

Jesus said:

**“Search the scriptures, for ...  
they are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39 KJV

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# **DAILY LECTIONARY**

## **With Some Background**

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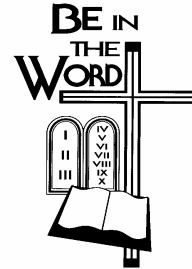
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Dear Friend,

*Holy Scripture is priceless to us because, as the image and verse on the front cover indicate, in it we find Jesus. In the picture, the Chi-Rho symbol (the first two Greek letters of the word for “Christ” that form a cross with a head of sorts on it) is not simply a decorative bookmark but also a reminder that Jesus is in at least some way the center of all the Bible records. The things that are written in Holy Scripture are written, as St. John reports, that we “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing [we] might have life through His Name” (John 20:31 KJV).*

*Being “in the Word” was a point of emphasis of the now-sainted Dr. Alvin Barry, a previous president of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and it is an exhortation we always do well to heed. Dr. Barry’s successor, Dr. Robert Kuhn, also has suggested that renewing our commitment to the Word of God would be helpful for us in our Synod’s difficult days.*

*At Grace Lutheran Church, we would like to so renew our commitment to “Be in the Word”, and this Daily Lectionary With Some Background booklet is intended to help you do that, by offering you a little background about each book of the Bible and other information, such as pertinent themes to watch for as you read. In connection with your reading, you can submit anonymous questions about your reading, with answers appearing in the bulletin or newsletter and on the congregation’s web site. Also on the web site, I regularly will be posting some thoughts about the reading in the form of a web log (what is known as a “blog”). In all this we know God’s Word accomplishes that which He pleases (Isaiah 55:10-11)!*



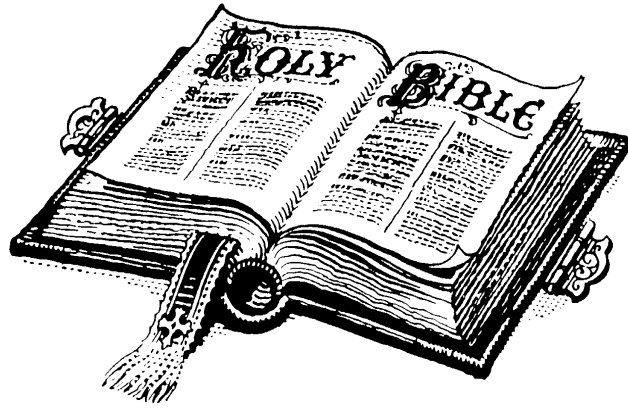
*Pastor Jayson S. Galler*

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# DAILY LECTIONARY

This outline is a devotional reading plan that covers the entire Sacred Scriptures each year. The selections are based on ancient models and are generally in harmony with the liturgical church year. The average reading is three chapters daily. A seasonal canticle is assigned for each month and is scheduled to replace the psalm on the first and last days of the month. All of the psalms are read twice a year.

The lectionary is in accordance with Martin Luther's suggestions: "But let the entire Psalter, divided in parts, remain in use and the entire Scriptures, divided into lections, let this be preserved in the ears of the church." Also: "After that another book should be selected, and so on, until the entire Bible has been read through, and where one does not understand it, pass that by and glorify God."



*Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.*

The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 14

# December

The first seasonal canticle, a liturgical song without a fixed meter, of the new Church year is the first of the four great canticles recorded in St. Luke's Gospel account: The Magnificat, called thus for its first word in Latin, which we translate into English as "it magnifies". This is Mary's song when she visits Elizabeth and John the Baptizer leaps in his mother's womb at the presence of the Lord in Mary's womb. We can think of God's regard for us in our low estate of sin and His mercy promised to Abraham and his descendants, which we are, spiritually.

December begins with us reading the Revelation to St. John. Despite the singular (Revelation, not Revelations), the book is full of various letters and visions Jesus revealed to John, the so-called beloved disciple, who also authored the Gospel account that bears his name and three epistles that survive in the New Testament collection. John likely experienced and recorded this revelation while exiled on the island of Patmos (according to tradition, he was the only apostle who died of natural causes). Revelation begins with seven letters, one each to seven churches, most of which we read on the first day of the month. These letters are relatively straightforward, especially compared to the rest of the book.

With its placement at the end of the New Testament, Revelation may seem like a strange place in the Bible to start off the year of reading, but it fits well with the end-times focus of the first part of the Advent season, when we emphasize Christ's return in judgment. The book is especially comforting in its triumphant vision of the saints in heaven and its reassurance that nothing ultimately suppresses the Church. Concentrate on themes like that in your personal, devotional reading of this book, and do not get bogged down in trying to interpret everything. Note also that not everything in a work such as this, called "apocalyptic literature" is meant to be taken literally (especially not the highly symbolic numbers like the 144,000 believers or the 1,000 years).

On the ninth of the month, we take up the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied near the end of Judah's existence before its captivity in Babylon, around the same time as the prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah. This book is also a good one for the Advent and Christmas seasons, as it contains many prophecies of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection (see especially chapters 7 and 53). Also found in Isaiah are the timely prophecy and words of John the Baptizer (see the beginning of chapter 40, one of my favorite chapters in the Bible). Yet, Isaiah, thought of as "the greatest of the writing prophets," also speaks to us, warning us of our sins and telling us of the forgiveness available through the Messiah. As Isaiah prophesied of the exile and return of the people of Judah, so he also prophesies of our exile in this place and our ultimate "return" to heaven. Note also the great scene of heavenly worship in chapter 6, from which the Church took another part of its historic liturgy, the Sanctus.

The last day of December we begin to read the Gospel according to St. Mark. This theological life of Jesus is likely Peter's preaching as recorded by his assistant John Mark (see Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; etc.), probably while they were in Rome in the days before Peter was martyred there. Mark's first chapter also fits well with the Advent and Christmas seasons.

|    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Luke 1:46-55<br>Revelation 1-2 |
| 2  | Psalm 1<br>Revelation 3-5      |
| 3  | Psalm 2<br>Revelation 6-8      |
| 4  | Psalm 3<br>Revelation 9-11     |
| 5  | Psalm 4<br>Revelation 12-14    |
| 6  | Psalm 5<br>Revelation 15-17    |
| 7  | Psalm 6<br>Revelation 18-20    |
| 8  | Psalm 7<br>Revelation 21-22    |
| 9  | Psalm 8<br>Isaiah 1-3          |
| 10 | Psalm 9<br>Isaiah 4-6          |
| 11 | Psalm 10<br>Isaiah 7-9         |
| 12 | Psalm 11<br>Isaiah 10-12       |
| 13 | Psalm 12<br>Isaiah 13-15       |
| 14 | Psalm 13<br>Isaiah 16-18       |
| 15 | Psalm 14<br>Isaiah 19-21       |
| 16 | Psalm 15<br>Isaiah 22-24       |
| 17 | Psalm 16<br>Isaiah 25-27       |
| 18 | Psalm 17<br>Isaiah 28-30       |
| 19 | Psalm 18<br>Isaiah 31-33       |
| 20 | Psalm 19<br>Isaiah 34-36       |
| 21 | Psalm 20<br>Isaiah 37-39       |
| 22 | Psalm 21<br>Isaiah 40-42       |
| 23 | Psalm 22<br>Isaiah 43-45       |
| 24 | Psalm 23<br>Isaiah 46-48       |
| 25 | Psalm 24<br>Isaiah 49-51       |
| 26 | Psalm 25<br>Isaiah 52-54       |
| 27 | Psalm 26<br>Isaiah 55-57       |
| 28 | Psalm 27<br>Isaiah 58-60       |
| 29 | Psalm 28<br>Isaiah 61-63       |
| 30 | Psalm 29<br>Isaiah 64-66       |
| 31 | Luke 1:46-55<br>Mark 1         |

# January

This second month of the Church Year again features a seasonal canticle that is one of the four great canticles from the Gospel account of St. Luke. In this case it is the “Benedictus,” Zacharias’ Divinely inspired first words after a long silence at the birth of his son, John the Baptizer. The canticle is called by its first word in Latin that we translate as “Blessed”. Note especially how this liturgical song, often used at Matins, emphasizes the themes of God coming to His people to redeem them and the relationship between salvation and forgiveness.

