

Daily Devotional Readings, Parish Prayers, and Parish Birthdays and Anniversaries
March 8, 2026 – March 14, 2026
Good News Daily Devotional Readings

Sunday, March 8

Psalm 96 *Sing to the LORD a new song...* (v.1 NAS)

Years ago, I had the privilege of chronicling faith stories for a church blog. I interviewed random members who had agreed to have their stories published. The discovery was surprising.

My early upbringing as a Christian included a time in our gatherings for lay members to share testimonies, insights, and life lessons. So, I have always been eager to probe what for many churches is that secret garden: the congregation! What I found behind this compelling gate was what appeared a quiet vineyard bursting at the seams with yield.

A young woman leaving a home, yet unsold, in faith, in a cross country move. A single man leaving a prestigious job only to find an even greater reward through a blind leap of faith. A couple battling postpartum depression and work stress, by a joint-call to midday prayer, finding their lives suddenly altered.

I would venture to say most churches are full of unassuming people quietly living out *new songs* of faith in their day to day lives. Who are you sitting next to?

Genesis 44:1-17; Psalm 93; Romans 8:1-10; John 5:25-29

Birthdays:

Anniversaries:

Monday, March 9

1 Corinthians 7:25-31 *...those who marry will face difficult circumstances, and I'm trying to spare you such problems.* (v.28 NET)

I recall watching a situation-comedy years ago in which a wife appeared very concerned. I believe it was Archie Bunker who asked Edith what's wrong. "It's the gays," she said with worry. "Now they want to get married." "Ah jeez," Archie replied. "Haven't the gays suffered enough already?"

I roared in laughter. Ironically, it's a similar point the apostle Paul is alluding to in today's reading which implies, *be careful what you ask for.*

While Paul's addressing straight Corinthians wondering whether to marry one could argue that today gay people may weigh the very same question. One can never hear Paul's kinds of warnings while deliriously in love. The fog has to clear first. Only then can one listen to reason. A dear friend once told me, "When falling in love be more careful than in anything else you do." That's the challenge. I don't know when falling in love is ever *very careful*. Ergo, Paul's wish to spare.

Genesis 44:18-34; Psalm 80; Mark 5:21-43

Birthdays: Rodney Gillespie, Patrick True

Anniversaries:

Tuesday, March 10

Mark 6:1-13 *"A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives...."* (v.4)

Scholars tell us Hindu sage Narada Muni was the first to coin the phrase "familiarity breeds contempt." Chaucer later used it in his *Tale of Melibee*. For prophets, it's a special irony just as Jesus alludes to it in today's reading.

It got me wondering about the origins of my own contempt. I think for me it is when my imaginary suspicions are stirred by ignorance and insecurities, leaving me vulnerable to error and bad assumptions.

When I took to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to deal with anxieties, I learned the resolve was redirecting *irrational* fears to simple logic and reason. My own suspicious, ignorant feeling of contempt must find similar corrections if I am to escape them as well.

Recently I felt jealous contempt toward a friend. About the same time, I heard a Rabbi say, the essence of love is *giving*. When I realized my jealousy was based on ignorance and suspicion I thought of the Rabbi and, yes, how much better it would be to replace my contempt, with giving. What can I *give* my friend instead?

Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 78:1-39; 1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Birthdays: Megan Kirking

Anniversaries: Eddie & Marion Rhodes

Wednesday, March 11

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 *Knowledge makes arrogance, but love edifies.* (v.1b NAS)

Using *Strongs Concordance* to measure this reading, "knowledge inflates with self-conceit whereas love builds and encourages." Some argue this reflects the contrasts of early Greco-Roman cultural values of pride and honor versus the new Christian emphasis of humility and service. Paul further threads an even finer line, telling me if my spiritual knowledge allows me to eat temple food, celebrate secular holidays, or drink pagan wine—with a free conscience—but that freedom somehow offends my brother that I do well to re-consider and, perhaps, abstain. I may be "free" but my "freedom" may cause a loved one offense. Paul's advice: be careful with liberty, consider others.

If I am reading this correctly, I am okay with this version of loving my neighbor. Spiritual knowledge is something I explore and relish and celebrate. But it too can make me inflated, give me that exaggerated sense of self-importance. It feels right that if I must weigh spiritual protocol over love that the latter should always prevail.

Genesis 45:16-28; Psalm 119:97-120; Mark 6:13-29

Birthdays: Barbara Baugh, Sam Reynolds

Anniversaries: John & Carol Keith

Thursday, March 12

1 Corinthians 9:1-15 *...those who proclaim the gospel...receive their living by the gospel. But I have not used any of these rights.* (vv.14-15 NET)

Paul goes at great length to point out to Corinthians that while he would be fully justified to receive compensation for his ministry, he purposely forfeits it. His motive? So as not to be a hindrance to the gospel.

I recall both my Muslim mother and my Episcopalian grandmother were equally repelled by the idea of religious coffers. To them money and religion were an odious mix. They would be quite thumbs-up with today's reading.

Perhaps it is why I was also taken by my early church elders. My first exposure to Christianity was in private home gatherings in the late 60s in the Bay Area. Our host was a dear widow who gave of her home generously. Our three elders, disciples of Watchman Nee, all worked day jobs. We gathered three nights a week for years. Neither the host nor the elders ever asked for money. Ever.

