

by Jennifer Monroe

Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. -Ephesians 5:15-16

A Christian friend of mine used to bus tables at a popular local restaurant. He told me that his least favorite time to work was the Sunday lunch shift because that was when the establishment was crowded with people stopping off to eat after attending church. Not only was it busy, but he also said that almost inevitably, these customers were more demanding and difficult than average. He said that several times he had worked for large tables of difficult customers who, instead of leaving a tip for the wait staff, left evangelistic tracts printed to look like million dollar bills. He knew that many of his fellow employees weren't Christians and felt ashamed and embarrassed by the diners' behavior.

Perhaps the people who left the tracts on the restaurant tables thought that they were "making the most of every opportunity" by leaving the message of the gospel behind them, but instead they only served to turn others off, reinforcing negative stereotypes about what it means to be a follower of Christ. Believers have the chance to creatively shine a light into every corner of their lives, always asking the question, "what does it mean to follow Jesus in this place?" I think that Paul's command to take advantage of "every opportunity" goes beyond being polite to the person who helps us find the right size of shoes to buy, letting someone go ahead of us in line, or knocking on a stranger's door and asking him if he believes in Jesus (though, of course, it can and probably does mean all of these things). Paul charges us to continually be wise and intentional about how we live our lives because we understand "what the Lord's will is" (Ephesians 5:17). This might mean re-thinking our most basic decisions about how we spend our money and our time, what we eat and how we view other people (to name a few). And it might mean that if you pray before you eat in a restaurant, you ought to try to leave a generous tip.

Youth: Can you think of time in your life when you didn't take advantage of an opportunity? What happened?

Adults: What might it mean to "make the most of every opportunity" in your own life?

Prayer: Jesus, we want to live as wise people. Help us to truly make the most of every opportunity, every day. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo

You Shall Have No Other ...

by Judy Williams

For this is what the Lord says—“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.” -Isaiah 45:18a,22

In Exodus, Moses received the commandment from God telling the people that he was the ONLY God. In spite of this commandment, the people continued to hold on to their many gods in disobedience to God’s command.

In today’s passage God spoke through the prophet Isaiah, instructing him to tell the world about his plan for our salvation. As the people in Old Testament times were continuing to worship idols and believe in many gods, it was vital that they come to understand the existence of *one true* God. Our modern world is filled with many “gods” that divert human attention from the one true God. This passage is vital for each generation and must be shared with “the ends of the earth” now as never before.

As members of Christ’s body, we believers in his church must accept the challenge to spread this word of salvation every way we can. We have opportunities each day to tell those we meet of God’s plan for our eternal life with him. Some are called to serve at “the ends of the earth” and others serve effectively in their own homes, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. Each of us has a mission to fulfill in spreading the news of God’s plan for our eternal destiny.

Youth: As this new year has begun, what are some ways you can share what you know about God with your friends? Is there a special Bible verse or Bible story you know that you could use in talking to a friend about Jesus and his love?

Adults: Who might you meet today that needs to hear the Good News of God’s love and salvation? Will you be ready to answer his or her questions about God’s grace and forgiveness?

Prayer: Dear God, your righteousness and strength are beyond our comprehension. Yet we love you and long to bring others to salvation in you. Give us courage today to share your eternal plan with others. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Back to God Ministries (Uganda)

Life's Twist and Turns

by John McKee

Our lives can take many
Sharp twists and turns
As we journey it's crooked path.

Most twists and turns
Are filled with enjoyment,
But some we find filled with wrath.

And we can never be certain
From one day to the next
Of what lies ahead in our road,

But, if we just keep the faith
God will see us through safely
And help carry our burdensome load.

It is during these times of trouble
That family and friends
Are comforting to us indeed

As they rally to aid us
Through a deep love and concern
To provide the support that we need.

I pray God has blessed you
With such family and friends
To be with you through thick and through thin.

I pray, also, God guides you
Through life's crooked turns
And brings enjoyment into your life again.

Let us join in prayer for:

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 67:1-7

Is 47:1-15

Heb 10:19-31

Jn 5:2-18

Ps 46:1-11

A Praise Song

by John Cheek

*May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,
Selah*

*that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.*

-Psalm 67:1-2

I'm always fascinated by the views Scripture gives us of ancient worship. The book of Psalms represents the worship lyrics of Judaic worship, including some worship instructions (for example the "Selah" in this Psalm) whose meaning we can only speculate. In the Psalms, we can find expressions of security, lament, fear, sadness, and joy, as well as other emotions. This particular psalm expresses the joy and elation of being in relationship with the Lord.

Do we feel this kind of elation in our worship? Can we belt out such a song of praise? We should be able to. We are people whom God has loved so much that he sent his own son to live for us, die for us, and be raised for us. If that doesn't lead us to sing for all we're worth, what could?

Youth: What makes you happy about being at church? Could you tell God "thank you" for these things?