January picks up with the reading of St. Mark’s Gospel account where December left off. The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark may well have been the last of the Gospel accounts to have been written. While reading, note especially the identification of Jesus the God-Man with the Good News (what the word “Gospel” means) that St. Mark reports. Moreover, St. Mark’s account makes it clear that Jesus is both Christ and Son of God (note well the converted Centurion’s confession in Mark 15:39). The role of Christ is further elaborated as one both of the glorious Son of Man and of the Suffering Servant (about whom we read last month in Isaiah 53). Events are linked in quick succession, and St. Mark seems to focus more on Jesus’ deeds than words (even as we today focus on God’s Word combined with His sacramental actions).

As you near the middle of the month, be ready for an abrupt ending. Most ancient copies of this Gospel account end at Mark 16:8. (There are various theories as to why it might have ended there and as to from where vv.9-20 came.) Martin Luther had no qualms about these verses, as he used v.16 in his *Small Catechism*. Many newer editions of the Bible put some sort of separation between verses 8 and 9, but these text-critical issues should not disturb our faith, as there is nothing foundational to our faith in vv.9-20 that we do not find elsewhere in the Bible.

In the middle of January, we switch from the New Testament back to the Old, reading the book of Genesis and wrapping it up on the last day of the month. Genesis, commonly held to have been written down by Moses but previously passed from generation to generation by the faithful believers, tells of salvation history from the beginning to the last days of Joseph (from where Exodus, which we will read in February, picks up the story). Especially important is the account of humankind’s fall into sin in Genesis 3, which also contains the proto, or first, Gospel in Genesis 3:15: that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, though the serpent would bruise His heel.

One writer says that “Genesis is foundational to the understanding of the rest of the Bible,” and no doubt it is true. Note well that in Genesis there is only one true God and that He opposes notions that there are other gods, no gods, or that everything is divine. Note, too, that subjects and themes of the first three chapters of Genesis are reflected in the final three chapters of Revelation. We must marvel at the literary genius of our God who is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, and Who inspired holy men of God to record His revelation, thereby giving to that record the property of inerrancy (being without error). Something to consider when the topic of evolution arises.

|    |               |
|----|---------------|
| 1  | Luke 1:68-79  |
|    | Mark 2        |
| 2  | Psalm 30      |
|    | Mark 3        |
| 3  | Psalm 31      |
|    | Mark 4        |
| 4  | Psalm 32      |
|    | Mark 5        |
| 5  | Psalm 33      |
|    | Mark 6        |
| 6  | Psalm 34      |
|    | Mark 7        |
| 7  | Psalm 35      |
|    | Mark 8        |
| 8  | Psalm 36      |
|    | Mark 9        |
| 9  | Psalm 37      |
|    | Mark 10       |
| 10 | Psalm 38      |
|    | Mark 11       |
| 11 | Psalm 39      |
|    | Mark 12       |
| 12 | Psalm 40      |
|    | Mark 13       |
| 13 | Psalm 41      |
|    | Mark 14       |
| 14 | Psalm 42      |
|    | Mark 15-16    |
| 15 | Psalm 43      |
|    | Genesis 1-3   |
| 16 | Psalm 44      |
|    | Genesis 4-6   |
| 17 | Psalm 45      |
|    | Genesis 7-9   |
| 18 | Psalm 46      |
|    | Genesis 10-12 |
| 19 | Psalm 47      |
|    | Genesis 13-15 |
| 20 | Psalm 48      |
|    | Genesis 16-18 |
| 21 | Psalm 49      |
|    | Genesis 19-21 |
| 22 | Psalm 50      |
|    | Genesis 22-24 |
| 23 | Psalm 51      |
|    | Genesis 25-27 |
| 24 | Psalm 52      |
|    | Genesis 28-30 |
| 25 | Psalm 53      |
|    | Genesis 31-33 |
| 26 | Psalm 54      |
|    | Genesis 34-36 |
| 27 | Psalm 55      |
|    | Genesis 37-39 |
| 28 | Psalm 56      |
|    | Genesis 40-42 |
| 29 | Psalm 57      |
|    | Genesis 43-45 |
| 30 | Psalm 58      |
|    | Genesis 46-48 |
| 31 | Luke 1:68-79  |
|    | Genesis 49-50 |

# February

The seasonal canticle for February is the *Nunc Dimittis*, from the first words of the Latin translation meaning “You now dismiss”. It is Simeon’s song to God after receiving the child Jesus in his arms. We sing the same in the historic liturgy of the Divine Service after we have received Jesus’ Body and Blood from the altar into our mouths.

February continues the reading of the Pentateuch. “Pentateuch” is the term, from the Greek meaning “five-vesseled”, used as early as the 3rd century to refer to the first five books of the Bible (Genesis-Deuteronomy). As noted previously, the content of these five books are held to have been passed from generation to generation by the faithful believers until they were written down by Moses (most probably during the 40 year wanderings in the desert, around 1446-1406 B.C.). We reject higher critical claims of four different authors (named “J”, “E”, “D”, and “P”).

The book of Exodus, which we begin on the first of this month, tells of God’s delivering His people from slavery in Egypt. Their “exit” or “departure” gives the book its name. Moses, the Passover, the Seven Feasts, the Exodus itself, the Manna and Water in the desert, the Tabernacle, and the High Priest are shadows of the greater grace to come in Christ Jesus (see especially how the author of Hebrews “preaches” on Exodus). Note well that the people of Israel are to be freed from bondage in Egypt in order to worship God, just as we are freed from our slavery to sin to do the same—to worship God.

In the middle of the month, we take up Leviticus, in which God through Moses proscribes how He is to be worshiped. God also gives details relating to the Levites, for which the book is named. These detailed regulations were likely given during the year Israel camped at Mt. Sinai as described in Exodus. God’s grace is again clear in pictures of Christ: the five offerings, the high priest, and the seven feasts. Those offerings and feasts no longer pertain to us, but the priestly office does. The work of the Old Testament priesthood was directed both toward God and toward His people and the world; today all baptized people are priests in their offering of praise to God, and pastors continue to represent the people to God and be God’s priests to the world.

The final five days of February, we read half of the book of Numbers, which continues Exodus’ historical narrative with the people’s preparations to move from Sinai to Canaan. Chapters 1 and 26 include census lists of the people, giving this book its name. In February we read far enough into the book to see the people’s lack of faith in and rebellion against God, costing them the Promised Land for a period of 40 years. If it were up to us and our complying with the law to win salvation, we would lose it for all eternity. Thanks be to God for the free gift of His Gospel of grace through faith.

