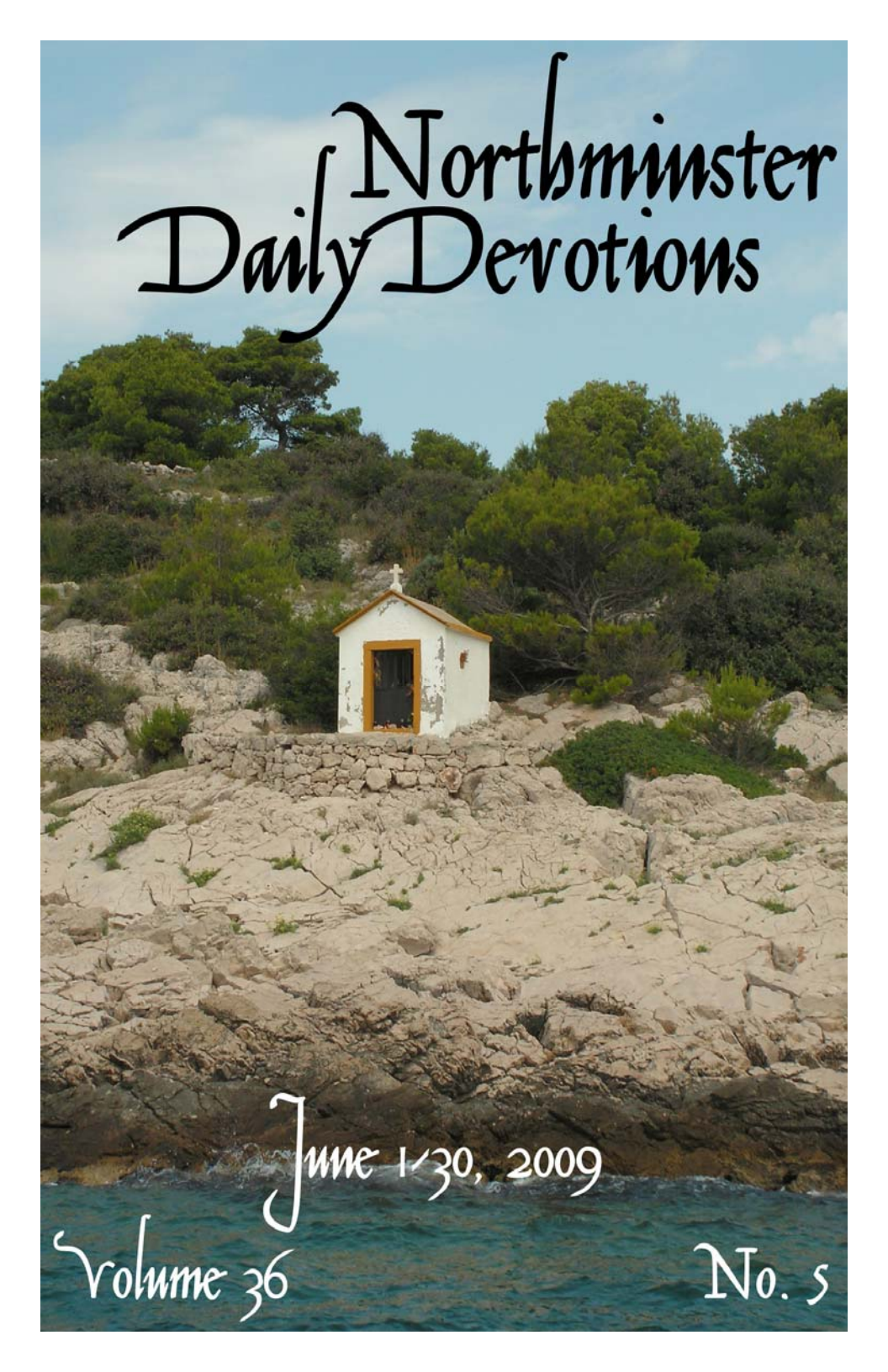


# Northminster Daily Devotions



June 1/30, 2009

Volume 36

No. 5

# ***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.

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 June 28, 2009.*

Cover image: Lonesome chapel on Croatian coast.

***The gray 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.***

**MONDAY, JUNE 1 LECTIONARY READINGS**

Psalm 57:1-11 Deuteronomy 11:13-19 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2 Luke 17:1-10 Psalm 85:1-13

***To Forgive is Divine***

by John McKee

It is a mystery to man  
The capacity of God  
To forgive sin without recall.

When we forgive those by  
Whom we've been wronged,  
We rarely forget it at all.

We may forgive with a word,  
Or through some deed.  
Either way it is very worthwhile

To see the faces of those  
Who have treated us badly,  
Light up with a joyful smile.

We cannot forgive others  
Their sins against us  
Until we've granted *ourselves* absolution.

As self-flagellation  
For sins we've committed  
Is an obstacle and not a solution.

The ability to forgive  
That is placed in our hearts  
Is a gift from God that is pure.

The benefit realized  
By forgiving ourselves  
Is removal of guilt we endure.

For, 'to err is human.  
'to forgive is divine'  
(I believe Alexander Pope coined that phrase).

But it still rings of truth  
In the here and now  
As it did back in Mr. Pope's days.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Presbytery of St. Andrew (Mississippi)***

## TUESDAY, JUNE 2 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 54:1-7    Deuteronomy 12:1-12    2 Corinthians 6:3-7:1    Luke 17:11-19    Psalm 28:1-9

# *Dividing Lines*

by Dale McArthur

*Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." -Luke 17:17-19*

Jesus was famous for placing his ministry in situations of conflict allowing him to show solutions to problems. In traveling to Jerusalem, he selected a path that traveled between Galilee and Samaria. It was a difficult path to travel between two unfriendly communities. As predicted, the opportunity for Jesus to teach all a lesson presented itself.

Ten men who had leprosy called out from a distance to have mercy by Jesus. He sent them to their priest and on the way they were healed. That was the first miracle but it also put pressure on the local priests—what were they to do with those nine men?

One of the Samaritan men returned to Jesus praising God for being healed. This demonstration of human nature gave Jesus the opportunity to ask about the other nine. It was a mirror for us to see our society today.

This scripture can cause us to look around our own communities and try to identify the "one" and the "nine," and to help us structure our personal ministry of what are we going to do with them or for them? Are they Samaritans or Galileans? Does it make a difference? We, too, may be one of the ten.

**Youth:** Have you identified the borders around your life and the people who are there?

**Adults:** Is the perceived price of helping people calling out, a real price?

**Prayer:** Lord, open our eyes and our lives so we can see our borders and help us learn to function within the Gospel and your love. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

*The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley (Alabama)*

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 65:1-13 Deuteronomy 13:1-13 2 Corinthians 7:2-16 Luke 17:20-37 Psalm 125:1-5

# Three Levels of Healing

by Dick Leon

*Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." -Luke 17:17-19*

When we lived in the Philippines we saw a lot of people coming from all over the world to be "healed" by a band of "faith healers." Much of it was just a bold rip-off. We watched one "operation" that was more sleight of hand than divine intervention! But it left me wondering: "What can we believe about God's healing work today?"

