

# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Eblast

February 15, 2024



## Mardi Gras

On Tuesday evening St. John Lutheran Church hosted the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper (also known as 'Mardi Gras' here at the Church of the Redeemer. We were able to provide a space for the event as St. John's South Wing is currently unusable. The event was funded by a Thrivent Grant. Their members contributed a variety of delicious desserts, purchased the ingredients for a tasty breakfast for dinner, and was sure to include our Youth as both cooks and servers. Enjoy the photographs from this event!



# More from Mardi Gras ...



A good cross-section of both parishes



were present from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Noone left hungry and all were filled.

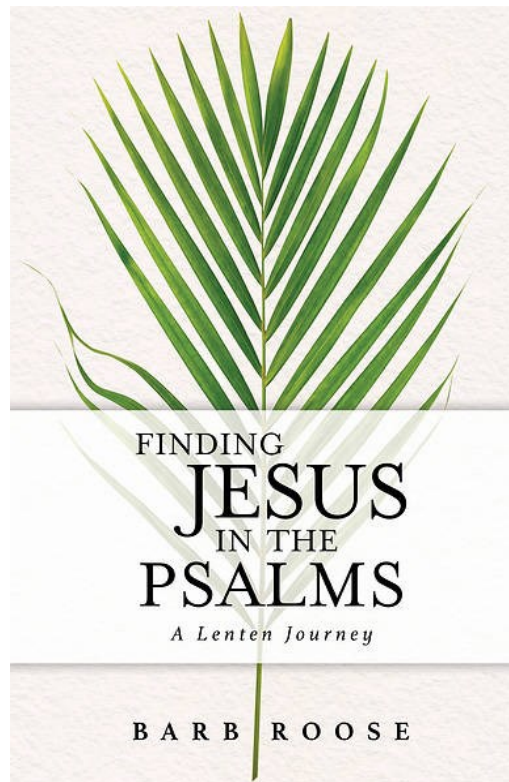


## Did you know?

- ♦ Alice Bennett is now our Senior Warden.
- ♦ Jeff Watson and Bruce Carpenter remain our Junior Warden and Treasurer respectively.
- ♦ Diane Siebecker is clerk to the Vestry.
- ♦ Mitzi Mohn and Glenn Murrelle join Betsy Schumacher and Margaret Cole as members of the Vestry.



# Lenten Book Study



On Monday, February 19th at 6:30 p.m. we will begin our Lenten Bible Study “Finding Jesus in the Psalms.” We will gather in the Nursery at St. John Lutheran Church, 207 S. Hopkins Street.

Outline of the Bible Study:

February 19, Introduction & Chapter 1

February 26, Chapter 2

March 4, Chapter 3

March 11, Chapter 4

March 18, Chapter 5

March 25, Chapter 6 & Conclusion

# LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

## *A Lenten Series*

**Valley United Presbyterian Church and the Epiphany Roman Catholic Church are coming together to offer presentations on the topic of "Love Your Neighbor" on Wednesday evenings in Lent.**

**Leaders from local organizations will speak on our responsibilities to fellow human beings. A freewill offering will be collected for various organizations.**

### *Feb 21 - Obligations to the Poor*

Speakers: A panel featuring Kim Paul from The Bridge, Christina Ramirez from The Salvation Army, and Patrick Aquilio from Catholic Charities