Remember that though a good portion of the content of the Pentateuch consists of laws of one sort, there is still Gospel, the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, to be found in these books. Similarly, the Old Testament as a whole must not be regarded as “law” in comparison to the New Testament as “Gospel”. In both Old and New Testaments one can find examples of both the law, the teaching of the Bible that shows us we are sinners, and the Gospel, the teaching of the Bible that tells us what Jesus Christ has done about our sin.

|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Luke 2:29-32<br>Exodus 1-3    |
| 2  | Psalms 59<br>Exodus 4-6       |
| 3  | Psalms 60<br>Exodus 7-9       |
| 4  | Psalms 61<br>Exodus 10-12     |
| 5  | Psalms 62<br>Exodus 13-15     |
| 6  | Psalms 63<br>Exodus 16-18     |
| 7  | Psalms 64<br>Exodus 19-21     |
| 8  | Psalms 65<br>Exodus 22-24     |
| 9  | Psalms 66<br>Exodus 25-27     |
| 10 | Psalms 67<br>Exodus 28-30     |
| 11 | Psalms 68<br>Exodus 31-33     |
| 12 | Psalms 69<br>Exodus 34-36     |
| 13 | Psalms 70<br>Exodus 37-38     |
| 14 | Psalms 71<br>Exodus 39-40     |
| 15 | Psalms 72<br>Leviticus 1-3    |
| 16 | Psalms 73<br>Leviticus 4-6    |
| 17 | Psalms 74<br>Leviticus 7-9    |
| 18 | Psalms 75<br>Leviticus 10-12  |
| 19 | Psalms 76<br>Leviticus 13-15  |
| 20 | Psalms 77<br>Leviticus 16-18  |
| 21 | Psalms 78<br>Leviticus 19-21  |
| 22 | Psalms 79<br>Leviticus 22-24  |
| 23 | Psalms 80<br>Leviticus 25-27  |
| 24 | Psalms 81<br>Numbers 1-3      |
| 25 | Psalms 82<br>Numbers 4-6      |
| 26 | Psalms 83<br>Numbers 7-9      |
| 27 | Psalms 84<br>Numbers 10-12    |
| 28 | Luke 2:29-32<br>Numbers 13-15 |

# March

The seasonal canticle for March is part of Isaiah's praise and prayer for divine deliverance. Though it was likely that at that time the gracious presence of God had been withdrawn from Israel, this lamentation recalls God's history of righteously dealing with His faithful people; it confesses the people's sin, including that of neglecting God; and it pleads for God's mercy. There is an implied summons for all to join in the praise and prayer.

In the beginning of March we continue the book of Numbers that we began in February, which book continues the historical narrative of the Old Testament, with the census lists in chapters 1 and 26 giving the book its name. The chapters we read in March pick up the story with the people of Israel at Kadesh, beginning with their rebellion. There are various pictures of Jesus in Numbers, especially the faith in the one lifted up on the pole (21:4-9), and Numbers includes a very strong prophecy of Jesus, the Messiah (24:17). See how Jesus in St. John's Gospel account explains His fulfillment of the prophecy of the "lifting up" episode (John 3:14-15; 8:28). An interesting aspect of the strong prophecy of Jesus is that God spoke it through the lips of a pagan prophet, whose donkey God also enabled to speak!

The eighth of March we begin the final book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy presents Moses' farewell sermon to the people of Israel as they stand in Moab at the Jordan River preparing to enter the Promised Land. The sermon is part of God and the people renewing the covenant, and thus it repeats much of the law given earlier. In this sense, Deuteronomy is a repetition or copy of the law, as its name suggests. Pay special attention to the similarities between Moses and Jesus, and likewise note in chapter 18 Moses' direct prophecy of Jesus, "The Prophet" raised up from among His brothers, and notice how in the New Testament some apply that passage to Jesus (for example, John 7:40).

The latter third of March we read from St. Luke's Gospel account, what may be a welcome New Testament break after reading through the entire Pentateuch in the preceding two months. Luke helps us see the completeness and universal availability of God's grace and the table fellowship that believing sinners have with Jesus. St. Luke's account includes more detail about Jesus' birth than the other Gospel accounts, and it is thought that perhaps the Holy Spirit used the Virgin Mary herself as one of St. Luke's sources for those details. The timing of the reading of the latter chapters of the Gospel comes close to the annual observance of Holy Week.

We know from Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 that a doctor named Luke was a friend and coworker of St. Paul's, and early Christian writings identify Luke as the author of both the Gospel account that bears his name and its companion volume, the book of Acts (note its "we" portions: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). Born a Gentile and serving as a doctor, Luke was likely well-educated, skills the Holy Spirit put to good use.

A word is in order about the four different accounts of the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. While there are various higher critical theories about the similarities and differences between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the simplest explanation is that the Holy Spirit inspired four different men to write different accounts.

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Isaiah 64:1-9     |
|    | Numbers 16-18     |
| 2  | Psalm 85          |
|    | Numbers 19-21     |
| 3  | Psalm 86          |
|    | Numbers 22-24     |
| 4  | Psalm 87          |
|    | Numbers 25-27     |
| 5  | Psalm 88          |
|    | Numbers 28-30     |
| 6  | Psalm 89          |
|    | Numbers 31-33     |
| 7  | Psalm 90          |
|    | Numbers 34-36     |
| 8  | Psalm 91          |
|    | Deuteronomy 1-3   |
| 9  | Psalm 92          |
|    | Deuteronomy 4-6   |
| 10 | Psalm 93          |
|    | Deuteronomy 7-9   |
| 11 | Psalm 94          |
|    | Deuteronomy 10-12 |
| 12 | Psalm 95          |
|    | Deuteronomy 13-15 |
| 13 | Psalm 96          |
|    | Deuteronomy 16-18 |
| 14 | Psalm 97          |
|    | Deuteronomy 19-21 |
| 15 | Psalm 98          |
|    | Deuteronomy 22-24 |
| 16 | Psalm 99          |
|    | Deuteronomy 25-27 |
| 17 | Psalm 100         |
|    | Deuteronomy 28-30 |
| 18 | Psalm 101         |
|    | Deuteronomy 31-34 |
| 19 | Psalm 102         |
|    | Luke 1            |
| 20 | Psalm 103         |
|    | Luke 2-3          |
| 21 | Psalm 104         |
|    | Luke 4-5          |
| 22 | Psalm 105         |
|    | Luke 6-7          |
| 23 | Psalm 106         |
|    | Luke 8-9          |
| 24 | Psalm 107         |
|    | Luke 10-11        |
| 25 | Psalm 108         |
|    | Luke 12-13        |
| 26 | Psalm 109         |
|    | Luke 14-15        |
| 27 | Psalm 110         |
|    | Luke 16-17        |
| 28 | Psalm 111         |
|    | Luke 18-19        |
| 29 | Psalm 112         |
|    | Luke 20-21        |
| 30 | Psalm 113         |
|    | Luke 22           |
| 31 | Isaiah 64:1-9     |
|    | Luke 23-24        |

# April

The seasonal canticle for April is again a song of praise from Isaiah. This one in chapter 25 celebrates the deliverance brought about by the judgments detailed in chapter 24. Note well the heavenly banquet described in vv.6-10 and remember that Jesus also spoke of heaven as a banquet and that we have a “foretaste of the feast to come” in the Sacrament of the Altar.

As usual, the seasonal canticle begins and ends the month and the cycle of Psalms continues on April’s other days. Note of Psalm 119, which occupies our attention for 22 days this month, that it is a “devotional” of sorts on the Word of God itself. As one might expect, law and Gospel are themes throughout this meditation on God’s Word, but the word translated “law” does not always mean “law”. This psalm is what is called an “acrostic poem”, where “the verses of each stanza begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet”.