In today's text we see Jesus heal ten lepers and one of them returned to give God thanks. Jesus said: "Your faith has made you 'well'." The Greek word used here also means "saved!" In this text two levels of healing take place: physical healing and being saved! Is that what "healing" means in scripture?

Actually, I find three levels of healing mentioned in the Bible:

- The deepest and most enduring healing Jesus brings us is our saving relationship with God! The one leper who returns to give thanks is now "saved" and that is a lot more than physical healing.
- Secondly, healing happens where someone lives with an infirmity but finds God's strength in the midst of their weakness (see Paul's lack of physical healing but new strength in 2 Corinthians 12).
- And thirdly, there are stories where the outward signs of illness are totally removed. The lepers were all cleansed! That shows the power of Jesus to restore physical health. I believe this level of healing still happens, but it is not automatic and it does not just depend on "having enough faith" as "faith healers" often claim!

God uses many "therapies." Modern medicine is one of them, so we should not pray and avoid the doctor, any more than we should see the doctor and avoid praying! The church possesses even more therapies: worship, Scripture, a loving community, sacraments, prayer. These therapies lead us to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, God's most enduring "healing." They also are avenues of grace to live with infirmities and, sometimes, the total cure of an illness.

**Youth:** Does your understanding of "health" include a relationship with God?

**Adults:** What therapies of the church mean the most to your health?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant us your healing grace on all levels, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Presbytery of South Alabama***

## THURSDAY, JUNE 4 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 143:1-12 Deuteronomy 16:18-20;17:14-20 2 Corinthians 8:1-16 Luke 18:1-8 Psalm 81:1-16

# ***Idols and Injustice***

by Jennifer Monroe

*Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you. Deuteronomy 16:20*

At first glance, this passage about judges seems out of place, falling right after instructions about feasts and celebrations (chapter 15 is about the year of canceling debts and freeing servants and chapter 16 covers the celebration of Passover and the feasts of weeks and tabernacles) and right before warnings about worshipping other gods.

Upon reflection, the placement of these commands makes perfect sense. Over and over again in the Old Testament, the worship of idols is linked to injustice. When Israel forgets her history and who she is and thus her reason for feasting and celebration, and finds herself worshipping foreign gods, injustice will not follow far behind. God's commands for Israel reflect a truth about human nature in general: when we create gods for ourselves, fashioned after our own images and designed to meet what we think are our own particular needs (whether that be for money, power, attractiveness, or prestige, to name a few), the end result is that we are tempted to marginalize those who do not "measure up," as we perceive ourselves to do. We will also start to look like that which we worship. Worship an empty wooden statue (or a glossy two-dimensional magazine picture, or a flimsy dollar bill, or a plastic trophy) and you'll soon find yourself as hollow and shallow as the idol you revere, completely unconcerned about the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. Worship the living, all-powerful Creator God, understanding your need for his grace and mercy, and you will start to look like him and find yourself genuinely concerned for all of the people with whom you come in contact. It's worth reminding ourselves, however, that just like all good things that are themselves worthy of our time and attention (holiness, meekness, and peace, for example), we need to be careful that we don't allow ourselves to put our desire for justice in God's place. Our struggle to see justice realized in the world is one important means by which we worship the true and living God; it is not itself the end. That role is reserved for God alone.

**Youth:** What are some idols that you might be tempted to worship? How can you remind yourself to worship God alone?

**Adults:** Have you ever found yourself idolizing anything that ultimately led you to act in an unjust or unloving way to other people? How might you prevent that happening in the future?

**Prayer:** Almighty, living, all-powerful God, forgive us for the times when we have worshiped anything other than you. Thank you for your graceful forgiveness and remind us to worship only you. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Presbytery of Transylvania (Kentucky)***

## FRIDAY, JUNE 5 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 88:1-18 Deuteronomy 26:1-11 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 Luke 18:9-14 Psalm 6:1-10

# *Mr. Invincible*

by Scott Coverdale

*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. -Luke 18:14b*

I regularly tell my son Brandon that I am the Smartest Man in the World. I also claim the title, on special occasions, of “Mr. Invincible.” One Sunday afternoon when Brandon and I were on a bicycle exploration near the Rillito River, we came across a construction zone. There was, of course, some of that pesky orange fencing and a wee little bit of yellow caution tape that was practically dragging on the ground, but there was also the prospect of being the first ever bicyclists to cross the soon-to-be completed Alvernon Bridge—a golden opportunity. We rode across in fine fashion, congratulating ourselves for our bicycling achievement. On the other side were some new concrete steps, just beckoning to a mountain bike. I stopped at the top of the stairway.

“Hey, Brandon,” I called out. “You think we could ride down these stairs?”

Brandon eyed the proposal with over-cautious skepticism. “No, don’t do it, Dad,” he intoned. “You’ll kill yourself.”

“Aw, come on,” I said. “You seem to be forgetting that I am the smartest man in the world. I am Mr. Invincible.”

Brandon obstinately shook his head. “Don’t to it, Dad. If you do, you’re crazy.”

That settled it. I knew that my duty lay with showing my impressionable son how to overcome a challenge with confidence and courage. I rode my bike in a little loop and began descending the stairs victoriously. Then somehow the world conspired against me and somehow I became airborne and my bicycle and I parted ways. I landed several yards below in an undignifying jumble, bruised, bleeding and somewhat humiliated. Brandon helped me up, thinking private thoughts.

Our verse today doesn’t mention bicycles, but does point out the folly of coming to God in an attitude of self-confidence and a sense of superiority over other people. God loves us, to be sure, but that love is all about mercy and grace, not because He is impressed with our virtue, knowledge or power.

**Youth:** Have you ever seen someone who was boastful and proud? What do people usually think of that kind of person?

**Adults:** Do you harbor any confidence towards God that may be a function of your own virtue instead of a trust in God’s grace?

**Prayer:** Thank you, God, for your willingness to accept and love us in spite of ourselves and our foolish ways. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

*The Presbytery of Western Kentucky*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 6 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 122:1-9 Deuteronomy 29:2-15 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 Luke 18:15-30 Psalm 100:1-5

# ***Peace Within***

by Anne Price

*For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say "Peace be within you."*

*-Psalm 122:8*

Have you ever noticed when reading a familiar verse from the Bible one word stood out? Over the years I have heard the clergy say "peace be with you" and we responded "and with you." Or, we have been asked to say to those around us "peace be with you." The word within is what created a desire to look into a deeper meaning for the word.

