



Daily Devotional Readings, Parish Prayers, and Parish Birthdays and Anniversaries
July 26, 2026 – August 1, 2026
Good News Daily Devotional Readings

Sunday, July 26

Joshua 24:1-15 *He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.* (v.1b NIV)

Here is a faded photograph from the pages of Israel's family album. It is torn on the edges and creased through the middle. But the image is still observable. In this old sepia tone, we see a snapshot of worship. The people of God are gathered together with their spiritual leaders.

Notice what the text says. They "presented themselves before God." That is what we still do on Sundays in worship. We join with the rest of God's family and make a presentation of ourselves anew to Him. Our part in worship is to recognize God and our need of Him, and to give ourselves anew to Him through tangible acts of confession, praise, reflection, prayer, and obedience to His word.

But when God's people join together, God also makes a presentation. He presents Himself to us, He opens his own photograph album and leafs through the pages of history as we look over His shoulder. On each page we see His faithfulness and goodness portrayed. What He has done in the past is captured on paper in this holiest of history books, and our hearts are motivated to worship. Our feeble faith is nourished with a close-up of God's reliable profile.

Psalms 24, 29; Acts 28:23-31; Mark 2:23-28

Birthdays:

Anniversaries:

Monday, July 27

Joshua 24:16-33 *"Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."* (v.23)

What benediction were you given as you left the sanctuary yesterday? Chances are, you were challenged to walk through the week in the shadow of God's favor and in the confidence of His power.

After rehearsing God's acts from the past in the presence of the people of God, Joshua dismissed the people to get back to their task of inheriting the promised land. But before sending them off, He called them to separate themselves from the symbols of the pagan culture that surrounded them and to consecrate themselves to the Lord. His benediction had a bit of a Billy Graham sound ringing through it. The text doesn't say they sang "Just as I Am," but the altar-call flavor is there nonetheless.

Every week we face the same challenge of living out the values of the kingdom in a setting that is as pagan as Canaan. The gods of pleasure, lust, materialism, success, vanity surround us and beg to be worshiped. Unless we daily yield our hearts to the Lord and confess our desire to serve Him alone, by mid-week Sunday's flame will have died to a barely glowing ember.

Psalms 56, 57, 58; Romans 16:1-16; Matthew 27:24-31

Birthdays: Stephanie Prado, Tom O'Brien

Anniversaries:

Tuesday, July 28

Judges 2:1-5, 11-23 *"I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did."* (v.22)

An optional wording for the Lord's Prayer changes "And lead us not into temptation," to "And save us from the time of trial." A curious change, isn't it?

Scripture tells us that the Lord cannot be tempted and neither does He tempt us to sin. But God historically has used trials and tests as a means of strengthening His followers. Heavy times build strong faith muscles. Difficult circumstances also provide us with a mirror by which we can see just how much of a family resemblance we bear to

our Father in heaven. That is what God seems to be about in today's passage. He wants to help the Israelites see their own reflection and reflect upon it.

No doubt you are facing a hardship this week. Maybe it is in relationship to a family member. Perhaps it concerns a colleague at work. For some it is a medical issue. Can you see the hand of God in it? Can you picture yourself being held in the palm of His hand as you endure it? God wants to test you to see just how much you are willing to rely on Him to get you through.

Psalms 61, 62; Romans 16:17-27; Matthew 27:32-44

Birthdays: Emma Arnold, Brandon Mancine

Anniversaries: Kyle & Diane Keller

Wednesday, July 29

Acts 1:1-14 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (v.8)

Cell phones are amazing! They have improved my productivity at work and my sense of security while traveling obscure roads. When my wife and I are out to dinner, it is comforting to know that the phone will ring at our table if our school age children need us at home for any reason. But for cell phones to work, they must have a power source.

The same is true between Sundays. If we are to confront a secular society and remain unstained from godless influences, we need a source of power. If we are to endure hardships and emerge through the tunnel of testing, we need the fuel to keep the engine moving. What we are called to do as the people of God requires an ability that we do not have on our own. With our model, batteries are not included.