Adults: What kind of attitude do you bring to worship? How would your worship and your life be different if you worshipped in this spirit of unbridled joy and praise?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, fill us with the joy of authentic relationship with you. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Medical Benevolence Foundation (Haiti)

MONDAY, JANUARY 26 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 57:1-11

Is 48:1-11

Gal 1:1-17

Mk 5:21-43

Ps 85:1-13

Watch Therefore...

by John McKee

He'll return one day soon
To claim his Church Bride
And shall rule here for 1,000 years.

We're to watch every day
For his second coming
That longed-for day he reappears.

Christ said none but the Father
Know the day and the hour
When this marvelous event is to be,

But he gave signs to watch for
That will herald his arrival,
Most of which we can already see.

Signs like...the enormous increase
In *knowledge and travel*
We've experienced most recently

The *greed and arrogance* of man,
Now more rampant than ever,
That has grown significantly.

Violence and mayhem is rising
Perpetrated by *terrorists*...
With *loss of faith* on the increase.

Middle East tension is high
As the *enemies of Israel*
Seek her destruction instead of peace.

The spread of nuclear weapons
A *revived Roman Empire*
The *Jews return* to the Holy Land

With *Jerusalem as the capital*
Being the foremost sign
The *return of the King* is at hand.

**"Watch therefore, and pray always
"You'll be counted worthy
"To escape..."** the Lord Jesus said.

Although the signs are disturbing
Take heart, my dear friends
For his return to us lies *just ahead*.

Let us join in prayer for:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC) (Ghana)

The Blessing of Peace

by Jerry Smith

If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. -Isaiah 48:18

What is peace? Webster says, “a state of calm and quiet, security, freedom from disturbing thoughts or emotions, a state of concord, and agreement to end hostilities.” Comes close, but misses the mark. The Bible describes it as, “Perfect well being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity, and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts.” This is certainly a better definition for Christians. We also know that peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But this Scripture has another connotation of serenity. Like the peace you would experience by sitting on the bank of a deep river and watching it languidly flow by.

The peace that only comes from knowing that you are right with God. That you have confessed your short comings and that he has forgiven you and cleansed you from all unrighteousness. Eugene Petersen has a similar interpretation in John 16:23-24, “This is what I want you to do: ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I’ve revealed to you. Ask in my name, according to my will, and he’ll most certainly give it to you. Your joy (peace) will be a river overflowing its banks.”

Youth: Do you have this peace that only God can give?

Adults: Do you lack this peace because you don’t take everything to God in prayer?

Prayer: Father, we pray that our peace may be that river overflowing its banks and that we will lift our hearts in praise to you the giver. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger

Start Each New Day with God

by Judy Williams

Let the morning bring me words of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. -Psalm 143:8

As a very young child I would wake up each morning full of enthusiasm for whatever the day held in store for me. Then, as a teenager, I recall the pressures of schoolwork and the schedule of events that “planned my day” for me. Throughout all these early years I sensed God’s presence, guiding my actions, even though I was not then consciously aware of this particular passage in Psalms.

In my college years I began to delve more deeply into the Bible. And as I reached adulthood and took on the responsibilities of marriage, parenthood and employment as a teacher, chaos could well have begun to direct my path! However, turning to God each morning and asking for his direction in the unfolding hours gave a sense of peace in accomplishing the day’s tasks. Through reading and re-reading God’s word for us in the Bible, I am sure more than ever of his guiding love for me.

I trust God’s Daily Planner in my life! Setting aside time for prayer and Scripture reading starts the day with purpose and gives direction and clarity all day long.

Youth: Do you think about God and what he wants you to do each morning when you wake up? Do you pray and ask him to show you how to live each day?

Adults: Have you found a way to “let go and let God” take over when the day’s problems seem perplexing? Can you, like the psalmist, lift up your soul to God?

Prayer: Dear Father in Heaven, I know you have a plan for my life, not only in the grand scheme but also in the smallest details. I ask you to guide me that I may fulfill the plans you have for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

You Give Them Something to Eat

by Jennifer Monroe

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "And it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

-Mark 6:35-37

It had already been a really long day. The disciples were just back from a preaching tour in Galilee and were exhausted. But just as soon as they think they have escaped the crowds to find food and rest, they discover to their dismay that they have been followed. Jesus takes one look and, instead of telling the thousands of people to go home and find him tomorrow, he starts teaching them again! After a little while, the disciples have had enough, and they do what seems to them to be the compassionate thing. They tell Jesus to send the people away so that everyone can get some food and a good night's rest.

There are a few things that could have happened next. Jesus could have taken his disciples' advice and told the people to go away and come back tomorrow. He could have called down manna from heaven and immediately fed them all himself. What Jesus actually does, however, is perhaps the most surprising option of all: he says to the disciples, "You give them something to eat." Their dumbfounded reaction is understandable: "Are you kidding? Feeding this many people would take eight months wages! Do you seriously want us to spend that much money just on one meal?" It seems, however, that they're missing the point, which is that Jesus intends to use the resources that are already available in order to feed these 5,000 hungry people. Isn't that the way it so often goes? We might be tempted to look at our own lives and only see scarcity, what we don't have. God, however, is calling us to take stock and see what we do have and then offer it to him for his use. When offered in his service, our meager loaves and fish can be turned into an abundant banquet for thousands.