How can I feel peace within? The first attitude that came to my mind was gratitude. I love the quote from G. K. Chesterson, "*I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.*"

The second pathway to peace from within, as represented by Jesus himself, is forgiveness. When I carried anger or resentment towards others I have actually felt a heavy heart. I have found it necessary for me to forgive others for me to be at peace within.

The third way to have peace within is through connectedness with others as did Jesus with his twelve disciples. I have people in my life that I communicate with regularly. We give and take from each other. Each Sunday, for example we look around the church to see familiar faces. We meet afterwards for refreshments in the courtyard for catch up. Even the mega churches know the value of small groups in order to feel connectedness.

Peace within is evidenced by the trust in God and will work in the heart of the individual to bring about His plan for us.

**Youth:** What brings you comfort when things around you seem crazy?

**Adults:** Where do you go in your thoughts when you do not have control of what is happening around you?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father please continue to remind me that peace within is what you give to me. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Synod of Mid-America (Kansas and Missouri)***

**SUNDAY, JUNE 7 LECTIONARY READINGS**

Psalm 103:15-25

Deuteronomy 6:1-15

Ephesians 4:1-16

John 1:1-18

Psalm 117:1-2

# ***A Farewell***

by John McKee

Perhaps it is well  
That we none can know  
The trials that we are to face

Before being called home  
From here on earth  
To live a far better place.

To a place where pain  
Is no longer remembered...  
Where tears never again shall flow.

To a joyful place  
To be with loved ones  
Who crossed over long ago.

The peaceful beauty  
We can but imagine  
Until we go there to dwell.

In the Scriptures we learn  
It is far more lovely  
Than mere mortal words can tell.

To be welcomed home  
By the Lord Jesus Christ  
When our life on earth is through,

Will trivialize the trials  
That we mortals endured  
As we begin life in Heaven anew.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Trinity Sunday***

## MONDAY, JUNE 8 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 61:1-12 Deuteronomy 30:1-10 2 Corinthians 10:1-18 Luke 18:31-43 Psalm 73:1-28

# *Lives Restored*

by Karen Foss

*When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. -Deuteronomy 30:1-3*

These were some of Moses' last words to his people. He speaks of God's mercy. He promises a new beginning for us no matter what we've done and how far we've strayed from him. He can take even the most broken lives and make them new. We have a wonderful example of this right here in Tucson.

Last year, the Gospel Rescue Mission opened a new transitional home for women that had turned their lives around and were living clean and sober. Some of these women had been homeless and on the streets. Some have children and were living in abusive situations. With the help of the Gospel Rescue group they learned life skills, and just as important, how to trust in God for their everyday needs. The new and beautiful transitional home is for those women that are completing courses in substance abuse recovery and are getting ready to enter the work force and living on their own. The home has 6 beautiful bedrooms for the women and their children, a large dining area, kitchen and living rooms for both the women and the children. The back yard is a very peaceful setting with a play area for the children. What is most beautiful is that this is a Christian setting teaching Christian values. I highly recommend you take a tour when they have their next open house.

**Youth:** Do you know that there is nothing you can do that will make your Father in heaven turn his back on you?

**Adults:** Isn't it wonderful that we have a loving God who will forgive us no matter what the circumstances?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for your unconditional love. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy (Illinois and Missouri)***

## TUESDAY, JUNE 9 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 12:1-8

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

2 Corinthians 11:1-21a

Luke 19:1-10

Psalm 36

# ***Lost and Found***

by Marie Ruiz

*Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:9-10*

I love reading this story of Zacchaeus—in fact every time I read it I remember the song I learned in Sunday School as a young girl:

*Zacchaeus was a wee little man  
a wee little man was he.  
He climbed up in the sycamore tree...*

You know what I'm talking about. Zacchaeus was a wee little man and that's precisely why he had to climb that tree in order to see Jesus. But more important is what he heard Jesus saying. Jesus' words transformed the mind of Zacchaeus and only God knew he would be having this encounter with Zacchaeus in his home. The crowds around them were in dismay. They disrespected Zacchaeus for cheating people and could not understand that transforming power that a single encounter with Jesus could do. But Jesus knew this man was in need of a Savior. Jesus knew that Zacchaeus' transformation would be a moment for all the doubters to reconsider. These Zacchaeus haters now witnessed honesty and integrity in a man who had one of the worst reputations in town.

But what really was difficult for the crowd to get their head around was when Jesus referred to Zacchaeus as "the son of Abraham." This was altogether incomprehensible to those who knew Zacchaeus as a cheat and turncoat—a Jew who worked for the Romans against his own people. Jesus in his words again teaches the crowd that he has come to seek and save all who are lost, **that means all**, even those we despise.

We all are in need of a Savior. That is precisely why Christ came to die on a cross. We have been given salvation through Christ's blood that was shed and body that was broken for you and me. Thank you Lord for this indescribable gift.

**Youth:** What do you think about Zacchaeus? Was he smart to climb the tree?

**Adults:** I don't think Zacchaeus looked back. He was transformed. Do you look back even after you know God has pointed you in a new direction? Let us be content in following God's forward leading.

**Prayer:** I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Heartland Presbytery (Kansas and Missouri)***

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 96:1-13 Deuteronomy 31:30-32:14 2 Corinthians 11:21b-33 Luke 19:11-27 Psalm 132

# *How Do I Love Thee*

by John McKee

Let me count the ways  
That I love my LORD GOD.  
Let me tell you why I will forever.

Because he first loved me  
Even though I'm a sinner.  
Because he will forsake me never.

When my friends turn away  
And I feel down and out...  
When life for me has lost its zest.

I come to him with my burdens  
For whenever I'm weary...  
He always gives me peaceful rest.

I try to show him I'm grateful  
Through prayers of thanksgiving  
And by lifting up my voice in song

To praise his power and glory  
In joyful adoration...  
Singing out loudly and strong.

I cannot count all the blessings  
He bestows on me daily,  
Asking only my love in return.

Can there be any wonder  
I profess my love for him...  
Any wonder it continues to burn?

And it burns ever brighter  
When I consider his Son...  
Sacrificed on that cruel cross to die

So that all may have life  
And have it in abundance...  
Who steadfastly refuse to deny

That Jesus is KING of kings.  
He is LORD of lords.  
He is the Savior of all mankind.

Those who confess with their lips  
These absolute truths  
At the Rapture... won't be left behind.

Let us join in prayer for:

***John Calvin Presbytery (Kansas and Missouri)***

## THURSDAY, JUNE 11 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 116:1-19

Song of Solomon 1:1-3,9-11,15-16a;2:1-3a

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Luke 19:28-40

Psalm 26:1-12

# ***What Do I Owe You Lord?***

by Jennifer Hager

*How can I repay the Lord for all the goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. -Psalm 116:12-14*

In Psalm 166, the writer begins by praising the Lord for all he has done for him. The Lord heard his cry and he turned his ear to the author. The psalmist praises the Lord as gracious and righteous, full of compassion (verses 1-11).