Maternal influences certainly impacted my life. But my early elders choosing to abstain from compensation also added to the credibility of the gospel of Christ to me. Cheers to them!

Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34; Psalms 42, 43; Mark 6:30-46

Birthdays: Harrison Braun

Anniversaries:

Friday, March 13

Genesis 47:1-26 *“Since I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you. Cultivate the land.”* (v.23)

What I like about today’s reading is that Joseph is a great problem solver. In addressing a relentless famine, he proves to be both clever and compassionate—and, repeatedly. As the famine morphs, Joseph navigates each surprise proactively.

I had a boss when I was young who amazed me. He was head of a college Physical Plant with over a hundred employees. He had seven children and was Pastor of his church. How on earth did he get through the week, I wondered. Not only did he but he did so seamlessly with grace, kindness, drive, and humor. He taught me how to keep a tight ship with the scheduling of my staff but also to be compassionate. It was the first time in my life I learned what self-esteem felt like thanks to his compliments that were both generous and sincere.

As a result, I began to recognize so many people weighed down with criticisms and starved of compliments. Like Joseph, my boss taught me that maybe I too could help change that for others.

Psalm 88; 1 Corinthians 9:16-27; Mark 6:47-56

Birthdays: Elena de Leon, Jackie Worthington

Anniversaries: David & Karen Huff

Saturday, March 14

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 *...let the one who thinks he is standing be careful....* (v.12)

In addressing the evils of arrogance, Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld of Torah.org wrote, “The one who values himself above all else lives in the center of his own universe.” A description so like solipsism—that ultimate worship of self. Paul seems to sound the alarm when the human mind takes that solipsism and justifies it. In contrast, humility and self-effacement are of supreme value to rabbinic teaching as both Rabbis would argue.

But Rosenfeld goes on to say that while there is no room for arrogance neither is there for openly carrying yourself about like a born loser, suggesting there can be an extreme in either direction with pride and confidence.

I have an old friend who sometimes pummels himself so far into the ground as though there seems nothing left. Frankly, sometimes I do the same. It is interesting that one thing solipsism and self-annihilation have in common is that neither bear fruit. Jesus said lose life, find life—clearly implying promise as an end. If I find no promise I should expect, one way or another, somethings up.

Genesis 47:27—48:7; Psalms 87, 90; Mark 7:1-23

Birthdays:

Anniversaries:

by William Bacon

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Collect: Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, we ask you from our hearts to give us your peace. Grant that nothing may take your peace from us, and protect us from all that is evil. May we always be mindful that we should serve you in self-denial. May we be faithful on all our ways, looking to the great promise you have given each one of us. Keep us under your protection, as you have always done. We praise and thank you for all that comes to our hearts from you, making us full of trust and certain of your further help. *Amen.*

Parish Prayer Requests

Pray for: St. Nicholas', Spring Branch

Pray for our weekly intercessions: Pray for Sunday school teachers and Christian Formation leaders.

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 Rshodes*, Tom Foster*, Martha Hubby*, Beverly & Charlie Hamlett*, Alma & Patrick Garcia*, Terry and Linda Francis*, Ed & Angela Springer*, Kathryn Woehler*, John Worthington*, Rodney & Catherine Gillespie*, Stephanie Cady, Judy Thompson, Liz Jauer, Lisa Drozdick, Randy Meriwether, Brenda Jacobs, Patty Barton, Jimmy Benne, Kathleen Stephens, Julia Crusius, Virginia Lukefahr, Linda Albrecht

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*
Patrick Griffith* - *friend of Letty Slavich*
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 & Lizzzie 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 Lautenschlager*
Scott Simon* - *parent of STES student*
Erin, Shelby, & Aria Ball* - *family of Sherry West*
Alicia Baker - *friend of Carrie Turner*
Gertie - *friend of Jenny*
Rylynn Rodger - *friend of St. Thomas*

April Smith - *friend of Julia Crusius*
Darlene Joy Guernsey - *daughter-in-law of Gil Lautenshlager*
Peggy Green - *friend of Gretchen Benne*
Lawson Benton - *friend of Gretchen Benne*
Tom & Karen Keck - *family of Gretchen Benne*
Megan Kaufmann - *friend of Sarah Anderson*
Kelly Baetens & Family - *family of Lisa Nelson*
Leslie Speigel - *friend of Sue Rathbone*
Jim - *friend of Dan & Nancy Wallace*
Jim Chuck - *cousin of Kathy Lathrop*
The Family of Eloy Perez
Lena - *daughter in law of Nancy Leming*
Jaclyn Barry - *family of Lillian Barry*
Van Foreman - *stepfather of Jeff Nelson*
Jason & Kannen Thomas - *family of Joan Duncan*
Jim Summitt - *father of Carrie Turner*
Maryanna - *friend of St. Thomas*
Rick Kimball - *cousin of Stephanie Cady*
Kathryn Whipple - *mother of Lisa Drozdick*
Gilberto Guerra - *friend of Julia Crusius*
Belle, Don, & Anne - *friends of Christopher & Hollis Lyon*
Margi - *friend of Judy Thompson*
Lynn Copeland - *dad of Kent Copeland*
Yolanda Griffith - *friend of Letty Slavichs*
Tasha & Lee Cain - *friends of Joni Fredrick*
Trisha - *friend of The Crusius Family*
Darren Bencivengo - *friend of Ben de Leon*

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.