Youth: How would you feel if you were the boy with the five loaves and two fish that Jesus used to feed thousands?

Adults: Do you look at your life and see what you do have or only what you don't have?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we thank and praise you for the abundance with which you have given us. Give us eyes to see it and the will to use it for your glory. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

What is Your Foundation?

by Dick Leon

But when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed.

-Mark 6.49-51

I love the first line of Scott Peck's best seller, *The Road Less Traveled*, it goes like this: "Life is difficult."

Amen to that! And these days life is more difficult for more people than it has been for a long time! We are living in uncertain times with fierce winds shaking the foundations. Or is it the foundations that are being shaken? Maybe it is only the house! Or to use the image of our text today, only the houseboat!

The foundation for us should be the person of Jesus Christ. He cannot be shaken. He may shake us! But he cannot be shaken. He is the same yesterday, today and forever! So when he is in our boat in the midst of the storm even the wind capitulates to his presence.

The lesson for us here is to not make our houseboats into our foundations! All of our endeavors ... our careers, our investments, our possessions, even our families ... are subject to the storms of life and will be shaken. But not Jesus! He alone is a foundation worthy of all our trust. Invite him into your little houseboat and the storms will amazingly die down!

Youth: Have you tried to include Jesus in your storms?

Adults: What is the difference in your life between your houseboat and your foundation?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, come into our lives as the foundation for living, not an accessory but as the center, the core, the essence so that the winds around us will at least die down! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 LECTIONARY READINGS

Ps 122:1-9

Is 51:1-8

Gal 3:23-29

Mk 7:1-23

Ps 100:1-5

Unclean

by Karen Foss

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?’ He replied, Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites: as it is written: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.

-Mark 7:1-2,5-8

In reading this passage, I am reminded of the men and women that are preparing to go down to Rocky Point to build houses in February. To begin with, most stay in tents in the middle of a flat area of nothing but sand. Toilets and showers are primitive at best and not available at the actual work site where the construction takes place. Because time is short, lunches are packed in the morning and placed in paper bags and transported to the work site. A sheltered port-a-potty is set up first thing. Most people where the homes are built do not have running water. It is delivered to them via truck and stored in huge tanks. When it is lunch time, hand sanitizers are available but hands are not clean by any means! And, yes, sometimes there is work to be done on Sunday.

What would the Pharisees think of all of this? Just as Jesus’ disciples were doing long ago, the hard working disciples from Northminster will be doing God’s work. Yes, they will be eating their lunch with unclean hands, but will it really matter? Will it matter to the families that get the homes that will be constructed?

Youth: Have you gone on a mission trip and gotten dirty doing God’s work? How did it make you feel?

Adults: Have you ever thought of going on a mission trip? It’s an experience that you will never regret.

Prayer: Dear Father, help me look around and see where I can be used to do your work, even if it means I will have to get dirty to do it! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Presbyterian Church of Sudan

NOTES

Books of the Bible Abbreviations

Old Testament

Genesis - Gen
Exodus - Ex
Leviticus - Lev
Numbers - Num
Deuteronomy - Deu
Joshua - Jos
Judges - Jud
Ruth - Ruth
1 Samuel - 1 Sam
2 Samuel - 2 Sam
1 Kings - 1 Kng
2 Kings - 2 Kng
1 Chronicles - 1 Chr
2 Chronicles - 2 Chr
Ezra - Ezr
Nehemiah - Neh
Esther - Est
Job - Job
Psalms - Ps
Proverbs - Prv
Ecclesiastes - Ecc
Song of Solomon - Song
Isaiah - Is
Jeremiah - Jer
Lamentations - Lam
Ezekial - Eze
Daniel - Dan
Hosea - Hos
Joel - Joel
Amos - Am
Jonah - Jon
Micah - Mic
Nahum - Nah
Habakkuk - Hab
Zephaniah - Zeph
Haggai - Hag
Zechariah - Zech
Malachi - Mal

New Testament

Matthew - Mt
Mark - Mk
Luke - Lk
John - Jn
Acts of the Apostles - Acts
Romans - Rom
1 Corinthians - 1 Cor
2 Corinthians - 2 Cor
Galatians - Gal
Ephesians - Eph
Philippians - Phil
Colossians - Col
1 Thessalonians - 1 Thes
2 Thessalonians - 2 Thes
1 Timothy - 1 Tim
2 Timothy - 2 Tim
Titus - Titus
Philemon - Philemon
Hebrews - Heb
James - Jam
1 Peter - 1 Pet
2 Peter - 2 Pet
1 John - 1 Jn
2 John - 2 Jn
3 John - 3 Jn
Jude - Jude
Revelation - Rev

Northminster Presbyterian Church

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