

Thank you for serving your church in this way and for sharing God's word with your sisters and brothers. A few reminders:

- Practice the readings beforehand.
- Please arrive at least ten minutes before your scheduled service. "A Guide to Pronouncing Biblical Names" book is located in the Pastor's Sacristy, the small room on the right hand side at the front of the Sanctuary. If, after consulting the book, you still need help with any pronunciations, Pastor can help you.
- You may sit in one of the right-side altar chairs until it is time to read, or you may come forward prior to the Prayer of the Day.
- When speaking, please project your voice and make sure you are speaking as loudly and clearly as possible.
- The lessons may be introduced simply by saying,  
*"The Old Testament Reading is from the number chapter of book."*  
*After the lesson the reader says, "The Word of the Lord." And congregation responds, "Thanks be to God."*  
*"The New Testament Reading is from the number chapter of book."*  
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Thank you again for serving. Your contribution to worship is appreciated by all!

## INTRODUCTION

*The Lord our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading we recall the transformation of Saul, the persecutor, into Paul, the apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## READINGS

Isaiah 43:16–21

Psalms 126

Philippians 3:4b–14

John 12:1–8

## OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 43:16–21

*The prophet declares that long ago the Lord performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage through the waters of the sea. Now, the Lord is about to do a new thing, bringing the exiles out of Babylon and through the wilderness in a new exodus.*

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, <sup>17</sup>who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: <sup>18</sup>Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

<sup>19</sup>I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

<sup>20</sup>The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, <sup>21</sup>the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

**A** The Word of the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

## PSALM: 126

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the for-<sup>1</sup> tunes of Zion,  
then were we like<sup>1</sup> those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth<sup>1</sup> filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with<sup>1</sup> shouts of joy.**

<sup>3</sup>Then they said a-<sup>1</sup> mong the nations,  
"The LORD has done great<sup>1</sup> things for them."

<sup>4</sup>**The LORD has done great<sup>1</sup> things for us,  
and we are<sup>1</sup> glad indeed.**

<sup>5</sup>Restore our for-<sup>1</sup> tunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses<sup>1</sup> of the Negeb.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who<sup>1</sup> sowed with tears  
will reap with<sup>1</sup> songs of joy.**

<sup>7</sup>Those who go out weeping, carry-<sup>1</sup> ing the seed,

will come again with joy, shoulder-<sup>1</sup>ing their sheaves.

### **NEW TESTAMENT READING: Philippians 3:4b–14**

*Writing to Christians in Philippi, Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.*

<sup>4b</sup>If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup>Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.     **A** The Word of the Lord.     **C** Thanks be to God.

### **GOSPEL: John 12:1–8**

*Judas willfully misinterprets as waste Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume. Jesus recognizes that her lavish gift is both an expression of love and an anticipation of his burial.*

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

<sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

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