But don't be discouraged. Today's text conveys the words of Jesus himself. He says that power is available to us to do what witnesses of the gospel are required to do and endure. That power is the Holy Spirit. It is the spirit of Jesus that will fill the lives of all of us. And through the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to minister in his world.

Judges 3:12-30; Psalm 72; Matthew 27:45-54

Birthdays:

Anniversaries:

Thursday, July 30

Acts 1:15-26 *Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."* (vv.24-25)

It's one thing to know your own heart. It is quite another to know the heart of God. When it comes to selecting leaders for governing the local church, we need to be intent on understanding both.

The first disciples knew their own hearts. They knew what they were about. It was clear to them that their primary purpose was to be eyewitnesses to the life and resurrection of Jesus. For the church to grow and be taken seriously, the integrity of their claims was essential. Leaders in the church need to be above reproach, not just those with the most votes.

It was a basic assumption that to be a leader among God's people required that a person have a first-hand relationship with Him and be one who abstained from ungodly choices (to which Judas had succumbed). To choose quasi-Christians would communicate the wrong message to the watching world and could easily lead a congregation to ruin.

For us the principle is clear. We must be sure of our purpose and motives and then prayerfully identify possible choices. But the most important thing is to seek the will of God for His choice and then act on what we believe that to be.

Judges 4:4-23; Psalms 70, 71; Matthew 27:55-66

Birthdays:

Anniversaries: David & Charlotte Greathouse, Rusty & Janet Biechlin

Friday, July 31

Acts 2:1-21 *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.* (v.4)

Pentecost

They gathered in a room too small,

Weighted down with thoughts of recent days.

And they waited as instructed,

but were quite unsure just why their Leader had gone away.
Sequestered and scared, they prayed in silence.
For what? They didn't know.
"Life will never be the same," said one,
And the truth of what he spoke he hardly knew.
And then the unexpected:
A deafening sound of wind, an unconsuming flame,
A cacophony of praise, an offering of hands upraised.
The Spirit of the living Christ was living now within.
Hallelujah!

—by Greg Asimakoupoulos

Judges 5:1-18; Psalm 69; Matthew 28:1-10

Birthdays: Deborah Prevost, Susannah Payne, Sara Steigerwald

Anniversaries: Pete & Bera Casiano, Steve & Letty Slavich

Saturday, August 1

Psalm 75 *When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.* (v.3)

How can you go to church tomorrow and worship a God who allows bad things to happen to good people? Do you really think a good God is responsible for this crazy world? Why waste your time in church? Don't you have a better way to spend a Sunday morning?

If the people around you haven't asked those questions, they at least are thinking them. They want to know how we explain earthquake ravaged countries and parents who tremble in grief over the casket of a child. They want to know who is in control? They want to believe there is an answer.

God is not threatened by the questions our friends pose. Neither is He threatened by the seemingly unjust calamities of our world. He has a plan. He knows what He is about.

There's a hymn I remember singing in church as a boy. One of the stanzas went like this. "When darkness veils His lovely face/ I rest on His unchanging grace/ In ev'ry high and stormy gale/ my anchor holds with-in the veil/ On Christ the solid rock I stand/ All other ground is sinking sand." [My Hope is Built on Nothing Less by Edward Mote]

That is what the psalmist was saying. That is why it makes sense to go to church tomorrow.

Judges 5:19-31; Psalm 76; Acts 22-36; Matthew 28:11-20

Birthdays: Christopher Meriwether, Christina Pulliam

Anniversaries:

by Greg Asimakoupoulos

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Collect: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayer: Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Parish Prayer Requests

Pray for: St. Nicholas', Spring Branch

Pray for our weekly intercessions: Pray for St. James', Hebbbronville; and St. James', Hallettsville.

