

*Good News Daily*  
*For St. Matthew's Church*  
*Stmattsblm.org*  
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**Number 4**

**Sunday, January 25**

John 5:2-18 *Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (vv.2-6 NIV)*

Jesus comes to this pool where a great number of disabled people want to be healed and out of that large crowd he picks one man. We know that Jesus could have simply announced that everyone was now healed; but God doesn't work that way. Instead, Jesus went to one man, drawn to him by his helplessness. We can see ourselves in some way lying beside that pool. I have sometimes felt paralyzed, unable to do the things I want and know I should do; lame in my spiritual walk and struggling to make progress.

It is so wonderful how our Lord never changes. He has always been and will always be merciful and compassionate. When I'm lying by that pool feeling so helpless, Jesus always comes. And like this man, there is usually something he tells me to act on, or believe, or remember. When I do, I am healed and have renewed power to walk with him again.

Isaiah 47:1-15; Psalms 63:1-11, 98; Hebrews 10:19-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Long Island – (Province II, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Lawrence Provenzano.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Havana, The Rev Phillip Boeve, Priest in Charge; Ilalwansimba Parish: Rev.

Joel Kahindi, Tabora, Tanzania; The Mission of St John the Evangelist, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Luis Villalobos, Priest in Charge; Patronal Feast of St. Paul's Alton; St. Paul's, Carlinville; St. Paul's, Pekin; The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield; Ordination to the Priesthood, Virginia L. Bennett, St. Charles, MO.

ST. MATTHEWS: Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, and Lectors

### **Monday, January 26**

*Galatians 1:1-17 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. (vv.6, 7, 10)*

Like Paul, I am astonished that many are willing to so quickly turn to a different gospel to try to win the approval of men, not God. I used to find it a real struggle not to succumb to anger and despair, seeing churches seem to move away from God. I feared that this was just the start of a downward spiral away from the true gospel and into one that will increasingly accommodate worldly behavior as something that God will accept from us—the so-called “social gospel.” But I can take heart in God’s Word. It tells us how the Church has struggled with this from the very beginning. God will continue to raise up the faithful and bring glory to His name. Paul reminds me in Romans 8:15, “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Isaiah 48:1-11; Psalm 41, 52; Mark 5:21-43

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Los Angeles – (VIII, The Episcopal Church)  
The Rt Revd Jon Bruno; Suffragan bishops of Los Angeles: The Rt Revd Mary Glasspool and The Rt Revd Diane Jardine Bruce

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Very Rev. Sean D. Ferrell, Champaign; Wedding anniversary of The Rt. Rev. Edward L. and Louise Salmon, St. Louis, MO.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Outreach Committee and projects.

## **Tuesday, January 27**

Mark 6:1-13 *Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.* (vv.4-6)

Faith is so very central to Christianity. God tells us that he does indeed require faith and that unbelief can hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus attributes faith with much power. Among many other things, faith saves, sanctifies, purifies hearts, justifies, assures prayers will be heard, and makes people well.

Many people who come to the healing ministry at my church seeking to be healed arrive with very little faith of their own. In their desperation, they are reaching out and counting on the faith of others to lift them up before the Lord. Often, the intercessory prayer for these people will include asking that they receive the gift of faith so they will believe in their heart that the Lord is indeed healing them. It is incredible to see how so many people are changed after that, becoming powerful intercessors themselves who can effectively pray in faith for others.

The faith of those interceding does make a difference in unleashing the power of the Holy Spirit. Our faith grows and is strengthened as we come to know and depend on the Lord more and more.

Isaiah 48:12-21; Psalm 45; Galatians 1:18—2:10

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Louisiana – (IV, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Morris Thompson.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Mattoon, Admitted to the Diocese, 1908.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Fr. Kari Marcelle and Holy Trinity Parish, St. Vincent.

## **Wednesday, January 28**

Psalm 119:49-72 *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. (v.67)*

This passage is very meaningful to me because I have lived it. Having been raised in the church, I believed in God from an early age. As I began to grow up, however, I went astray. Looking back now it's easy to see how it began. Being young, prosperous, and confident that the future would bring nothing but good things, I found myself trusting in many things besides God. It's funny how that happens; how we begin to stop thinking about Him and that causes us to slowly drift away. We find "better" things to do besides going to church and we only think of prayer when something bad happens. Our personal relationship fades.