In April we read through nearly all of St. Paul’s letters, also called “epistles”. St. Paul made three primary missionary journeys (more about those next month with Acts), and his letters are generally to churches he founded. Though originally directed to churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia (a Roman province), Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and Thessalonica, and to young Pastor Timothy and his congregation, the Holy Spirit also does speak to us through these letters.

We read the letters in canonical order (that is, the order they appear in the New Testament), but this order is not the order in which St. Paul likely wrote them. The order of writing is far more likely: Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy. The epistles were likely authored over a period of some 20 years, probably around the same time as the writing of the three “synoptic” Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which accounts “see together” many of the sayings and events of Jesus’ life).

In these letters, you also will notice the strong emphasis the Divinely-inspired Paul places on both law and Gospel as he lovingly and caringly follows-up with his children in the faith. His letters encourage and chastise when each is appropriate. They have a clear focus on teaching, but at the same time they boldly preach Christ, and Him crucified.

Paul’s letter to the *Romans*, whom he had not yet visited, is a fairly complete treatment of the fallen human condition, Jew and Gentile, and the Gospel’s solution for it.

In the letters to the *Corinthians*, Paul concentrates on problems in their congregations and how they should be resolved in grace.

Paul in *Galatians* strongly emphasizes that law and Gospel cannot be confused and that salvation is by faith.

*Ephesians* clearly excludes the role of works in salvation, which God has elected in advance. Paul talks about the Lord’s gift of the Office of the Ministry to the Church (but watch for bad translations of 4:11—the KJV has it right).

In *Philippians*, we have a wonderful “hymn” about Christ (2:6-11) and we see the practical results of faith in the lives of the believers. Watch the NIV translation of 2:6, “form” is correct.

Paul in *Colossians* holds up the truth of Christ against a false teaching that was circulating there.

In the letters to the *Thessalonians*, persecution is a central theme, and Paul relates it to the truth about the Lord’s coming.

In the letters to *Timothy*, Paul encourages the young pastor and his people to put their trust where Paul had put his: in the Gospel.

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 1  | Isaiah 25:1-9       |
|    | Romans 1-3          |
| 2  | Psalm 114           |
|    | Romans 4-6          |
| 3  | Psalm 115           |
|    | Romans 7-9          |
| 4  | Psalm 116           |
|    | Romans 10-13        |
| 5  | Psalm 117           |
|    | Romans 14-16        |
| 6  | Psalm 118           |
|    | 1 Corinthians 1-3   |
| 7  | Psalm 119:1-8       |
|    | 1 Corinthians 4-6   |
| 8  | Psalm 119:9-16      |
|    | 1 Corinthians 7-9   |
| 9  | Psalm 119:17-24     |
|    | 1 Corinthians 10-11 |
| 10 | Psalm 119:25-32     |
|    | 1 Corinthians 12-14 |
| 11 | Psalm 119:33-40     |
|    | 1 Corinthians 15-16 |
| 12 | Psalm 119:41-48     |
|    | 2 Corinthians 1-4   |
| 13 | Psalm 119:49-56     |
|    | 2 Corinthians 5-7   |
| 14 | Psalm 119:57-64     |
|    | 2 Corinthians 8-10  |
| 15 | Psalm 119:65-72     |
|    | 2 Corinthians 11-13 |
| 16 | Psalm 119:73-80     |
|    | Galatians 1-3       |
| 17 | Psalm 119:81-88     |
|    | Galatians 4-6       |
| 18 | Psalm 119:89-96     |
|    | Ephesians 1-3       |
| 19 | Psalm 119:97-104    |
|    | Ephesians 4-6       |
| 20 | Psalm 119:105-112   |
|    | Philippians 1-2     |
| 21 | Psalm 119:113-120   |
|    | Philippians 3-4     |
| 22 | Psalm 119:121-128   |
|    | Colossians 1-2      |
| 23 | Psalm 119:129-136   |
|    | Colossians 3-4      |
| 24 | Psalm 119:137-144   |
|    | 1 Thessalonians 1-3 |
| 25 | Psalm 119:145-152   |
|    | 1 Thessalonians 4-5 |
| 26 | Psalm 119:153-160   |
|    | 2 Thessalonians 1-3 |
| 27 | Psalm 119:161-168   |
|    | 1 Timothy 1-3       |
| 28 | Psalm 119:169-176   |
|    | 1 Timothy 4-6       |
| 29 | Psalm 120           |
|    | 2 Timothy 1-2       |
| 30 | Isaiah 25:1-9       |
|    | 2 Timothy 3-4       |

# May

The seasonal canticle for May is Hannah's prayer singing praise and thanksgiving to God, echoed by Mary's song, the Magnificat. Though Hannah speaks of her conceived son, Samuel, who will establish the kingship and usher in a new period of Israel's history, her supreme source of joy is the God Who answered her prayer for a child. We might take special note of v.6 and think of the work of the law and Gospel, respectively bringing us death for our sin and raising us to life by faith in Christ.

On May first, we finish the collection of St. Paul's letters. The letter to Titus, like those to Timothy, is to a pastor and his congregation (note especially the great summaries of grace and Baptism). Philemon is to a believer in Collose, which believer Paul asks to accept back as a brother the runaway slave, Onesimus.

On May 2-13, we read other New Testament letters. In reading Hebrews, notice especially how the author warns us about the dangers of abandoning the true teaching and sacraments for the sake of escaping persecution, and notice the "roll-call" of the saints or "heroes of the faith" in chapter 11. James, a kinsman of the Lord, exhorts us by describing the life that Christians should live. Peter's two letters give Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered through Asia Minor (1) strong Baptismal teaching and instructions regarding persecution inside and outside the church, and (2) directions for dealing with false teachers and evildoers in the revealed church. The Apostle John has three letters in the New Testament, though, like in his Gospel account, he does not refer to himself by name in them. The first expresses God's grace very clearly and also addresses false teaching. The second and third letters address the issue of discouraging false teaching by not showing hospitality. Jude, another kinsman of the Lord, writes briefly like 2 Peter of the Gospel as the antidote for false teaching.

On May 11, note well Psalm 130. Psalm 130 is one of the seven penitential psalms (the others are Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, and 143). As such, Psalm 130 expresses well our plea to God for the forgiveness He so graciously offers. Martin Luther paraphrased this psalm in a hymn, *TLH #329*.

On May 14-24, we read John's Gospel account, written for people to come to believe and continue believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that by believing they might have life in His Name (see 20:31). This account compliments the other "synoptic" Gospel accounts and treats in a circular, escalating fashion the same sub-themes. The other accounts were no doubt known to John and he, by the Spirit's inspiration, did not cover exactly the same ground, though his ultimate purpose was the same.

The rest of May, our attention is directed to Acts. As noted in regards to March's readings, the book of the Acts of the Apostles is the second New Testament book recorded by St. Luke. Where the earlier book that bears his name tells "about all Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was given up to heaven" (1:1-2), this book details the spread of the Church from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (1:8) after Jesus' ascension. In May we read only through Luke's divinely-inspired narration of St. Paul's first missionary journey (chapter 14).