In verse 12, the author prays to the Lord for guidance in how he can repay the Lord. In this world, we are accustomed to receiving and then calculating what we owe in return. But in the kingdom of our Lord, we owe him nothing. What he gives us is freely given, with no possibility of repayment in proportion to what he gives us. Our Lord Jesus Christ repays our debt for us.

But we can honor our Lord through worship and praise and study of the Holy Bible. We can accept the instruction of the Holy Spirit and allow him to dwell in us. The Lord desires that we become like Jesus and welcome his will in our lives in all we do.

**Youth:** Jesus repays our debt for us. Grow in your relationship with Christ to honor the Father.

**Adults:** How can we repay the Lord today? Praise him, worship him, and join his fellowship of believers in maturing in your faith.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, thank you for freely giving us our salvation. Help us to seek your will in all we do and to walk in the path of righteousness. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Missouri Union Presbytery***

## FRIDAY, JUNE 12 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 84:1-12

Song of Solomon 2:8-13;4:1-4a,5-7,9-11

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Luke 19:41-48

Psalm 25:1-22

# Coming Home

by Jennifer Monroe

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*

-Psalm 84:1-2

Do you know what it's like to be homesick? I remember the first time I spent the night at a friend's house crying quietly into my pillow after the lights were out. Even though I had been having a lot of fun, all I wanted at that moment was to go home to my own bed. Many of us have experienced similar feelings of longing for home, sometimes after being gone for only a few hours or days, sometimes after being away for months or years. No matter the exciting or exotic things we've seen or the new experiences we've enjoyed, we just want to be home, in familiar surroundings, with people we know and love.

It might be hard for a 21st century Christian to imagine, but this kind of intense longing to be "at home" is the same feeling that the psalmist expresses in Psalm 84. The difference is, the psalmist doesn't want to go home, he wants to be in the Temple. He cannot be content or at peace until he knows he is in God's house. For the ancient Jew, the temple was the place most closely associated with the presence of God. In fact, in 2 Chronicles 7:2b-3, when Solomon has finished praying to dedicate the temple, fire literally comes down from heaven, burns up the people's sacrifices, and "the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it." Obviously, this was a very special place.

Solomon's temple no longer exists, but thankfully for us, we no longer need a temple in order to be in the presence of God. Do you want to know where God dwells now? In us! The Church, not the physical building, but all people everywhere who name Jesus Christ as Lord, is God's temple. Both individually and as a whole group, we are his dwelling place, his home. As Paul said to the Men of Athens in the Areopagus, "*The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands*" (Acts 17:24). He also wrote to the Ephesians 2:22, "*And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*" Look around the next time you're with other believers and remember, these people are God's temples. You are in the presence of God! Welcome home!

**Youth:** Have you ever been homesick? How did it feel?

**Adults:** How might you treat other people differently if you looked at them like temples, dwelling places of God?

**Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you have chosen to indwell us, making human beings your home. Help us to treat ourselves and others like the temples that we are. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Presbytery of Northern Kansas***

## SATURDAY, JUNE 13 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 63:1-11

Song of Solomon 5:10-16;7:1-7a,9;8:6-7

2 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 20:1-8

Psalm 125:1-5

# *Is Sex Dirty?*

by Frank Shallenberger

*Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of a craftsman's hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. -Song of Solomon 7:1b-2*

The Song of Solomon is included in the Holy Bible because God wanted us to know that married love and sex are meant to bring pleasure and joy to both husband and wife. If anyone should be an expert on the subject it should be Solomon who had over 700 wives and countless concubines. However the devotion he expresses here could not have been written after he had descended into the sin of polygamy. Apparently he wrote this beautiful book about his first wife, their courtship, marriage and wedding night.

Marriage was instituted by God and testified to in Genesis, Chapter 2:24 *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

Just mention the word "sex" today and most people immediately associate it with the sordid exploitation as seen in the movies and on television. Is it surprising therefore that God included in the biblical texts a book that devotes itself to the beauty and purity of marital love and sex?

**Youth:** Do you snicker when you hear the word "sex"? Do you understand the difference between sexual hanky-panky between young people and the sexual relationship between husband and wife?

**Adults:** Have you begun to think of sex as a sordid relationship between men and women?

**Prayer:** Father God, you included all of the books in our Holy Bible that we might be instructed in your ways. Help us to look upon sexual relationships in marriage as a beautiful expression of your will. This we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

*The Presbytery of Southern Kansas*

## SUNDAY, JUNE 14 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 103:1-22 Exodus 6:2-13;7:1-6 Revelation 15:1-8 Matthew 18:1-4 Psalm 117:1-2

# Speech Class

by Andy Ross

*But Moses said to the Lord, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?" -Exodus 6:12*

I had a rough time in speech. For each of my major presentations, I would get so nervous about talking in front of people, I would suffer from a horrible red rash that would blotch all over my neck and up into my face. I quickly learned in my initial speeches that people weren't so much listening to my prepared talks as they were staring at me, wondering if I would live through them. I looked like a patient with some kind of tropical plague, reporting on my little nervous talk, before I fell over and died. It was one of those nasty cycles: I would get the rash because I was nervous, and the rash only made me more nervous. Neat.

It's good to hang in there in speech class, though right? It makes me feel good that Moses, one of the premier heroes of the Bible, had to be encouraged by God to stand and deliver.

Let's be clear about the facts: Moses was having a rough time telling his fellow Israelites that they were going to be rescued by a God who wanted to be *their* God. Pharaoh wasn't much better as audience — he was a super-powerful leader of a mighty empire, who liked thinking of himself as god! Talk about suffering from a rash! But God told Moses to hang in there, and speak up for how he was the One who really rules this world, and how he was going to deliver his people from out of cruel bondage.

Let's face our facts today — it's not always easy speaking up about your faith, how we go to church, how we trust in Jesus. Sometimes when we want to talk about God, we might even get a rash. Just remember: It's not the end of the world, and God is always there to help you, give you the coaching you need. Most importantly, there are people all around you who need to hear what you have to say about this God you worship and love! Don't be afraid to speak up!

**Youth:** When is it hard for you to talk to people about God? Why?

**Adults:** (same question)

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, please give us your speech lesson each day; we want to tell others about you, and what you mean to us. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary***

## MONDAY, JUNE 15 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 5:1-7

1 Samuel 1:1-20

Acts 1:1-14

Luke 20:9-19

Psalm 82:1-8

# ***Just One Man***

by Cheryl Moore

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit is come on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. -Acts 1:8*

My Christian “Spiritual” birth can be traced back to a man named David Wilkerson; a pastor who braved the streets of New York in the late 1950s to preach the Gospel to street gangs. A really bad, bound for Hell gang member named Nicky gave his life to Christ and began his own ministry rescuing gang members and giving lectures. Nicky and David are still best of friends, and changing lives!