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

### *Feb 28 - Life and Dignity of the Human Person*

Speaker: Anja Miller, Guthrie Hospice

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

### *March 6 - Care for God's Creation*

Speaker: Marty Borko, Carantouan Greenway

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

### *March 13 - Boundaries and Relationships*

Speaker: Dawn Clover, Guthrie Employee Assistance Program

Location: Valley United Fellowship Hall

### *March 20 - Solidarity and Peace*

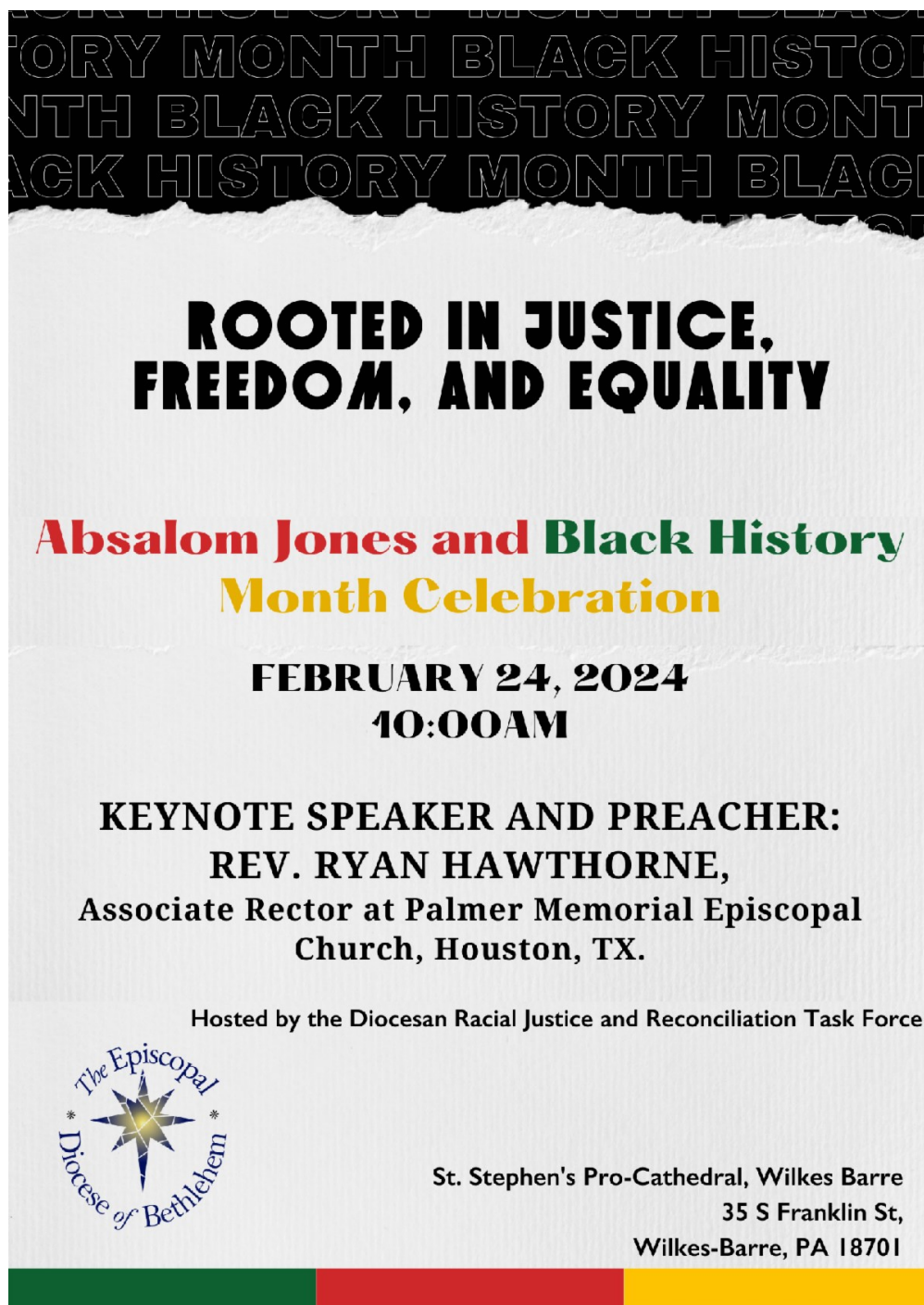
Speaker: Father Dan Toomey and Pastor Sharan Knoell

Location: Valley United Fellowship Hall

**Dinner and fellowship start at 5:45pm on each evening.**

**Join us this Lenten season as we earnestly listen to the Word of God and learn what we can do to show our love for our neighbors.**

If you plan on attending this event please let Canon Melinda know. We are hopeful that you will attend. If you do plan on going perhaps we can ride together. Please note there is NO COST TO ATTEND but registration is required and a link can be found at the bottom of this page.