Pray for our parishioners: Travis Kiker*, Brandi Woehler*, Nancy Priest*, Christopher Weaver*, Dolores Jones*, Bob Thompson*, Helen Lynch*, Caroline Barnett*, John Throop*, Geoffrey Martin*, Jon Swanson*, Tom Braley*, Martin Wizorek*, Katherine Turner*, Karen Rsshodes*, Tom Foster*, Martha Hubby*, Beverly & Charlie Hamlett*, Alma & Patrick Garcia*, Terry and Linda Francis*, Ed & Angela Springer*, Kathryn Woehler*, John Worthington*, Rodney & Catherine Gillespie*, *Randy Meriwether, Stephanie Cady, Judy Thompson, Kathy Wilkinson, The Beckcom Family, Merlene Salmans, Beth Turner, Cora Beckcom

Pray for those who have served and are serving in our Armed Forces.

Pray for those who have died.

Pray for family & friends:

Richard Needham* - *brother of Sue Needham*
Robbie Branco* - *former parent of STES student*
Greg Norz & Cari Woolf Norz* - *family of Frank Woolf*
Tami Perez* - *daughter of Beverly Wheeler*
Rusty Felter* - *father of Matt Felter*
Peter Brazy* - *friend of Kathy Lathrop*
Kathy Rieth* - *friend of Kathy Lathrop*
Ayla Marie Clark* - *daughter of Mary & Ed Clark*
Catherine Armitage* - *niece of Mary & Ed Clark*
Helen Richt* - *aunt of the Cady's*
Jan Deines* - *sister of Carol Keith*
Tanya Lemons* - *daughter of Terry Francis*
Raquel Davila* - *sister-in-law of Rick & Amanda Rodriguez*
Cathy Cole-Perez* - *parent of Greg & Lizzie Perez*
Ed Bateman* - *son of Barbara Baugh*
Russell Schlicher* - *brother of Dan Schlicher*
April Hancock* - *friend of John Throop*
Lauren Huerster* - *friend of Karin Anderson*
Eric Knight* - *friend of the Lynch Family*
Larry Lathrop* - *brother-in-law of Kathy Lathrop*
George & Darcy Needham* - *family of Sue Needham*
Steve Lautenshlager* - *son of Gil Lautenshlager*
Scott Simon* - *parent of STES student*
Erin, Shelby, & Aria Ball* - *family of Sherry West*
Rylynn Rodger* - *friend of St. Thomas*
Charles Rueve* - *father of Lisa Nelson*
Lena* - *daughter-in-law of Nancy Leming*

Glenda - *friend of Mary Wells*
Bess & Family - *family of Courtney Jewett*
Neddie Perez - *friend of Nancy Emback*
James Ferguson - *friend of Nancy Emback*
Don - *friend of Nancy Emback*
Austin - *son of Carol Ann Britt*
Nalah Newhouse - *friend of Sarah Anderson*
Barbie Gerloff & Family - *friends of Sarah Anderson*
Mason - *family of Debra Copeland*
Maira Ramirez - *friend of St. Thomas*
Kristie Miller - *friend of St. Thomas*
Mary Gabriel - *friend of Mary Wells*
Mary Phyllis Lutz - *friend of Stephanie Cady*
Ann Wilke - *friend of Stephanie Cady*
Mike Bowles & Family - *son-in-law of Susanne O'Brien*
Kristie Miller - *friend of St. Thomas*
Janet Deyong - *friend of the Beckcom's*
Nancy Pittman - *friend of Sue Rathbone*
Peter Holdren - *friend of St. Thomas*
Don Gabriel - *friend of Mary Wells*
Brian Brown & Family - *friends of Maria Weaver*
Makenna - *friend of St. Thomas*
Mike Baird - *friend of The Lukefahr's*
Bobby Garza - *friend of John & Carol Keith*
Bob Coffman - *friend of Stephanie Cady*
Patricia Adams - *friend of John & Carol Keith*
Chris & Denise - *son & daughter-in-law of Mary Wells*

To submit names to the Prayer List, email stthomaschurch@tom1604.org. Please indicate whether the person is a parishioner, family member, or friend and if they should remain on our long-term prayer list or short-term prayer list.