A young Jewish girl named Terry attended one of Nicky’s lectures at the University of Arizona in 1972. During one of his “alter calls” she did the unthinkable for a Jew at that time... She gave her heart and life to Christ.

In 2000, Terry had a tough time giving the good news of Christ to a co-worker, but she persevered and prayed (a lot!) and later that year, Cheryl Moore gave her life to Christ and to this day they are still best of friends! But it all started with just one man who felt the Holy Spirit move him to be a witness to the Gangs of New York! Praise God for those who dared to share!!

If you want to go back even further... It began with just one man, who took all of our sinful ways upon himself so that we can be closer to God! He was the one who originally told us of God’s unfailing love even though he faced danger! That’s where the pebble was dropped and it indeed has rippled to the uttermost parts of the earth!

**Youth:** Do you try to tell people about God even if it’s very difficult? Do you know that Jesus is your Best Friend?

**Adults:** Are you striving to be the pebble, to start more ripples to reach those who need the Good News of Christ?

**Prayer:** Father, we pray that you make us your witnesses to those around us and unto the farthest reaches of the Earth! Help us to make a difference for your sake. In Christ we pray, Amen!

Let us join in prayer for:

***Conference of European Churches***

***World Alliance of Reformed Churches***

## TUESDAY, JUNE 16 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 42:1-11

1 Samuel 1:21-2:11

Acts 1:15-26

Luke 20:19-26

Psalm 102:1-28

# ***Just What Is Brotherly Love?***

by Judy Williams

*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! -Psalms 133:1*

This psalm is one of the group of fifteen psalms known to us as Psalms of Ascent.

According to a Bible commentary, these Psalms (120-134) may have been sung by worshipers from all parts of Palestine as they went up to Jerusalem for the great festivals. Others suggest that the number 15 refers to the fifteen steps leading to the Court of Israel in the Temple, and that the Psalms were sung on these steps.

Today's "brotherly love" psalm bears closer study. At first reading, I remembered my own family and the closeness I felt during my formative years as I enjoyed happy times spent with my parents and younger sister. Every family has its times of stress and disagreement, but understanding and forgiveness for shortcomings does bring about the good and pleasant feelings of unity.

I believe David's intention when writing this song was to bring to mind the divisions that had caused the separation of the tribes. The coming together of all the Israelites during the great feasts enabled them to experience the unity of purpose that God had planned for them. Being able to live together in brotherly love was truly good and pleasant!

Today, God wants us to be united in purpose. The Israelites had separated into just two kingdoms. How many different denominations are represented in our city? How do we let different worshiping styles separate us from our brothers and sisters? How do we allow small irritations to separate us from those near us? Think about this favorite hymn:

Blest be the ties that bind our hearts in Christian love.

The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

**Youth:** How can you show brotherly and sisterly love to your family today?

**Adults:** Can you resolve to look for the Christ-like attributes in someone with whom you find it difficult to spend time? How might this bring about a good and pleasant feeling in your heart?

**Prayer:** Dear Father, remind me today that all of your children are my brothers and sisters. Help me to strive to live in unity with each of them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***The Church of Sweden, The National Church of Denmark, The Norwegian Church, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria.***

## ***Sitting on the Porch***

by Anne Price

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. -Psalm 1:1-2*

As I opened the Book of Psalms, I felt the exultation of God's word. This prepared me to be able to listen to him and not merely letting him hear my words.

To meditate means to empty myself of everything and allow my mind to rest at peace while going deep into the heart. To be silent is natural and yet how many of us can do that?

The first thought that came to mind on the subject of meditation was a slow ball from left field. I was amazed at how my old in-laws could sit on their front porch of their little farm in East Texas and just be quietly peaceful. I would pull up a rocker and join them while not feeling the urge to talk. The only books that they had in their home were well worn Bibles. They lived their faith and loved Jesus with all of their hearts. I felt safe within and learned a new peace that I had not had living a hectic life in Houston and Los Angeles.

In our home in the Tucson Mountains we have a couple of rockers on the front porch. Yet, we, like others today don't spend time just sitting quietly on the front porch being grateful for all that God has blessed us with.

I have learned to be careful who I am with while in a meditative state. The mind can be open to suggestions that would not follow God's laws. We are blessed when we derive our ideas of life from God's word rather than what the world offers. May our minds rest at peace.

**Youth:** Where do you go to just think and listen to God?

**Adults:** Have you found that by being quietly with God you feel completely at rest?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, may you come into our open hearts while we are meditating on your word. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal***  
***Evangelical Church of Spain***

THURSDAY, JUNE 18 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 97:1-12

1 Samuel 2:27-36

Acts 2:22-36

Luke 20:41-21:4

Psalm 16:1-11

# ***First Evangelical Christian Sermon***

by Jerry Smith

*Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. -Acts 2:36*

This day began with around 120 people gathered together in one place where they received Christ's promise and the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of receiving the Holy Spirit. A great number of people, at least 3000, heard them speaking in their languages and asked for an explanation. This gave Peter the opportunity to deliver the first evangelical message of the new Christian Church.

I'm not sure how much of this message was Peter speaking and/or the Holy Spirit speaking through him, but it was a powerful message that convicted around 3000 people of their sins and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Savior. Powerful but not overly long or academically challenging. It established Jesus Christ as God's chosen Savior, their status as sinners and what they needed to do to be saved and the opportunity to be saved now!

I had the opportunity to work in a Billy Graham crusade in San Diego. He delivered a very simple message, but when he asked people to come forward to be saved it was instantaneous bedlam of people responding to the call. Rain or shine it made no difference, when the invitation was given the needy responded. I've often reflected on that experience and how we tend to over complicate the message of salvation. Keep it short, base it on God's Word, offer the invitation and expect the Holy Spirit to move hearts and respond to the invitation. A new KISS principle, "Keep It Simply Salvation."

**Youth:** Do you hesitate to speak about Jesus because of your youth ?

**Adults:** What is it that keeps you from speaking about Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord help us to trust your Spirit to give us the words to speak about you as Peter did on the day of Pentecost. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***United Reformed Church (United Kingdom)***

***Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland***

## FRIDAY, JUNE 19 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 51:1-19

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Acts 2:37-47

Luke 20:21:5-19

Psalm 142:1-7

# ***Cry Out Loud***

by Jennifer Hager

*Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me. -Psalm 142:7*

David starts this psalm with "I cry aloud to the Lord." In his anguish he lifts his voice out loud with his prayer. He tells the Lord of his torment at the hands of his pursuers. Those who pursue David have set a snare for him and they seem too strong.