**ROOTED IN JUSTICE,  
FREEDOM, AND EQUALITY**

**Absalom Jones and Black History  
Month Celebration**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2024  
10:00AM**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND PREACHER:  
REV. RYAN HAWTHORNE,  
Associate Rector at Palmer Memorial Episcopal  
Church, Houston, TX.**

Hosted by the Diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Task Force

 The Episcopal  
Diocese of Bethlehem

St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes Barre  
35 S Franklin St,  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

The Racial Justice & Reconciliation Task Force will host a celebration of Absalom Jones and Black History Month Celebration on **February 24, 2024**, at [St. Stephen's Pro-cathedral \(Wilkes-Barre\)](#).

Join us for a day of reflection, formation, and fellowship with keynote speaker the Rev. Ryan Hawthorne, Associate Rector at [Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church](#), Houston, TX.

This event consists of check-in at 9:30 a.m., keynote address, discussion, lunch, and a concluding worship service. Registration is needed for your participation: [click here](#)

[Absalom Jones & Black History Month 2024 \(constantcontact.com\)](http://constantcontact.com)

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



08623

February 2024

Church of the Redeemer  
201 S Wilbur Ave  
Sayre, PA 18840-1605

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your continued prayers for my recovery. I am grateful for my family, for the exceptional medical care that I am receiving and for the support of my Episcopal family.

I am writing to invite you, your congregation, and all Episcopalians to honor the life and work of Blessed Absalom Jones by making a gift in 2024 to the Absalom Jones Fund for Episcopal Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). In 1804, Absalom Jones became the first African American to be ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. We celebrate his life and accomplishments each year on February 13, known on our church calendar as the Feast of Absalom Jones.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I ask that you consider making a gift or dedicating a plate offering in your parish (live or virtual) this year to support the Absalom Jones Fund. Since the Church established the Absalom Jones Fund in 2018, a third of all Episcopal Dioceses, sixty-five parishes, and hundreds of generous individuals have donated. I am profoundly grateful.

Many faithful Episcopalians have been asking me what they can do to make a real difference. One way to make that difference is to invest in a better future for young people. Historically Black Colleges and Universities create dynamic and empowering educational environments for college students from diverse backgrounds. Now more than ever, these institutions need your support. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and may God bless you and keep you and your loved ones.

Keep the faith,

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry  
Primate and Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church

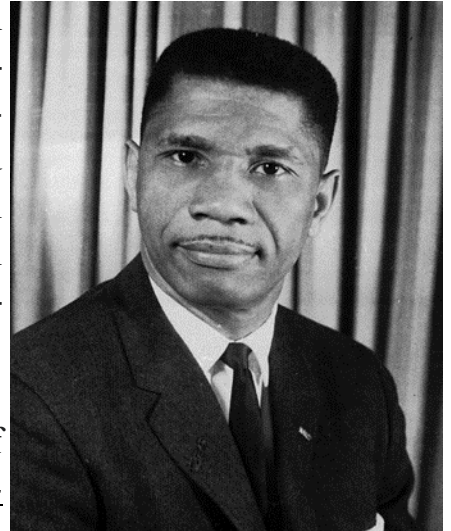
P.S. To obtain a press release and bulletin inserts visit: [episcopalchurch.org/development/HBCU](https://episcopalchurch.org/development/HBCU). Julia Alling, Senior Development Officer, is pleased to answer any questions you may have. She can be reached directly at [jalling@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:jalling@episcopalchurch.org) or 212-716-6041.





**Medgar Wiley Evers** (July 2, 1925 – June 12, 1963) was an American civil rights activist and the NAACP's first field secretary in Mississippi, who was assassinated by Byron De La Beckwith. Evers, a decorated US Army combat veteran who had served in World War II. He was engaged in efforts to overturn segregation at the University of Mississippi, end the segregation of public facilities, and expand opportunities for African Americans including the enforcement of voting rights.