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| 1  | 1 Samuel 2:1-10         |
|    | Titus, Philemon         |
| 2  | Psalm 121               |
|    | Hebrews 1-4             |
| 3  | Psalm 122               |
|    | Hebrews 5-7             |
| 4  | Psalm 123               |
|    | Hebrews 8-10            |
| 5  | Psalm 124               |
|    | Hebrews 11-13           |
| 6  | Psalm 125               |
|    | James 1-3               |
| 7  | Psalm 126               |
|    | James 4-5               |
| 8  | Psalm 127               |
|    | 1 Peter 1-2             |
| 9  | Psalm 128               |
|    | 1 Peter 3-5             |
| 10 | Psalm 129               |
|    | 2 Peter                 |
| 11 | Psalm 130               |
|    | 1 John 1-3              |
| 12 | Psalm 131               |
|    | 1 John 4-5              |
| 13 | Psalm 132               |
|    | 2 John, 3 John,<br>Jude |
| 14 | Psalm 133               |
|    | John 1-2                |
| 15 | Psalm 134               |
|    | John 3-4                |
| 16 | Psalm 135               |
|    | John 5-6                |
| 17 | Psalm 136               |
|    | John 7-8                |
| 18 | Psalm 137               |
|    | John 9-10               |
| 19 | Psalm 138               |
|    | John 11-12              |
| 20 | Psalm 139               |
|    | John 13-14              |
| 21 | Psalm 140               |
|    | John 15-16              |
| 22 | Psalm 141               |
|    | John 17-18              |
| 23 | Psalm 142               |
|    | John 19                 |
| 24 | Psalm 143               |
|    | John 20-21              |
| 25 | Psalm 144               |
|    | Acts 1-2                |
| 26 | Psalm 145               |
|    | Acts 3-4                |
| 27 | Psalm 146               |
|    | Acts 5-6                |
| 28 | Psalm 147               |
|    | Acts 7-8                |
| 29 | Psalm 148               |
|    | Acts 9-10               |
| 30 | Psalm 149               |
|    | Acts 11-12              |
| 31 | 1 Samuel 2:1-10         |
|    | Acts 13-14              |

# June

The seasonal canticle for June consists of another two of Isaiah's psalms or songs of praise for deliverance. With the people of Israel, we can sing them today, as in Jesus God has delivered us from sin.

Now about halfway through the Church Year, in June we complete our first run through the Psalms and begin the second. Specific psalms to give special attention to this month are Psalm 1 (about the two "ways" or paths), Psalm 2 (quoted frequently by the New Testament and applied to Christ), Psalm 22 (from which Jesus Himself quotes while on the cross), and Psalm 23 (to be related to Jesus' self-identification as the Good Shepherd in John 10 and just part of the rich Old Testament shepherd background for Jesus' teaching in the New Testament).

In the beginning of June, we finish the book of Acts. We pick up the story of the spread of the Church after Jesus' ascension with the account of the Jerusalem conference, which conference took place after St. Paul's first missionary journey (chapter 15), and we follow his second and third journeys and the unexpected way he got to Rome. (See Romans itself for St. Paul's expressing his desire to get there.)

On the 8th of June, we return to the Old Testament, starting to read what are called "The Former Prophets." Picking up where Moses left off in Deuteronomy (in more ways than one), the book of Joshua details the conquest and fulfillment of God working through the people of Israel now in the Promised Land. Joshua himself is a living prophecy of the God-man with the same name, Whom we know as Jesus. It may have been a pre-incarnate Jesus who makes a brief appearance in this book, and the book also tells of one of Jesus' ancestors, and it may surprise you who it is!

From June 14-June 20 we read Judges. The book of Judges, which word also means "leaders", tells of the days after Joshua died and again shows God's gracious provision of spiritual and political deliverers. Take special note of the cycle of disobedience and apostasy, foreign oppression, cries of distress, and deliverance. The people were faithless, but God was faithful. The events are strikingly like our time (in society and church) in that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6 *KJV*).

On June 21st, we read Ruth. The book of Ruth is in sharp contrast to the accounts of the book of Judges, though set at the same time. This book tells more about the ancestry of David and thus also Jesus, but more importantly it shows us salvation is by faith and that deliverance comes from our Redeemer. Ruth 1:16-17 is frequently used as a wedding text, but note how its context is not that of a wedding, though there are weddings in the book of Ruth. (I have a recording of a wonderful contemporary musical based on Ruth, if anyone is interested in hearing it.)

On June 22nd, we continue in canonical and chronological order with 1 Samuel. Samuel, too, is a living prophecy of Jesus in that he was prophet, priest, and "king", even before there was a king. Samuel on God's behalf anointed Israel's first two kings and was instrumental in establishing the kingship as God's service. In June we read only as far as chapter 27; the ending of Saul's and the beginning of David's kingship will wait until July.

|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Isaiah 12:1-6<br>Acts 15-16   |
| 2  | Psalm 150<br>Acts 17-18       |
| 3  | Psalm 1<br>Acts 19-20         |
| 4  | Psalm 2<br>Acts 21-22         |
| 5  | Psalm 3<br>Acts 23-24         |
| 6  | Psalm 4<br>Acts 25-26         |
| 7  | Psalm 5<br>Acts 27-28         |
| 8  | Psalm 6<br>Joshua 1-5         |
| 9  | Psalm 7<br>Joshua 6-8         |
| 10 | Psalm 8<br>Joshua 9-11        |
| 11 | Psalm 9<br>Joshua 12-16       |
| 12 | Psalm 10<br>Joshua 17-21      |
| 13 | Psalm 11<br>Joshua 22-24      |
| 14 | Psalm 12<br>Judges 1-3        |
| 15 | Psalm 13<br>Judges 4-6        |
| 16 | Psalm 14<br>Judges 7-9        |
| 17 | Psalm 15<br>Judges 10-12      |
| 18 | Psalm 16<br>Judges 13-15      |
| 19 | Psalm 17<br>Judges 16-18      |
| 20 | Psalm 18<br>Judges 19-21      |
| 21 | Psalm 19<br>Ruth              |
| 22 | Psalm 20<br>1 Samuel 1-3      |
| 23 | Psalm 21<br>1 Samuel 4-6      |
| 24 | Psalm 22<br>1 Samuel 7-9      |
| 25 | Psalm 23<br>1 Samuel 10-12    |
| 26 | Psalm 24<br>1 Samuel 13-15    |
| 27 | Psalm 25<br>1 Samuel 16-18    |
| 28 | Psalm 26<br>1 Samuel 19-21    |
| 29 | Psalm 27<br>1 Samuel 22-4     |
| 30 | Isaiah 12:1-6<br>Samuel 25-27 |

# July

The seasonal canticle for July is from the song Moses sang to the people of Israel after his final sermon. He sang it from beginning to end, but we read only the first four verses! Notice God's righteousness and how His doctrine is referred to as rain.

Through the 25th of July, we continue reading "The Former Prophets", picking up the historical narrative at Saul's demise. As we finish 1 Samuel, and read all of 2 Samuel, we cover David's kingship. Reading through 1 and 2 Kings covers all the kings after David until the people went into exile.

King David is one of the most important "types" of Jesus in the Old Testament. He rules with justice, wisdom, integrity, courage, and compassion. Though he was not perfect, he is a living prophecy of Jesus. God promised David that a king from his line would rule righteously forever. God fulfilled that promise in Jesus, the Son of David, who sits on the throne of David, and surpasses His ancestor.

After David, Solomon ruled. This wise king also foreshadows Jesus, but, again, Jesus is greater than Solomon. Solomon built the Temple David wanted to build, and his dedication tells us a lot about our coming to worship where God's Name is today. The kingdom expanded then, even as God's kingdom expands today.