But in all of it, David returns to the Lord who knows his way, and who knows his complaints before he tells him his trouble.

What a strong example David gives us in this Psalm. The Lord desires that we turn to him in our trouble and our torment and ask him for relief. But let us remember to praise the Lord for his holiness and grace for us. We should acknowledge his omnipotence in our lives.

The Lord uses his goodness so we can praise his name and bring his word to those around us.

**Youth:** Thank our Lord Jesus for his help in our lives.

**Adults:** Is there a prison we need release from? Turn to the Lord and ask His relief.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Almighty God, thank you for calling me to you. Please help me see your way in my life so I can be of service to you and to others. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Presbyterian Church in Wales (United Kingdom)***

***Presbyterian Church in Ireland***

## SATURDAY, JUNE 20 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 104:1-35

1 Samuel 4:1b-11

Acts 4:32-5:11

Luke 21:20-28

Psalm 138:1-8

# God's Plan for You

by Karen Foss

*When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted. May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever - do not abandon the works of your hands. -Psalm 138:3-4,8*

The first part of this Psalm, David is telling us to be sure to remember to thank God for answered prayers. This reminds me of an e-mail that I recently received. Someone was taking a tour of Heaven and went into one room and it was very busy with angels receiving prayers and relaying them to God. The next room was just as busy with angels busy helping God answer those prayers. The third room, however, was strangely quiet and the tour guide was asked why. His reply was that this was where thanks for prayers were processed. It's very important to thank God for what he does for us.

The last part of the Psalm reminds us that the very hands that created us, has a purpose for us. We can make all the plans we want for our life, but we need to think about what God has planned for our lives. Is he leading you in a particular direction? He and only He knows what's best for us and He alone can fulfill His purpose for us. A few years ago the church did a Lenten series based on Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. It is an excellent planning book to define your purpose and how you can best serve God and others. It's well worth reading every year.

**Youth:** Do you pray for things in your life? Are your prayers answered? Do you thank God for helping you?

**Adults:** No matter where we are in life we should keep in mind that God had a plan for us when we were being formed. We should consult him when we are making life changing decisions.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, only you know the real me and what you would have me do with my life. Lead me and guide me Father. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

**Reformed Church in France**

**World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Switzerland)**

## SUNDAY, JUNE 21 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 19:1-14

1 Samuel 4:12-22

James 1:1-18

Matthew 19:23-30

Psalm 142:1-7

# ***Wonder Full***

by Andy Ross

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*-Psalm 19:1*

If you're like me – you just need those moments of wonder from time to time. Psalm 19 is a favorite of mine, because David got it right: the night time sky is such a glorious message of God's awesomeness. I remember standing on my driveway as a teenager, at that time waking up in my faith, asking God in hushed prayer about what he wanted me to become and do, as I stared at the stars. I remember camping trips on youth outings, lying underneath the heavens, trying to answer some of the deepest questions that can come when you look that far, when you look that deeply. I remember watching a meteor shower with my excited family in our backyard at 2:00am — amazed at what God was doing and how it was worth it to wake up and watch.

James writes about the hard times we sometimes have to face, as God's people. He reminds us to live humbly in God's care, trusting that every "good and perfect gift is from above." James points out lessons from the sun, and from flowers ... he should have mentioned the stars.

When you stare into the night sky, the whole point is to wonder. We wonder at how big God is, and how small we are. We wonder about the glory of a God that could think up and then create a universe. We wonder about a God who could create a solar system, but also design the molecular structure of our own human skin! We wonder about a God who is that big, who loves us so much that his very own Son would become so small — a human like us — in order to save us.

Have you wondered lately? Wondered how God loves you? Wondered at what he wants you to be and do today?

**Youth:** What do you think is one of the neatest things about the night sky?

**Adults:** Share a time you felt hushed and filled with wonder because of the presence of God. Why did you feel that way?

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, help us to sense your presence today – and to live as your worshipping, faithful children. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Men of the Church***

## MONDAY, JUNE 22 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 135:1-21

1 Samuel 5:1-12

Acts 5:12-26

Luke 21:29-36

Psalm 97:1-12

# ***What Marvelous Faith in Our Lord and Savior***

by Jerry Smith

*Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. -Acts 5:14-16*

Why don't we see and experience this same faith today? Jesus hasn't changed for, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" Hebrews 13-8. So does that mean that we have changed and or the circumstances have changed? Our living conditions are certainly better and there is no doubt that today's medical science can heal almost everything. So how about those things that modern medicine can't heal. Can we still call upon him who created us from the dirt of the earth and knows every atom in our body to heal us?. And how about the problem of sin? Jesus Christ is still the **only answer** to the sin problem.

Life is too easy and we have become complacent. We don't see the urgency of our current circumstances and the need to call upon the Lord every moment of every day to see the situation as it is and to offer ourselves as vessels of change. We need the same faith as the church portrayed in these Scriptures from Acts. Faith to win souls for Christ and faith to pray for the sick and demon possessed. He hasn't changed, why should we?

**Youth:** Would you like to have been in faith movement of the early church?

**Adults:** Do you see the need for the faith of the Acts church in your life?

**Prayer:** Father fill us with your Spirit that we too might have the faith of the early Church. In and for Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Evangelical Church of Germany***

***Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland***

## TUESDAY, JUNE 23 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 123:1-4

1 Samuel 6:1-16

Acts 5:27-42

Luke 21:37-22:13

Psalm 30:1-12

# *The Word of Truth*

by Marie Ruiz

*They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. -Luke 22:13*

We've often heard a saying, "his word is good." And we know people we can trust and feel confident their word is good. When they say something we know we can count on it to be right and true.

That is exactly what typifies the Savior. His word is always right and true just as he said.

In our passage of Scripture in Luke for today, Jesus is instructing his disciples about the preparations they needed to make for Passover. In fact, it was the last Passover supper they would share before Jesus' crucifixion. These instructions were not simple, but had a series of steps that needed to be followed. The disciples did exactly as Jesus instructed and found the upper room where they would share Passover with the Savior.

The disciples asked Jesus how to prepare instead of taking matters in their own hands. No doubt these disciples were used to getting instructions from Jesus. They also showed confidence in Jesus' instructions by going straight away and following his commands, which led them precisely to the place Jesus told them about—the upper room.

This should be a great lesson for all of us who believe in Christ Jesus. His Word is true. We need to ask him what he would like us to do. And when we receive his Word of instruction, we need to go straight away and do it, and not even think about questioning. Our confidence in the Savior is demonstrated in our obedience to his Word.

**Youth:** When your parents ask you to do something, do you do it right away or question them as to why? Some day God may ask you to do something for him, will you question him or do it straight away? Obeying your parents will help you to obey God.