A college graduate, Evers became active in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s. Following the 1954 ruling of the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated public schools were unconstitutional, Evers



challenged the segregation of the state-supported public University of Mississippi, applying to law school there. He also worked for voting rights, economic opportunity, access to public facilities, and other changes in the segregated society. Evers was awarded the 1963 NAACP Spingarn Medal.

Evers was murdered in 1963 at his home in Jackson, Mississippi, now the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, by Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the White Citizens' Council in Jackson. This group was formed in 1954 in Mississippi to resist the integration of schools and civil rights activism. As a veteran, Evers was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>[2]</sup> His murder and the resulting trials inspired civil rights protests, and his life and death inspired numerous works of art, music, and film. Although all-white juries failed to reach verdicts in De La Beckwith's first two trials in the 1960s, he was convicted in 1994 based on new evidence.

Evers' widow, Myrlie Evers, became a noted activist in her own right, serving as national chair of the NAACP. In 1969 his brother Charles became the first African American to be elected mayor of a Mississippi city in the post-Reconstruction era.

*Source: Wikipedia*

A recent biography has been published of Medgar and Myrlie Evers entitled *Medgar and Myrlie: The love story that awakened America* by Joy-Ann Reid.



## Readings for February 18, 2024

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25:1-9

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

### Scripture Reflection

#### Reflection on the Gospel by Rodney J Hunter from *Daily Feast: Meditations from Feasting on the Word*

And as in so many other transformative religious experiences, “Spirit” is shown here to be at once gentle and dovelike, yet acting with awesome, disruptive effect—descending without warning from a heaven “torn apart,” reorienting oneself and world, and setting one on a new and revolutionary spiritual path. In time, such a recipient of “Spirit,” such a religious revolutionary, is bound to confront the world with his or her own special vision and claim—the urgency of the inbreaking reign of God for Jesus in Mark’s Gospel—and to encounter the world’s resistance and rejection. Such is the transforming power of Spirit in the Bible. When Spirit comes, one is changed and, in Mark’s theology, set on the road of discipleship to a cross and beyond. How is God’s Spirit disrupting your life? In what ways has she reoriented your world?





## Our Undercroft is a MESS.

We have four decades or more of once cherished items being stored in the Undercroft. We have so much stuff that it has become a fire hazard and storage boxes are deteriorating. As a result, our rector has tasked Linda Murrelle with organizing a crew to look at all the things stored there and determine what should be kept and what should be thrown out. St. Mary's Guild, Altar Guild, and Sunday School will be given labels to affix to items that should be kept. We anticipate that the job will be completed by Easter. If your inner Marie Kondo is intrigued and your are willing to help please contact Linda or the Parish Office.

The Wildcat closet is still accepting donation of Sweat pants, Sweat shirts, socks and toiletries. The box is located in the atrium . Linda Murrelle will pick up your donations and make sure they are delivered to the proper locations.



For the Month of **February** we will be collecting cereal for our local food pantries.



## **Serving in Worship at Redeemer**

**February 18**

**Reader:** Alice Bennett

**Usher:** Rick Rhodes

**Greeter:** Mary Rhodes

**February 25**

**Reader:** Amy Murrelle

**Usher:** Glenn Murrelle

**Greeter:** Linda Murrelle

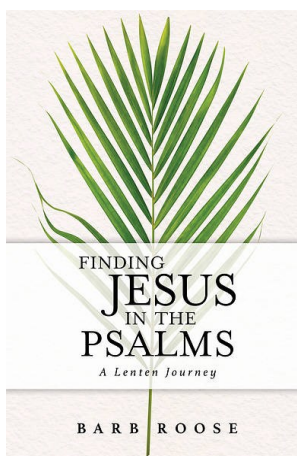


Linda Dix	2/17
Celia Watkins	2/19
Kay Lattimer	2/19
Doreen Marshall	2/20
Sherry Gabauer	2/20
Michael Atanasoff	2/23

### **Mark your Calendar**

**A celebration for our stained-glass windows. April 14, 2024. Tribute Quartet, a Gospel group out of Tennessee will be performing.**





On Monday, February 19th at 6:30 p.m. we will begin our Lenten Bible Study “Finding Jesus in the Psalms.” We will gather in the Nursery at St. John Lutheran Church, 207 S. Hopkins Street. As in years past, our parishioners join with parishioners at St. John to enjoy fellowship and share our insights as we engage with the Bible.

