**Bringing Church Home – January 28, 2018**

**Bible** **Bites**

*These short passages come from the Lectionary readings for today.*

Monday Deut. 18:17-19 The Lord promises a new prophet

Tuesday Psalm 111:1 Hallelujah!

Wednesday Psalm 111:2-4 God’s works are full of splendor

Thursday 1 Cor. 8:4-6 Many idols but just one God

Friday Mark 1:21-26 Many unclean spirits but Jesus wins

Saturday Mark 1:27,28 Jesus becomes famous

**Ritual**

*An activity to try at home*

Yes, it’s cold, but pick a clear night and go outside and look up at the sky. You may be tempted to say “Hallelujah!” as you look at the stars and planets. Or just look out the window of your house or your car. What do you see that is worth saying “Hallelujah” about? (You could also look up the word “Hallelujah.” Where did it come from?)

**Holy Conversation**

*Talking points for a family or small group conversation*

In Mark’s day, the world was thought to be occupied by “unclean spirits” or demons. We like to think we are more advanced, but we too have tormentors, physical and spiritual.

* What feels “demonic” in your world? How do you recognize that?
* Mark’s demon takes on Jesus. What “demons” take you on?
* Jesus has control even over “unclean spirits” or demons. How?
* Mark’s demon goes kicking and screaming. Why?
* What help do you need from Jesus?

**Caring**

*An idea for putting faith to work*

Your local food pantry always needs donations of canned goods. Why not pick up a few extras the next time you go shopping? Put them in the basket at the back of the church. Maybe the ushers take the basket forward at the offertory. What do you think this means?

**A Prayer for the Week**

Keep me, O God, from dealing with the unclean spirits that may visit me. Coax me, O God, out of the places where they wait for me.

Lead me, O God, back to wholeness with your restoring power. Amen.

**A Mealtime Prayer**

Hallelujah! We are grateful for this meal, gracious God. We may have had nothing to do with its planting, growing, harvesting or bringing to market. We may not have bought it, cooked it or served it. So, we thank you for this unmerited bounty. May it be a sign for us of your grace in all things. Amen.

**A Blessing**

*You could place your hands on another and say this blessing.*

*You could also say it tenderly for yourself.*

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your heart and your mind, in the strength of Christ Jesus. (based on Philippians 4:7)

**Bible Verse for the Week**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

 Those who act accordingly have a good understanding;

 His praise endures for ever. (Psalm 111:10)

**A Poem for the Week**

O Lord seek us, O Lord, find us

 In thy patient care;

Be thy love before, behind us,

 Round us, everywhere:

Lest the god of this world blind us

 Lest he speak us fair,

Lest he forge a chain to bind us

 Lest he bait a snare.

Turn not from us, call to mind us,

 Find, embrace us, bear;

Be thy love before, behind us,

 Round us, everywhere.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)