**Adults:** As adults, are forever in need of instruction from God. We need to depend on the teaching in his Word for direction in our lives and not rely on our own knowledge.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for the assurance that your Word is true. Help us to rely on it daily. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (Czech Republic)***

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 15:1-5

1 Samuel 7:2-17

Acts 6:1-15

Luke 22:14-23

Psalm 48:1-14

# *Truly Peaceful Rest*

by Judy Williams

*I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. -Psalm 4:8*

Many begin the day in prayer, devotional time, and Scripture reading. Today's suggested readings include David's fourth Psalm, which reminds me of the childhood comfort I received from a song my mother sang at bedtime. I would suggest that you might re-read this particular devotional once again this evening before you retire, thinking of all of God's blessings to you.

The song I remember had these words:

*Sleep, my child, and peace attend thee, all through the night.  
Guardian angels God will send thee, all through the night.  
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping, hill and vale in slumber sleeping,  
God in love his watch is keeping, all through the night.*

I remember, too, the words that God gave Moses in Numbers 6:24-26: *"The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."*

God wants his people to have peace in him. He sent his son Jesus so all the world could know. In John 14:27, during Jesus' last days of earthly ministry, he told his disciples, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

As you go to sleep tonight, remember Paul's words in Philippians 4:7-9, *"...the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things...and the God of peace will be with you."*

**Youth:** Will you remember God's blessings and thank him as you fall asleep tonight?

**Adults:** As a child of God, will you thank him for the blessings of safety and for the peace he gives you?

**Prayer:** Father, we thank you for the night and for peaceful rest. Guide our thoughts tonight as we prepare to sleep. Grant us refreshment for waking to do your will in the morning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy (Russia)***

***Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Russian Federation***

## ***Tea and Shortbread***

by Scott Coverdale

*... the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. -Luke 22:26*

My wife and firstborn son and I lived in Lesotho, where I worked as a community organizer, and did advocacy work for people who were being displaced by the construction of large dams. In the course of the work, I asked for an audience with the Anglican Archbishop of the country. To our surprise, two of my colleagues and I were invited to join the archbishop for tea. We arrived at the appointed time and were somewhat nervous as a grey-haired servant led us into a solemn and high-ceilinged dining room attached to the church. We spoke in subdued tones and waited for the archbishop. The servant brought out a plate of shortbread biscuits and tea, pouring each of us some tea, and adding cream and sugar according to our instructions. At last the servant finished his tasks and seated himself at the head of the table.

“Thank you for coming to visit me today,” he said with utmost politeness. “How may I please be of assistance?”

I am not sure what we each expected from the archbishop, but it was not to have him serving us tea and shortbread. My own expectations involved a tall hat, flowing robes and maybe a jeweled censer with holy smoke wafting out of it. To discover that the highest official of the church had just served us tea reorganized my preconceptions.

When Jesus served his disciples bread and wine, he was doing the same thing—he was challenging their assumptions about hierarchies and was showing them a new model of leadership. He left nothing to doubt when he told them that they, too, should serve as he did; that in the kingdom of God, things looked upside down from our usual expectations.

**Youth:** Think of an opportunity that you might have to serve someone who is younger than you or who would normally expect you to boss them around. Try it and see what happens.

**Adults:** In what way has Christ served you? In what way might you follow his example of service today or tomorrow?

**Prayer:** Thank you, God, for saving us through your condescension. Teach us, please, the wisdom of honoring you through our service to others. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Evangelical Reformed Church in Lithuania***

FRIDAY, JUNE 26 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 130:1-8

1 Samuel 9:1-14

Acts 7:17-29

Luke 22:31-38

Psalm 32:1-11

# Moses

by John McKee

The Children of Israel  
Were held captive in Egypt...  
Enslaved for more than four hundred years.

But, throughout their bondage  
They grew strong in number  
Giving rise to the cruel Pharaoh's fears.

So, when he ordered his soldiers  
To cast Hebrew male children  
Into the Nile River to drown...

A frightened Hebrew mother  
Concealed her new baby, Moses,  
When that edict from Pharaoh came down.

She placed him in a small arc  
Among the reeds of the Nile  
Where the daughter of Pharaoh bathed.

When his daughter saw the arc  
As it floated nearby,  
The life of young Moses was saved.

She raised him as her son...  
As a prince in the palace  
Later telling him of his past.

Still, he remained there with her  
For the next forty years  
But his royal life wasn't to last.

After killing a taskmaster  
For beating a Hebrew slave...  
Moses fled in fear for his life.

His flight took him to Midian  
Where he met a priest's daughter  
And took the young girl for his wife.

After tending her father's sheep  
For about forty years  
God spoke to him on mount Horeb one **DAY**.

He spoke from a flaming green bush  
And when Moses came closer  
He was stunned at what God had to say...

He commanded Moses go back  
And lead his people from bondage.  
Out of Egypt to the 'Promised Land'.

All through a forty-year trek  
Moses did lead the people...  
Obeying the Lord God's command.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Belarus  
Reformed Church in Carpath (Ukraine)***

## SATURDAY, JUNE 27 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 56:1-13

1 Samuel 9:15-10:1

Acts 7:30-43

Luke 22:39-51

Psalm 118:1-29

# ***Does His Love Endure Forever?***

by Dick Leon

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." -Psalm 118:1-2*

Do you ever doubt God's love? Do you ever doubt God? I do. I think we all do from time to time. Doubt is not the enemy of faith ... or even the opposite of faith. (Indifference is the enemy and the opposite of faith, not doubt.)

Doubts can be toxic but they can also be tools of building stronger faith. Doubts creep into our thinking when bad things happen around us, or to us, or within us.

I know the suffering of the world makes me wonder from time to time, asking myself, or anyone who is willing to answer: "Is God good and does the love of God really endure forever considering this troubled world around us?"

Many things help deter the toxicity of my doubts and actually sustain my faith that God's love indeed endures forever! Here are just three of them:

- **If I don't trust God's love, what is left?** The option of no God and no love means life is meaninglessness, empty, futile; and it makes all existence a mere random collection of protoplasm! Bad option!!
- **Jesus.** There is no one like him in all history. The congruence of his life and teaching, his historic birth, life, death and resurrection compels me toward belief in a self-giving and utterly gracious God of love! Without Jesus I would be mired in toxic doubt!
- **Life.** The longer I live the more grateful I am that God broke into my life through Jesus Christ. My life is more balanced, wholesome, meaningful and blessed beyond all deserving simply because I have yielded to God's gracious love and now seek to follow Jesus.

Well, how about you? What deters the toxicity of doubt in your life? Go ahead, have your doubts, but don't become a slave to them and don't let them keep you from believing in your heart of hearts: "His love endures forever!!"

**Youth:** What are your doubts about God?

**Adults:** Have you given good attention to your doubts so that they lead you to a stronger faith, or have you fed them and let them rule your life?