## **Lent Resources from Episcopal Relief and Development**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?*

*Luke 9:24–25*

On this Thursday after Ash Wednesday, Scripture offers us rich and complicated fare about life and death. Beginning with Deuteronomy 30:15, God describes two paths: “I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity.” In Psalm 1:3–4, we hear that those who follow the Law will be like “trees planted by streams of water,” whereas those who walk in the counsel of the wicked are “chaff which the wind blows away.” Such texts rely on strong contrasts. On one side is life and prosperity. On the other side, there is death and adversity. The starkness of the contrasts—their light and shadow—make the final reading even more remarkable because Jesus’ message of the cross complicates this polarized vision of reality. Jesus, after all, relishes a provocative paradox. In Luke 9:24, Jesus states, “Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.” Once again, Scripture presents life and death, but this time, gaining the whole world (power, prestige, etc.) is presented as the chaff that blows away, while the bewildering fact of a shameful crucifixion becomes the seed of new life.

## Today's readings

Psalm 1 | Deuteronomy 30:15–20 | Luke 9:18–25

*It is easy, at times, to miss the strange and paradoxical message of the cross. What does it mean to lose one's life for God's sake today?*

*How might the way of the cross be a beginning rather than an end?*

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

*Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners. Matthew 9:13*

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus and his disciples are admonished for hanging out with the wrong crowd. The religious authorities of Jesus' day criticize them for sitting with the much-loathed tax collectors and sinners. Jesus' response: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" (Matthew 9:13).

I see two components in Jesus' response. First, Jesus instructs us all to "go and learn." Go and learn what it means to follow God in a complex and confusing world. Go and learn what it means to have one's heart broken—and to know that you've broken others' hearts, too. Go and learn what it means to have tried your best and yet completely failed. Go and learn the names and stories of people that you have judged to be sinners. The second part occurs once one has "gone and learned." Once that has been done, we can begin to grasp the teaching that mercy—not sacrifice—is the hallmark of a truly faithful person. Jesus insists that a compassionate approach to life is more pleasing to God than righteous indignation and judgment.

## Today's readings

Psalm 51:1–10 | Isaiah 58:1–9a

Matthew 9:10–17

*Humans judge. At some point, we have all categorized people into good and bad, pure and impure. How might we entertain curiosity—rather than judgment—toward those we have dismissed?*

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

*If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.*

*Isaiah 58:9b–10*

Today, we find ourselves back at Isaiah 58, which serves for me as a summary of the entirety of my faith. After probing the depth and authenticity of performative faith, the prophet Isaiah lays out what God considers true religion. God states, “If you offer your food to the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom be like the noonday” (Isaiah 58:10).

Over the centuries, scholars and theologians have made many efforts to spiritualize such simple and direct language. In the second and third centuries, some Christians reinterpreted “the hungry” to mean “the spiritually hungry.” Whereas Scripture speaks directly about the hardships of the poor, “to remove the yoke” became a metaphor for any form of relief. As beautiful as this spiritualizing tradition can be, it is also vital to consider hunger, poverty and hardship in concrete terms. During Lent, let us ask ourselves these important questions:

Am I adding to the burdens of the poor, or am I helping to remove the yoke? Am I sharing my food with the hungry, or are my meals kept to a closely knit circle of family and friends? What is the connection between my life and the needs of the afflicted? Through Isaiah, God urges us to make this connection and to become more generous and satisfy the needs of the afflicted so that our light will shine in the darkness and our gloom will be like the noonday.