From such happy thoughts about the expansion of the kingdom, we next read of the division of the kingdom and the more than less-faithful "Kings" who followed in each of its two parts. Israel, the northern kingdom, turned away from God faster and further than did Judah, the southern kingdom. (At times this narrative can be hard to follow, as it dates kings in one kingdom by referring to the other.) Ultimately, despite work of prophets such as Elijah, the leaders and people of both kingdoms were exiled for their unfaithfulness, similar to the exile we deserve from God's presence on account of our sin. Their prophesied deliverance and return points to our salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

The books we read this month have unknown authors and have multiplied since their origin. The title of 1 and 2 Samuel has virtually nothing to do with Samuel as a potential author and virtually everything to do with Samuel's role in the books, and the books were originally one book with a various titles. Similarly, 1 and 2 Kings were one book and do not identify its human author, who remains unknown, though tradition says it was Jeremiah.

On the 26th of July, we begin the first of two books that were also one book in the Hebrew Old Testament canon and came at its end: Chronicles, one of the Old Testament "Writings". The anonymous author, known as the Chronicler, drew on a number of sources, some in the canon and others that no longer survive. 1 Chronicles begins with a summary of the genealogies from creation to David's reign, and, beginning with chapter 10, the book details David's reign through to Solomon's succession. We again see God's grace in the promise to David and the leading up to Jesus, Whose family line goes back to the tribe of Judah. We also see God's grace in the election of the Levites to serve God as priests, even as He today gives His forgiveness through pastors.

|    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Deut. 32:1-4<br>1 Samuel 28-31 |
| 2  | Psalm 28<br>2 Samuel 1-3       |
| 3  | Psalm 29<br>2 Samuel 4-6       |
| 4  | Psalm 30<br>2 Samuel 7-9       |
| 5  | Psalm 31<br>2 Samuel 10-12     |
| 6  | Psalm 32<br>2 Samuel 13-15     |
| 7  | Psalm 33<br>2 Samuel 16-18     |
| 8  | Psalm 34<br>2 Samuel 19-21     |
| 9  | Psalm 35<br>2 Samuel 22-24     |
| 10 | Psalm 36<br>1 Kings 1-2        |
| 11 | Psalm 37<br>1 Kings 3-6        |
| 12 | Psalm 38<br>1 Kings 7-8        |
| 13 | Psalm 39<br>1 Kings 9-11       |
| 14 | Psalm 40<br>1 Kings 12-14      |
| 15 | Psalm 41<br>1 Kings 15-17      |
| 16 | Psalm 42<br>1 Kings 18-20      |
| 17 | Psalm 43<br>1 Kings 21-22      |
| 18 | Psalm 44<br>2 Kings 1-3        |
| 19 | Psalm 45<br>2 Kings 4-6        |
| 20 | Psalm 46<br>2 Kings 7-9        |
| 21 | Psalm 47<br>2 Kings 10-12      |
| 22 | Psalm 48<br>2 Kings 13-15      |
| 23 | Psalm 49<br>2 Kings 16-18      |
| 24 | Psalm 50<br>2 Kings 19-22      |
| 25 | Psalm 51<br>2 Kings 23-25      |
| 26 | Psalm 52<br>1 Chron. 1-5       |
| 27 | Psalm 53<br>1 Chron. 6-10      |
| 28 | Psalm 54<br>1 Chron. 11-15     |
| 29 | Psalm 55<br>1 Chron. 16-20     |
| 30 | Psalm 56<br>1 Chron. 21-25     |
| 31 | Deut. 32:1-4<br>1 Chron. 26-29 |

# August

The seasonal canticle is the Psalm-like prayer of Habakkuk, who petitions God to renew His deeds. Habakkuk puts that request in the context of remembering God's former deeds. We likewise pray this canticle with confidence and trust that God will renew His deeds!

We begin August continuing the Old Testament "Writings" by reading 2 Chronicles, which details the reign of Solomon and summarizes the reigns of Judah's other kings through to Judah's exile in Babylon and promised return. Solomon is another type of Jesus, as Solomon's temple also is fulfilled in Jesus.

One of the more faithful kings after Solomon was Hezekiah, whose notable reformation the divinely-inspired Chronicler details (beginning in 2 Chronicles 29). Hezekiah not only focused on physically cleaning the House of the Lord, but he also restored the service of the House of the Lord, making provisions for music, worship, and the sacred meal, as did the 16th-century Lutheran Reformation, focusing primarily on God's service to us.

On August 13-18, we continue reading "the Writings" by taking up the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which continue the historical account where Chronicles left off. These two books from our Bible were also originally treated as one, and may have been authored by the same person as Chronicles. It is generally thought that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem first (and rebuilt the Temple) and was later joined by Nehemiah (who rebuilt the city's wall). Both books show how God fulfills His gracious promise to the people by returning them from exile (as He delivers us from sin). We also see the importance of preserving the Israelites' genealogy as they await the Messiah, coming through a specific family line.

August 19-21 we read Esther. Esther was a Jewess who became queen of Persia. Though we read her book after Ezra-Nehemiah, she likely reigned before their time. She exhibits Christ-like qualities in being willing to die for her people and advocating on their behalf. This account gives the background for the annual Jewish festival of Purim, a festival of God's faithfulness to His people. God's faithful and gracious preservation of His people in the face of danger and opposition is readily apparent in Esther, and we should remember God's promise to likewise always preserve us.

August 22nd through the month's end we read the first part of Job, which is included in a subcategory of the "Writings", the Wisdom literature. The events of this book likely took place long before Esther, while the people lived under judges (before the reign of the kings), though possibly the events were not recorded until much later. As with 1 and 2 Samuel, the name of the book does not refer to its author (who is unknown) but to its central character. The book of Job shows well how God uses suffering to test and teach us. As Job asks his wife, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10 NASB), we are reminded that all things are truly in God's control. Job also anticipates Christ well: as Mediator (9:33-34), Advocate (13:18), Atoner (14:17), and Redeemer (19:25-27—the source of a favorite Resurrection and funeral hymn, *TLH* #200).

|    |                              |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1  | Habak 3:2-19<br>2 Chron. 1-3 |
| 2  | Psalm 57<br>2 Chron. 4-6     |
| 3  | Psalm 58<br>2 Chron. 7-9     |
| 4  | Psalm 59<br>2 Chron. 10-12   |
| 5  | Psalm 60<br>2 Chron. 13-15   |
| 6  | Psalm 61<br>2 Chron. 16-18   |
| 7  | Psalm 62<br>2 Chron. 19-21   |
| 8  | Psalm 63<br>2 Chron. 22-24   |
| 9  | Psalm 64<br>2 Chron. 25-27   |
| 10 | Psalm 65<br>2 Chron. 28-30   |
| 11 | Psalm 66<br>2 Chron. 31-33   |
| 12 | Psalm 67<br>2 Chron. 34-36   |
| 13 | Psalm 68<br>Ezra 1-5         |
| 14 | Psalm 69<br>Ezra 6-10        |
| 15 | Psalm 70<br>Nehemiah 1-3     |
| 16 | Psalm 71<br>Nehemiah 4-6     |
| 17 | Psalm 72<br>Nehemiah 7-9     |
| 18 | Psalm 73<br>Nehemiah 10-13   |
| 19 | Psalm 74<br>Esther 1-3       |
| 20 | Psalm 75<br>Esther 4-6       |
| 21 | Psalm 76<br>Esther 7-10      |
| 22 | Psalm 77<br>Job 1-3          |
| 23 | Psalm 78<br>Job 4-6          |
| 24 | Psalm 79<br>Job 7-9          |
| 25 | Psalm 80<br>Job 10-12        |
| 26 | Psalm 81<br>Job 13-15        |
| 27 | Psalm 82<br>Job 16-18        |
| 28 | Psalm 83<br>Job 19-21        |
| 29 | Psalm 84<br>Job 22-24        |
| 30 | Psalm 85<br>Job 25-27        |
| 31 | Habak 3:2-19<br>Job 28-30    |

# September

In September the seasonal canticle is recorded in 1 Chronicles and is from King David's prayer of praise to God at the donation of supplies for the building of the first temple. As David confesses that all things, even his own, come from God, we confess the same truth as we give to God an offering of what He entrusts to our care.

