

FEBRUARY 21, 2021
FIRST SUNDAY
IN LENT



God's mercy conquers evil.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:9-15	Temptation of Jesus
Monday	Genesis 9:8-17	God's promise to Noah
Tuesday	1 Peter 3:18-22	Suffering for doing right
Wednesday	2 Samuel 24:10-17	Judgment on David's sin
Thursday	Titus 3:1-11	Maintain good deeds
Friday	Hebrews 4:14-16	Jesus is the great high priest
Saturday	Psalms 25:1-10	Prayer for guidance
Sunday	Mark 8:31-38	Jesus predicts his death

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Psalm 25:6 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, thank you for entering our lives and our world to confront all that is opposed to your reign of mercy through Christ, your Beloved Son. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this gift of food, let us remember your steadfast love and mercy that gives us life that we may live with hope. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God lead you in truth and teach you the way of Christ our Lord. (Psalm 25:5)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*O Lord, Throughout These
Forty Days*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How would you describe evil?
- Tell or think about a time you felt tested or tempted to do something wrong.
- Jesus was tested by Satan. How is Jesus' confronting Satan in the wilderness a story of hope?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 1:9-15.

This text is a fitting beginning for the season of Lent. At Jesus' baptism God intervenes by opening up the heavens and speaking of Jesus as God's Beloved Son. Jesus is thrown into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to confront Satan, the personification of all that opposes God's reign. Jesus endures, and he is cared for by the angels of God. Jesus then begins his own public ministry following the arrest of John the Baptist. John's experience is a precursor to Jesus' own betrayal and arrest to fulfill all that God intends to do through the Beloved Son. And, then, Jesus goes out to do the work of the kingdom, the reign of God that has not been stopped by Satan and will not be stopped, ever. The preaching is simple: repent and believe in the good news of God's reign. Repentance is not about remorse but about turning around and going in another direction, toward God and what God can and will do. This Lent, we are reminded to trust the work of God that will defeat everything opposed to God's rule of steadfast love and mercy. How will you repent and focus on the reign of God in your life and in the world?

Pray: **Almighty and merciful God, help us to trust your reign present now and forevermore through Jesus, your Beloved Son and our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

The story of Noah and the flood is a difficult story to grasp. The point of the story is that God's demand for justice (the flood) is finally outdone by God's mercy (a new beginning for creation for those on the ark). Justice does not stand alone. It needs mercy, especially in our world where no human has the wisdom of God to judge. Do you know someone who needs a word of mercy? Write a note to that person and pray for them this week.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Lent is a season filled with traditions that focus on discipline and discipleship. Choose a devotional space in your home. Consider laying out a purple cloth (the color for repentance and Lent) and place a candle and Bible on it. Read the *Daily Bible Readings*. Use the *Prayer for the Week* and add your own prayers. End the time by saying: **Remember that you are God's, and to God you shall return.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org