### **Today’s readings**

Psalms 86:1–11 | Isaiah 58:9b–14 | Luke 5:27–32

### **FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 18**

*Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 264

### **Today’s readings**

Psalms 25:1–9 | Genesis 9:8–17 | 1 Peter 3:18–22 | Mark 1:9–15

### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

*For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to*

*drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing,*

*I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.*





## *Matthew 25:35–36*

Growing up in a small Texas town in the 1980s and '90s, I was surrounded by versions of Christianity that placed great emphasis on God's coming judgment. To a surprising degree, my first encounters with Christians involved people who were trying to "save me" from the fires of hell and who were obsessed with the impending rapture. Needless to say, I found this experience both fascinating and strange. It is comforting—indeed, healing—then to reflect on Matthew 25:31–46 decades later. In this passage, Jesus offers us a different image of God's coming judgment. Jesus describes a time when God separated the sheep from the goats. Critically, however, the criteria for judgment center on how we treated God's "least of these" in our earthly life. This text on judgment specifically names the treatment of groups still incredibly vulnerable today: the hungry, the thirsty, the sick and the imprisoned. Jesus is notably silent on so many of the issues that inflamed my schoolmates' imaginations, yet he spoke eloquently about serving the most vulnerable in our midst. "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me"

(Matthew 25:40).

### **Today's readings**

Psalms 19:7–14 | Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18

Matthew 25:31–46

*What does it mean to you that in a text on God's judgment, Jesus identifies with "the least of these"?*

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20**

*Pray then in this way.*

*Matthew 6:9a*

A common theme in Lent is repentance and seeking forgiveness from God for our sins. Today's reading, however, turns the tables and asks us to consider the extent to which we

forgive others. In the Gospel lesson appointed for today (Matthew 6:7–15), Jesus instructs his followers on how to pray. He says we are not to pray "as the Gentiles do" by heaping word after word upon each other but to pray using the simple and direct formula that we've come to know as the Lord's Prayer. At the end of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus circles back and re-emphasizes how forgiving others is closely related to being forgiven by God: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if



you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” This is a problem. Or at least it is for anyone (like me) who tends to hold onto righteous anger. As a fairly creative thinker, I’m skilled at coming up with all sorts of reasons why I should not forgive someone. How can I forgive them when they’ve never acknowledged any wrongdoing? How can I forgive them when nothing about their behavior has changed? Those are good questions, and yet Jesus is telling us something important about the power of forgiveness to be a saving grace for its own sake. For our own healing, then, Jesus asks us to forgive.

### Today’s readings

Psalm 34:15–22 | Isaiah 55:6–11

Matthew 6:7–15

*Even as we hold others accountable for their actions, how might we take Jesus’ emphasis on personal forgiveness to heart? What does taking a step toward such forgiveness look like today?*

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

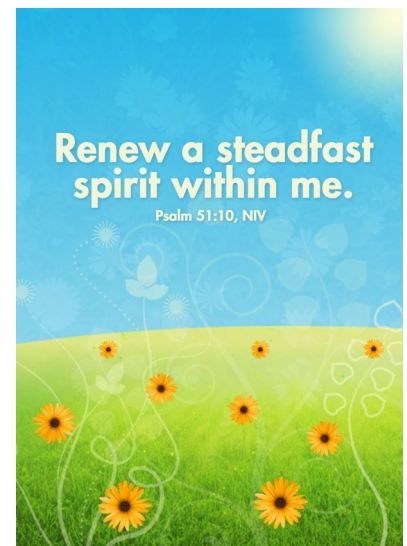
*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Psalm 51:11*