On the first four days of September, we finish reading the book of Job. One of the so-called "wisdom" books, Job gives us a good understanding of God's justice in light of human suffering. At times we feel, as did Job, that God is only wrathful towards us, but grace is always there. God's answer to a somewhat impertinent Job in chapters 38-41 helps us keep the right perspective when we want to ask God those seemingly unanswerable questions.

September 5-14, Proverbs, another wisdom book, is our central focus. Many of these short, pithy and practical sayings are from King Solomon; 1 Kings 3 tells how Solomon prayed to God for wisdom, and 1 Kings 4:32 tells of his ability to speak proverbs. The "wisdom" so often described is the result of reverence (fear) for God. Jesus personifies Wisdom, and we herein read of His summoning us to His banquet: "Come, eat of My bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled" (Proverbs 9:5 KJV). That statement can point to Christ's invitation in His Holy Supper! Note also the testimonial to women in 31:10-31.

For four days in the middle of the month, we read Ecclesiastes. King Solomon may also have authored this look at the measure of human beings, though the author's name is not directly given in the book. Human wisdom cannot figure out God's larger purposes or the meaning of our existence: it all seems meaningless, but life centered on God has purpose and meaning.

Next in September we spend two days with another "wisdom" book, Song of Songs (that is, the greatest of songs), also called Song of Solomon (which could be simply a song about Solomon—Solomon's authorship is debated). In this dialog between the beloved and the lover, with comments from friends interspersed, one notes "The subtle delicacy with which [the author] evokes sensuous awareness while avoiding crude titillation". While the book can be taken to endorse marital love in all its beauty, its most edifying use accents God's love for His people, giving us an Old Testament picture of the Church as the Bride of Christ, a figure of speech St. Paul also uses by Divine inspiration in Ephesians 5, with clear references to the role of Baptism ("the washing of water by the Word") in making the Church holy.

Lastly in September we begin the book of Jeremiah, one of the longest in the Bible, and one of the so-called "latter prophets". Jeremiah prophesied of God's coming judgment upon the people of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. Yet, he also foretells of the people's release and return from exile to their land. He prophesies of Christ and His kingdom, especially in the 23rd and the 31st chapter, which latter chapter finishes off this month's readings. Especially notable in Jeremiah 31 is the promise of the new covenant under which God forgives sins and changes minds and hearts through His Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Jeremiah 1:5 is an important text used in Biblical arguments against abortion.

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 1  | 1 Chron. 29:10-13   |
|    | Job 31-33           |
| 2  | Psalm 86            |
|    | Job 34-36           |
| 3  | Psalm 87            |
|    | Job 37-39           |
| 4  | Psalm 88            |
|    | Job 40-42           |
| 5  | Psalm 89            |
|    | Proverbs 1-3        |
| 6  | Psalm 90            |
|    | Proverbs 4-7        |
| 7  | Psalm 91            |
|    | Proverbs 8-10       |
| 8  | Psalm 92            |
|    | Proverbs 11-13      |
| 9  | Psalm 93            |
|    | Proverbs 14-16      |
| 10 | Psalm 94            |
|    | Proverbs 17-19      |
| 11 | Psalm 95            |
|    | Proverbs 20-22      |
| 12 | Psalm 96            |
|    | Proverbs 23-25      |
| 13 | Psalm 97            |
|    | Proverbs 26-28      |
| 14 | Psalm 98            |
|    | Proverbs 29-31      |
| 15 | Psalm 99            |
|    | Ecclesiastes 1-3    |
| 16 | Psalm 100           |
|    | Ecclesiastes 4-6    |
| 17 | Psalm 101           |
|    | Ecclesiastes 7-9    |
| 18 | Psalm 102           |
|    | Ecclesiastes 10-12  |
| 19 | Psalm 103           |
|    | Song of Solomon 1-4 |
| 20 | Psalm 104           |
|    | Song of Solomon 5-8 |
| 21 | Psalm 105           |
|    | Jeremiah 1-3        |
| 22 | Psalm 106           |
|    | Jeremiah 4-6        |
| 23 | Psalm 107           |
|    | Jeremiah 7-9        |
| 24 | Psalm 108           |
|    | Jeremiah 10-12      |
| 25 | Psalm 109           |
|    | Jeremiah 13-15      |
| 26 | Psalm 110           |
|    | Jeremiah 16-18      |
| 27 | Psalm 111           |
|    | Jeremiah 19-22      |
| 28 | Psalm 112           |
|    | Jeremiah 23-25      |
| 29 | Psalm 113           |
|    | Jeremiah 26-28      |
| 30 | 1 Chron. 29:10-13   |
|    | Jeremiah 29-31      |

# October

The seasonal canticle for October is Jonah's Psalm-like prayer prayed from inside the great fish. Jonah thanks God for delivering him from the death he deserved, and he anticipates again worshipping God. We, too, confess our sin and God's salvation.

First in October we finish reading Jeremiah. Mostly we hear the prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath, as well as God's judgment against the other nations. As God appealed to people then to repent before He carried out His judgment, so He graciously appeals to us to repent and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah was not only a prophet but also a priest whose family line may have gone back to Abiathar, a priest at the time of King Solomon. At the Lord's command, Jeremiah did not raise a family because of the times, a thought echoed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. Jeremiah had a co-worker named Baruch, who may have finished collecting Jeremiah's prophecy after the prophet's death. Jeremiah reveals much about his inner struggles with God.

On October 8-9 we read Lamentations, which book Jeremiah is believed to have also authored. A lamentation or lament is a poem of grief or of mourning over sin or over God's judgment for sin. The five lamentations in this book come from watching the people of Jerusalem go into exile in 586 B.C. Yet, note well how the third lament speaks of God's goodness as Lord of hope, love, faithfulness and salvation. Only as we appreciate God's wrath on us for our sin, however, can we appreciate this hope.

From October 10-25 we read Ezekiel, who prophesied about the same time as Jeremiah but in Babylon where the people of Judah were already exiled. He confirms God's judgment against the people for their unfaithfulness yet also holds out God's gracious promise to restore and renew His people. Note well what Ezekiel has to say about shepherds (today's pastors) and their responsibility to God, themselves, and the people in their care. Note also the comfort these same verses speak to you!

The next four days in October we read Daniel. From Daniel we hear how even while the people were exiled God's Name continued to be praised. We see in Daniel's life the conflict and victory of faith that is also ours. Daniel prophesies of Jesus, giving the title He would often use to refer to Himself: Son of Man. We want to be careful not to interpret too literally what is often figurative and symbolic language that Daniel uses by the Spirit's inspiration. The Old Testament book of Daniel is thus similar to the New Testament book of Revelation in that it is an apocalyptic book, similar in style and the use of symbols and numbers. But, in another sense, the word "apocalyptic" really means "revelatory", and that really applies to all the books of the Bible.

