

*For the week of the First Sunday in Lent
February 18th through February 24th, 2023*

Notes for the Week — “Blessed Is the Man Who Remains Steadfast Under Trial” James 1:12

Our Gospel lesson begins, “In those days...” With such an opening, it begs the question, “In what days?” And if you notice, we’re only nine verses into Mark’s Gospel. Mark doesn’t begin with an infant narrative. He doesn’t have any sheep or wisemen. He doesn’t have any stories of Jesus before His public ministry began. Mark simply states, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesu Christ, the Son of God.” And off he goes with John in the wilderness heralding the Kingdom and the preparing the way of the Lord through baptism.

It is “in those days” that we first encounter Jesus. He came to be baptized by John, and when He was, the heavens were torn open, the Spirit descended on Him, and a voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of God. Okay....now what? What was the point of all this? What is the purpose? Mark *immediately* makes that clear.

“The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.” Short, sweet and to the point. Mark adds no details of conversations between Jesus. He doesn’t need to. The confrontations between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of Light will soon unfold in Mark’s Gospel. That’s the main theme of the entire Gospel. What we need at this point, though, is to know that Jesus is the Lord’s Anointed, the One upon whom the Spirit descends and the Father reveals. And His coming, the Spirit’s anointing, the Father’s revelation is all for the purpose of facing down Satan.

Jesus has come to do what we were unable to do. Adam faced Satan in the garden and lost miserably. He didn’t even put up a fight. He even offered up his bride to Satan as a sacrificial offering as he sat back and watched everything unfold. Jesus, however, is different. He wasn’t going to sit back and watch Satan destroy His Bride through temptation. Instead, He came to place Himself between Satan and His Bride, and to endure temptation in our place. Jesus was going to do what we couldn’t do and win us back from the clutches of Satan, sin, death, and hell.

And the same Spirit that drove Jesus out into the wilderness on our behalf, is the same Spirit that brings that victory over Satan to you and me. He gives us Jesus’ victory over Satan, sin, death and hell. Though we will live in these bodies of flesh, our spirits are made alive in Him. Therefore, we are given power from the Spirit to struggle against Satan and temptation. Though this striving is empowered by God, it is not from God. He does not tempt us. That is our own sinful flesh with “helpful” suggestions from Satan. But the Lord promises that when we remain steadfast against temptation, we are blessed. That victory is our final victory flowing to us here and now. And it is to that victory we press on. Amen.

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

*Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate.
Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

APOSTLES’ CREED

VERSE: HEBREWS 12:2

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

PSALM 25:1-10 and/or the appointed daily psalms.

Prayer on the Psalm

O Lord, our most merciful Father in heaven, be gracious to us and forgive us our sins. Rule in our hearts by Your Spirit, that we may hate and forsake all manner of evil. Restrain our enemies who would deprive us of our salvation, and be to us, and Your whole Church on earth, a very present help in time of need. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	116, 117	119:1-24	119:49-72	119:89-112	119:137-152	120, 121	124, 125	129, 130, 131
Evening	118	119:25-48	119:73-88	119:113-136	119:153-176	122, 123	126, 127, 128	132, 133

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

	Bible Narrative for the Week	Second Reading
Sunday	Mark 1:9-15	Romans 5:1-11
Monday	The People Crave Meat—Numbers 11:4-6, 10, 13, 18-23, 31-34	
Tuesday	The Feeding of the Five Thousand—John 6:1-21	
Wednesday		
Thursday	Jesus Is the Bread from Heaven—John 6:22-44	
Friday	Jesus Is Rejected by His Own—John 6:47-69	
Saturday	Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16	

The Catechism: The Table of Duties

To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers	
The overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.	
What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors	
The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.	First Grade +
Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: god cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows	Second Grade +
The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."	Third Grade +

DEVOTION OR MEDITATION

DAILY PRAYER

Select from among the following prayers as time and circumstances allow:

Collect of the Week

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Daily Themes for Prayer

- Sunday:** *For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacrament.*
- Monday:** *For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.*
- Tuesday:** *For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.*
- Wednesday:** *For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.*
- Thursday:** *For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.*
- Friday:** *For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.*
- Saturday:** *For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.*

In Our Prayers this Week

Our Congregation: *Charles & Laura Adams; Kevin Adams; Nick Adams; Timothy & Susan Ahrens; Tony Ahrens; Tyler Ahrens Robert & Brenda Albert*

Baptismal Birthdays (past two weeks): *Denise Weber; Claire Perry; Marie Roth; Grover Kutzke; Charlotte Leadbetter; Zoe Barry; Sawyer Kutzke; Glenn Daniel; Joyce Eddings; Linda Meier; Debra Strawder*

Wedding Anniversaries: *Deb & Larry Hanson*

Members of the Congregation:

Friends of our Congregation:

Our Circuit:

*St. John Lutheran Church, Aliceville; Rev. Timothy Booth
Trinity Lutheran Church, Burlington; Vacant*

Our District Staff and President, *Rev. Justin Panzer.*

Heather Williams, Business Manager

Shannon Fender, Administrative Assistant

Our Synod and President, *Rev. Matthew Harrison*

Our Community: *City of Pomona; City of Williamsburg; USD 287*

Our State and Governor, *Laura Kelly*

LORD'S PRAYER

MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER FROM THE CATECHISM

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

—or—

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

- 1 A mighty fortress is our God,
A sword and shield victorious;
He breaks the cruel oppressor's rod
And wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe
Has sworn to work us woe.
With craft and dreadful might
He arms himself to fight.
On earth he has no equal.
- 2 No strength of ours can match his
might.
We would be lost, rejected.
But now a champion comes to fight,
Whom God Himself elected.
You ask who this may be?
The Lord of hosts is He,
Christ Jesus, mighty Lord,
God's only Son, adored.
He holds the field victorious.
- 3 Though hordes of devils fill the land
All threat'ning to devour us,
We tremble not, unmoved we stand;
They cannot overpower us.
Let this world's tyrant rage;
In battle we'll engage.
His might is doomed to fail;
God's judgment must prevail!
One little word subdues him.
- 4 God's Word forever shall abide,
No thanks to foes, who fear it;
For God Himself fights by our side
With weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house,
Goods, honor, child, or spouse,
Though life be wrenched away,
They cannot win the day.
The Kingdom's ours forever!

Text: tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978; Martin Luther, 1483-1546
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Looking Forward to "The Second Sunday in Lent"

February 25, 2024

Readings: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 | Romans 8:1-11 | Mark 8:27-38

In His covenant with Abraham, the Lord promised to be with him, to bless him and to make him "the father of a multitude of nations." It is "an everlasting covenant" in Christ Jesus, the seed of Abraham who is blameless before God Almighty. All who believe in this Lord Jesus are the offspring of Abraham and are blessed "throughout their generations" (Gen. 17:1-7), because the Christ has suffered many things. He was rejected and killed, and after three days He rose again (Mark 8:31). To comprehend this theology of the cross, we must set our minds "on the things of God," and not "on the things of man" (Mark 8:33). "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Therefore, having been "reconciled to God by the death of his Son," much more "shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Baptized into His cross and resurrection, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and by faith we rejoice in the hope of His glory (Rom. 5:1-2).