In today’s passage from the Book of Jonah, Jonah proclaims to the inhabitants of Nineveh that God will destroy them. Shockingly, the king and inhabitants of the city listen and change

their ways. This is not how things normally go. In most books of the Bible, we hear prophets

proclaim God’s message to hardened hearts. And yet, because Nineveh repented and changed its ways, God “changed his mind” (Jonah 3:10). God does not destroy the city, and everyone is left happy. Well, almost everyone. The one unhappy soul is Jonah himself. After all, God’s merciful act has left Jonah hanging out there looking like a fool. God received what God desired, and the city of Nineveh was saved, but Jonah’s credibility and ego are sorely bruised. Part of the reason why I love the book of Jonah, and this story in particular, is because it became part of a later tradition that reflected how following God will sometimes end up making you look like a fool. This resulted in a Christian Holy Fool tradition that drank deeply from the Book of Jonah, a spiritual path in which imitating Christ meant becoming a fool to respectable society, albeit a kind of holy fool ultimately grounded in God’s love.



### Today’s readings

Psalm 51:11–18 | Jonah 3:1–10 | Luke 11:29–32

*Let's be honest: choosing to follow Christ can occasionally feel like a strange and surprising choice. If it sometimes feels like foolishness, how can this be a way of identifying more deeply with figures like Jonah and Christ, whose journeys with God led them to the margins?*

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/lent/>





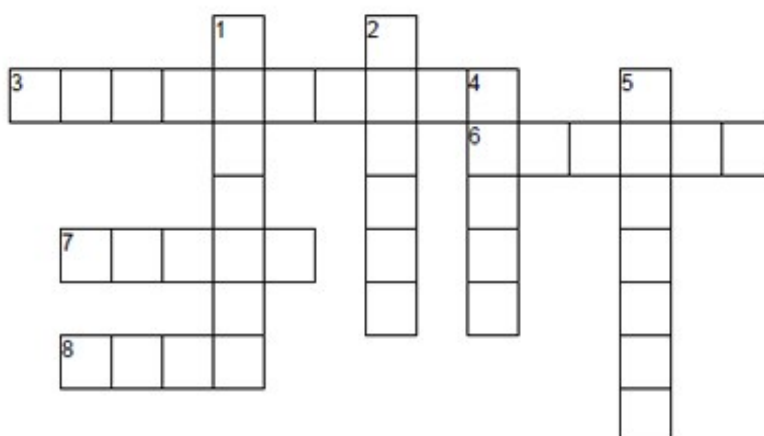
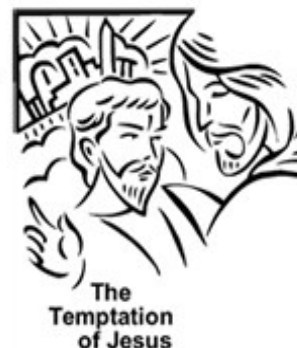
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Jesus is Tested in the Wilderness

# Into the Wilderness with Jesus

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. Mark 1:12-13 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Mark 1:12-15 (NIV)



## HORIZONTAL

- 3. A deserted area
- 6. Heavenly beings that protected Jesus in the wilderness.
- 7. The number that is ten more than thirty.
- 8. The opposite of bad.

## VERTICAL

- 1. Encouraged someone to do something even though it was wrong.
- 2. To turn away from sin.
- 4. The fallen angel who tempts someone to do wrong.
- 5. To accept something to be true.

WILDERNESS  
FORTY

REPENT  
SATAN

GOOD  
ANGELS

BELIEVE  
TEMPTED

# Into the Wilderness with Jesus

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. Mark 1:12-13 (NIV)



The puzzle is based on Mark 1:12-15 (NIV)

The words below have been written in code. Use the hints in the decoder at the top of the page to help break the code (the letters on top are the correct answers, the letters on the bottom are the code). Write the correct word on the line provided beside each code word.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 18-5-16-5-14-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-5-12-9-5-22-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20-5-13-16-20-5-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14-5-23-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1-14-9-13-1-12-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-1-20-1-14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4-1-25-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 23-9-12-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-15-18-20-25 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7-15-15-4 \_\_\_\_\_

REPENT  
SATAN

BELIEVE  
DAYS

TEMPTED  
WILD

NEWS  
FORTY

ANIMALS  
GOOD