

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."
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Thank you again for serving. Your contribution to worship is appreciated by all!

INTRODUCTION

This Sunday's texts paint startling pictures of the horrific—the demonic—nature of sin. The church's repeated celebration of the holy communion counters that tragic reality in a continued showing forth of the death of Jesus "until he comes." It is a dramatic declaration of "how much God has done for you."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

READINGS

Isaiah 65:1–9

Psalm 22:18–28

Galatians 3:23–29

Luke 8:26–39

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 65:1–9

The prophet announces God's impatience. The people's self absorption is idolatry, and images from pagan worship fill this reading. Like a vintner who crushes the grape to release the wine, God will use Israel's exile to establish a new community of the faithful.

I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here I am, here I am," to a nation that did not call on my name.

²I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; ³a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and offering incense on bricks; ⁴who sit inside tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, with broth of abominable things in their vessels; ⁵who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long.

⁶See, it is written before me: I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their laps ⁷their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they offered incense on the mountains and reviled me on the hills, I will measure into their laps full payment for their actions.

⁸Thus says the LORD: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, "Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it," so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all.

⁹I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall settle there.

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

PSALM 22:18–28

¹⁸Be not far a-¹ way, O LORD;

you are my strength; hast-¹ en to help me.

¹⁹Save me¹ from the sword,

my life from the power¹ of the dog.

²⁰Save me from the¹ lion's mouth,

my wretched body from the horns¹ of wild bulls.

²¹I will declare your name¹ to my brethren;

in the midst of the congregation | I will praise you.

²²Praise the LORD, | you that fear him;

stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel; all you of Jacob's | line, give glory.

²³**For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither does he hide his | face from them; but when they cry to | him he hears them.**

²⁴My praise is of him in the | great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the presence of those who | worship him.

²⁵**The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the | LORD shall praise him:**

"May your heart | live forever!"

²⁶All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD,

and all the families of the nations shall | bow before him.

²⁷**For kingship belongs | to the LORD;**

he rules o- | ver the nations.

²⁸To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow | down in worship;

all who go down to the dust | fall before him.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Galatians 3:23–29

For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people not only with God but with other believers. Those who call themselves children of God experience a transformation that removes prejudices of race, social class, or gender in favor of true unity in Christ.

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

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

GOSPEL: Luke 8:26–39

Jesus' mission includes foreigners, and his authority extends to the casting out of demons. Some who witness Jesus' work are seized with confusion and fear, but the man who was healed is commissioned to give testimony of God's mercy and power.

²⁶Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"—²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you. So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

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