

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21

A reading from Jeremiah.

¹⁵O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on
my persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;
for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

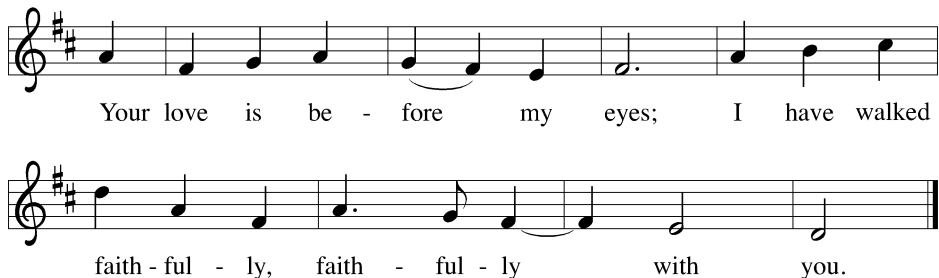
¹⁹Therefore thus says the LORD:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and
not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.
It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.

²⁰And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the LORD.

²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the
ruthless.

PSALM: Psalm 26:1-8

Cantor sings refrain. Assembly repeats refrain. Cantor sings verses. Assembly sings refrain at R.



Two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of text, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line of text. The lyrics are: "Your love is be - fore my eyes; I have walked faith - ful - ly, faith - ful - ly with you."

¹Give judgment for me, O LORD, for I have lived | with integrity;
I have trusted in the LORD and I have not faltered.

²Test me, O | LORD, and try me;
examine my heart | and my mind.

³For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes;
I have walked faithful- | ly with you.

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⁴I have not sat | with the worthless,
nor do I consort with | the deceitful. R
⁵I have hated the company of | evildoers;
I will not sit down | with the wicked.
⁶I will wash my hands in inno- | cence, O LORD,
that I may go in procession | round your altar,
⁷singing aloud a song | of thanksgiving
and recounting all your won- | derful deeds.
⁸LORD, I love the house in | which you dwell
and the place where your glo- | ry abides. R

SECOND READING: Romans 12:9–21

A reading from Romans.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:21–28

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:



These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. We invite you to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	Matthew 16:21-28	Take up your cross and follow
Monday	Matthew 10:32-39	Losing life to find it
Tuesday	Matthew 20:17-28	Jesus again predicts his death
Wednesday	Luke 9:57-62	The cost of following Jesus
Thursday	Philippians 3:7-16	Running towards the goal
Friday	1 Peter 4:12-19	Suffering as a Christian
Saturday	Psalms 101	The life of the righteous
Sunday	Matthew 18:15-20	Seeking reconciliation

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK:

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me."

Matthew 16:24 (CEV)

SAY, PRAY AND BLESS:

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, teach us to put you first, take up our crosses, and follow you. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

For all we eat and all we wear, for daily bread and nightly care, we thank you, Heavenly Father. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God keep your faith in Jesus alive and strong. May God help you to stay joyful and give you patience when times are hard. Amen.

CARING CONVERSATION:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What is something you find difficult to do? What makes it so?
- Sometimes following Jesus involves suffering or difficulty. In what ways have you experienced this?
- Jesus says *"if you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it"* (Matthew 16:25). What do you think he means by this?

DEVOTIONS:

Look together at Romans 12:9-21. Make up a poster listing and illustrating all of the things these verses call upon Christians to do (e.g. love others, honor others, be joyful, pray, bless). Put the poster up in a prominent place. Pray for God's help to live out these things in your home this week.

SERVICE:

This week, work together as a household to make small crosses out of note cards or popsicle sticks. Write the words *"Take up your cross and follow me"* on each cross. Commit to carrying your crosses with you this week as a reminder of Jesus' call to follow him in all things.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS:

When we hear the word "disciple," most Christians think of the twelve disciples of Jesus, who journeyed with him from place to place in his ministry, and we associate discipleship with being away from home more than in it. But our homes are where we spend a great deal of time, so they are the primary context in which we are called to live out our faith. In the ups and downs of household life, our faith and character are shaped, tested and grown through our interactions with those who know our very best and our very worst. The call to take up one's cross and follow Jesus is often not a call into unfamiliar places but to live differently with familiar faces. Romans 12:13 says: *"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."* Plan one way you can respond to this as a household this week.