The last two days of October we read Hosea. Hosea shows by his life and relationship to his unfaithful wife Gomer how God loves His people. Hosea prophesied against the people's idolatry, yet also speaks of God's salvation for His unfaithful people. Hosea's willingness to forgive and love his wife despite her unfaithfulness is an enduring example for married couples today, consistent with Christ's teaching to forgive as we are forgiven.

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 1  | Jonah 2:2-9        |
|    | Jeremiah 32-34     |
| 2  | Psalms 114         |
|    | Jeremiah 35-37     |
| 3  | Psalms 115         |
|    | Jeremiah 38-40     |
| 4  | Psalms 116         |
|    | Jeremiah 41-43     |
| 5  | Psalms 117         |
|    | Jeremiah 44-47     |
| 6  | Psalms 118         |
|    | Jeremiah 48-50     |
| 7  | Psalms 119:1-8     |
|    | Jeremiah 51-52     |
| 8  | Psalms 119:9-16    |
|    | Lamentations 1-2   |
| 9  | Psalms 119:17-24   |
|    | Lamentations 3-5   |
| 10 | Psalms 119:25-32   |
|    | Ezekiel 1-3        |
| 11 | Psalms 119:33-40   |
|    | Ezekiel 4-6        |
| 12 | Psalms 119:41-48   |
|    | Ezekiel 7-9        |
| 13 | Psalms 119:49-56   |
|    | Ezekiel 10-12      |
| 14 | Psalms 119:57-64   |
|    | Ezekiel 13-15      |
| 15 | Psalms 119:65-72   |
|    | Ezekiel 16-18      |
| 16 | Psalms 119:73-80   |
|    | Ezekiel 19-21      |
| 17 | Psalms 119:81-88   |
|    | Ezekiel 22-24      |
| 18 | Psalms 119:89-96   |
|    | Ezekiel 25-27      |
| 19 | Psalms 119:97-104  |
|    | Ezekiel 28-30      |
| 20 | Psalms 119:105-112 |
|    | Ezekiel 31-33      |
| 21 | Psalms 119:113-120 |
|    | Ezekiel 34-36      |
| 22 | Psalms 119:121-128 |
|    | Ezekiel 37-39      |
| 23 | Psalms 119:129-136 |
|    | Ezekiel 40-42      |
| 24 | Psalms 119:137-144 |
|    | Ezekiel 43-45      |
| 25 | Psalms 119:145-152 |
|    | Ezekiel 46-48      |
| 26 | Psalms 119:153-160 |
|    | Daniel 1-3         |
| 27 | Psalms 119:161-168 |
|    | Daniel 4-6         |
| 28 | Psalms 119:169-176 |
|    | Daniel 7-9         |
| 29 | Psalms 120         |
|    | Daniel 10-12       |
| 30 | Psalms 121         |
|    | Hosea 1-4          |
| 31 | Jonah 2:2-9        |
|    | Hosea 5-7          |

# November

The seasonal canticle for November is Moses' and the children of Israel's song sung to the Lord after their deliverance from Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. (Handel, incidentally, has set this to some beautiful music!) As we read or sing it, we think of our deliverance from sin for Christ's sake in the waters of Holy Baptism.

November's readings begin by finishing off *Hosea*, the first of the "Book of the Twelve" or "minor prophets". Then, we move on to other prophets in their Old Testament (but not chronological) order. Unfortunately, space does not permit more than a cursory comment about each here.

*Joel's* prophecy, most likely to Judah, centers on the theme that "restoration and blessing will come only after judgment and repentance" and provides the text for St. Peter's Pentecost sermon about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:28-29, 32).

In his work primarily in Israel, *Amos* proclaims a great deal about God's judgment, but he finishes his book with the beautiful promise of the Messiah and His Kingdom.

Though we are not sure exactly when *Obadiah* prophesied, his book tells of the ongoing conflict between the descendants of Esau (Edom), to whom he prophesied, and Jacob (Israel and Judah), but he also ends with the promise of deliverance.

In *Jonah*, God makes especially clear that His grace is meant for all people. Jonah was a reluctant preacher of repentance, but his three days in the belly of the great fish gives us a type of Jesus' death, three-day burial, and resurrection—a type to which Jesus Himself points (Matthew 12:39-41).

A contemporary of Isaiah, *Micah* preaches about the destruction of Israel and Judah, but he also provides one of the more famous Messianic prophecies: that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (5:2; Matthew 2:5-6).

*Nahum* tells of Israel and Judah's destruction at the hand of the Assyrians, but he also tells that the Assyrians in turn will be destroyed.

*Habakkuk's* last chapter is especially well known, for it contains an oft-cited clear expression of the principle of salvation by faith (2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11).

*Zephaniah* prophesies words that Jesus uses to refer to his second coming (1:15; Mt 24:29). As the church year winds down in November, you will also note an emphasis on Jesus' return in glory.

*Haggai* was one of the first prophets given to the people of Judah after they returned from exile in Babylon, and Haggai encouraged the people to rebuild the temple.

The book of *Zechariah*, a co-worker of Haggai, has many prophecies Jesus fulfilled, especially with the events of Holy Week. For example, see Zechariah 9:9 and John 12:15.

*Malachi* is generally regarded as the last prophet before John the Baptizer and provides words John uses. Back from exile, the people of Judah again fell into sin, and Malachi condemns several specific sins.

From November 17th to the end of the month we read the Gospel according to St. Matthew. This reading is fitting after all those Old Testament prophets, for Matthew's account more than any other emphasizes Jesus' fulfilling the Old Testament promises of the Savior of the world. Matthew well records Jesus' teaching about the end of all things, fitting for this time of year.

|    |                                 |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1  | Exodus 15:1-18<br>Hosea 8-10    |
| 2  | Psalms 122<br>Hosea 11-14       |
| 3  | Psalms 123<br>Joel              |
| 4  | Psalms 124<br>Amos 1-5          |
| 5  | Psalms 125<br>Amos 6-9          |
| 6  | Psalms 126<br>Obadiah, Jonah    |
| 7  | Psalms 127<br>Micah 1-3         |
| 8  | Psalms 128<br>Micah 4-7         |
| 9  | Psalms 129<br>Nahum             |
| 10 | Psalms 130<br>Habakkuk          |
| 11 | Psalms 131<br>Zephaniah         |
| 12 | Psalms 132<br>Haggai            |
| 13 | Psalms 133<br>Zechariah 1-5     |
| 14 | Psalms 134<br>Zechariah 6-10    |
| 15 | Psalms 135<br>Zechariah 11-14   |
| 16 | Psalms 136<br>Malachi           |
| 17 | Psalms 137<br>Matthew 1-2       |
| 18 | Psalms 138<br>Matthew 3-4       |
| 19 | Psalms 139<br>Matthew 5-6       |
| 20 | Psalms 140<br>Matthew 7-8       |
| 21 | Psalms 141<br>Matthew 9-10      |
| 22 | Psalms 142<br>Matthew 11-12     |
| 23 | Psalms 143<br>Matthew 13-14     |
| 24 | Psalms 144<br>Matthew 15-16     |
| 25 | Psalms 145<br>Matthew 17-18     |
| 26 | Psalms 146<br>Matthew 19-20     |
| 27 | Psalms 147<br>Matthew 21-22     |
| 28 | Psalms 148<br>Matthew 23-24     |
| 29 | Psalms 149-150<br>Matthew 25-26 |
| 30 | Exodus 15:1-18<br>Matthew 27-28 |