**Prayer:** Mighty Lord, we thank you for giving us good minds to explore all angles in life. But give us also good hearts that are willing to trust your love and to love you in return. We pray in the name of him who has given us eternal life! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Reformed Church in Hungary***

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28 LECTIONARY READINGS**

Psalm 67:1-7

1 Samuel 10:1-16

Romans 4:13-25

Matthew 21:23-32

Psalm 46:1-11

***Fly Above the Storm***

by John McKee

That we are blessed as a people  
To have a God who loves us  
By many, is a fact understood.

For he guides us through trials  
We encounter in life  
As only a Loving God could.

Storms of life can strike quickly,  
Oft-times without warning  
Immobilizing us through stark fear.

But it's a comfort to know  
That we're not in it alone...  
It's a comfort to know God is near.

During those times it's important  
That we seek his counsel  
And thankfully praise him in prayer...

For the surest way possible  
To have a heart that's at peace  
Is to give him the burdens we bear.

He'll remove all those burdens,  
For our God is awesome...  
There is nothing that He cannot do...

He is the Author of Life.  
He is Creator of all.  
Irrespective of the atheist's view.

It may be a natural disaster  
Or some personal problem...  
Making our inner turmoil begin.

Illness could be the issue...  
There are any number of trials  
Perhaps causal of storms we are in.

Take to wing as a bird  
And fly above that storm  
That's disrupting your life in some way.

For there is help to be had  
From our Lord God on high...  
He is awaiting you this very day.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Disability Inclusion Sunday***

## MONDAY, JUNE 29 LECTONARY READINGS

Psalm 57:1-11

1 Samuel 10:17-27

Acts 7:44-8:1a

Luke 22:52-62

Psalm 85:1-13

# ***Revive Us Again!***

by Dale McArthur

*Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? -Psalm 85:6*

Our seminary class was a mixture of students with various backgrounds. Many were young people trying to find their niche in the church but three of us were second career students. We all had student church charges, families, and loads of experience. One of us was a former hardware store owner, one a government inspector at Boeing, and I was from the insurance field.

We all felt our churches did not have a healthy spiritual life so we designed a three "Nights of Awareness" program to be presented at each church. Each of us would present the program for one night.

My church had an outstanding youth program that presented programs of "Up With People" as well as church programs to complement the church year, Christmas, Easter, etc.

One of our churches to have "Nights of Awareness" was in eastern Kansas, a small agricultural community of very conservative farmers. When it was my night to present the service, I took my youth fellowship of over 50 young people, all in uniform of red and white, to eastern Kansas. It took a school bus to move us and we presented an impact wherever we performed.

Needless to say, the church was not prepared for 50 young people singing gospel hymns. The young people started their program by entering down the center aisle singing *Revive Us Again* and after a 30 minute presentation of gospel hymns, they retired to the refreshments. The congregation in tow.

Yes, the congregation was "Revived" but so were the young people. Serving others does that to us.

**Youth:** Have you had the experience of raising the spirits of someone else?

**Adults:** You may be out of shape, but are you lifting the spirits of someone else as they lift you?

**Prayer:** Help us to renew our interest in helping others to see a better life in Christ. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Reformed Church in Romania***

***Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia***

## TUESDAY, JUNE 30 LECTIONARY READINGS

Psalm 54:1-7

1 Samuel 11:1-15

Acts 8:1b-13

Luke 22:63-71

Psalm 28:1-9

# *Is Jesus Divine?*

by Frank Shallenberger

*"If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am."*

*-Luke 22:67-70*

As Jesus was standing before the council, these men watched Jesus being beaten and tortured and didn't bother to stop it. They asked Jesus a question which has been asked of Christians down through the centuries. "Is Jesus the Son of God?" The few words printed above were enough to convince the Jews that Jesus should be crucified.

How many times have you and I been asked the same question: "Do you really believe that Jesus Christ is divine, that he is the Son of God?" Christian Faith is being vilified and mocked by the modern press every day. One commentator stated that Evangelical Christians are more of a danger to the United States than Muslim terrorists. Our gospel testifies that the cripple walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute speak and the poor have the gospel preached to them. There are historical records that Jesus walked on water, controlled the seas and the winds. On top of this there is the blood of martyrs from the first century on up to this present day to show that men and women were and still are willing to give up their lives rather than deny Jesus Christ. Still, many of us feel quite uneasy when attempting to explain our faith. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every Christian had the courage and fortitude that Jehovah's Witnesses have? In spite of being rejected almost everywhere they persist in knocking on doors and preaching their erroneous gospel.

**Youth:** Have you ever tried to tell a friend about Jesus? If not, why not?

**Adults:** How many times have you had the opportunity to testify about your faith and failed to do so? Have you ever thought why you did that?

**Prayer:** Dear God, help us to strengthen our faith and give us the boldness we need to testify to unbelievers the truth of Jesus Christ. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Reformed Christian Church in Croatia***

***Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy***

# ***The Disciples of Jesus***

by John McKee

We learn Christ had half-brothers  
In chapter twelve of Matthew  
In accordance to the forty sixth verse.

As he was teaching one day,  
His mother and brothers  
Were waiting for the crowd to disperse.

Mary sent someone inside  
To inform her Son, Jesus,  
His family came to speak with him.

When the man did as she asked  
Jesus said to Disciples  
As he stretched out his arm to them...

***“Who is my mother,  
“And who are my brothers?  
“Here are my mother and brothers.”***

***“...Whoever does the will  
“Of my Father in Heaven  
“Is my brother, and sister and mother.”***

A special friendship developed  
Between Disciples and Jesus...  
During the three years they would share.

Far beyond a mere friendship,  
Jesus loved them as family,  
He exuded God's love everywhere.

The twelve Disciples he selected  
Were just ordinary men  
Yet were an integral part of his plan...

They had no prior experience  
At spreading the Gospel,  
When Christ's earthly ministry began.

Though he was often impetuous,  
Jesus called him, *'The Rock'*...  
Peter was the first one to answer the call.

The Disciple named Philip  
Had the heart of a servant...  
Beyond that, we know little at all.

Simon was nicknamed, '*the Zealot*'...  
Saint John was beloved...  
Andrew and Philip were good emissaries

Who brought others to Jesus  
To hear his '*Good News*',  
They became his first missionaries.

As Jesus loved his Disciples,  
So he also loves us...  
He loves all who believe in his name...

All who confess before men  
That Christ died on the cross  
For our sins in deep agony and shame.



# Northminster Presbyterian Church

2450 East Fort Lowell Road  
Tucson, Arizona 85719-2417

520-327-7121

520-327-1839 fax

**Copyright © 2009 Northminster Presbyterian Church**

*Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.*

*The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by International Bible Society. Use of either trademark requires the permission of International Bible Society.*