But God, in his great mercy, blessed me with a series of afflictions, including a health problem, which began to draw me back to Him. Eventually, at my wife's urging, I became involved in a Bible study that required me to read and study daily. After several weeks of spending time in God's Word every day, it was able to penetrate my heart and change me forever. I soon fell to my knees with the realization of how much I had strayed. Adam Clarke, the famous 18<sup>th</sup> Century Irish preacher wrote, "Affliction sanctified is a great blessing; unsanctified, it is an additional curse." Thank You, Lord, for the great blessing.

Isaiah 49:1-12; Galatians 2:11-21; Mark 6:13-29

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Luapula – (Central Africa) The Rt Revd Robert Mumbi.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Very Rev. Gus L. Franklin, Springfield, and Carla, wife of The Rev Canon Dr William N. Malottke, Carol Stream.

ST. MATTHEW'S: The Choir of St. Matthew's.

## **Thursday, January 29**

Mark 6:30-46 *But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. (vv.33-34)*

If you have been reading Mark's Gospel this week, you know that Jesus' disciples have just returned from having been sent out among the people with the power to bless and strengthen and heal. They are excited at what they had seen and experienced, and Jesus wants to take them across the lake to a restful, secluded place to minister to them and teach them more. But when they arrive they find the very crowd they wanted to get away from was already there, waiting for them.

Would you, like me, have tended to react in a negative way, selfishly resenting the fact that these people would not leave you alone? After all, Jesus needed to minister to his disciples—the crowd should wait until a better time! But Jesus isn't like that at all. He has a true shepherd's heart. He is the one who said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6). These people were so hungry for the Word of God that they had run ten miles on foot while Jesus and his disciples traveled four by boat. Jesus' reaction is pure compassion, fulfilling not only their spiritual need, but their physical as well—miraculously feeding all five thousand. What a Lord and Shepherd we have in Jesus!

Isaiah 49:13-23; Psalm 50; Galatians 3:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lucknow – (North India) The Rt Revd Maurice Dan.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Lincoln, Anniversary of the Consecration of Church building, 1921.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Members of the Altar Guild

### **Friday, January 30**

Psalm 40 *Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare. (v.5)*

I am truly overwhelmed when I contemplate the wonder of God's creation. From the incredible vastness of the universe to the minute complexity of atomic structures, we can observe but a tiny bit and understand even less. One of the most puzzling things of all to scientists is the force that holds all things together. That is one thing I do

understand—it is Jesus! “He is before all things and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17). What power and might! Everything would just fall apart if he let go, but he doesn’t because he has plans for us.

David, calling out to the Lord for relief from his distress, knows that God has the power and the grace to deliver him. He can wait with patient prayer, not doubting, because of what the Lord has planned for him. He is choosing to trust in God’s promises. Why do we find that so hard to do sometimes, especially when we are troubled? The next time you are distressed, try contemplating the wonders he has done and the things he has planned for us. It sure helps me like it did David.

Isaiah 50:1-11; Psalm 54; Galatians 3:15-22; Mark 6:47-56

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lui – (Sudan) The Rt Revd Stephen Dokolo Ismail

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rt. Rev. Edward L. Salmon, Jr., St. Louis; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Phillip M. and Alison Lewis, Pueblo, CO.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Members of Building and Grounds

### **Saturday, January 31**

Isaiah 51:1-8 *“Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults.”* (v.7)

How often do you find yourself realizing that you missed the opportunity to stand up for Christ because you were timid and did not want to offend someone or to appear insensitive or politically incorrect? I must admit that it happens to me with too much regularity. Now, I am not suggesting that we be completely without tact, acting with brazen disregard for others’ feelings, but when we know that we should stand firm due to the prompting of the Holy Spirit we should let him guide us accordingly.

Living in the world, we are constantly bombarded by its bent values and pressure to compromise our Christian ways. When I showed my wife, Liz, what I was writing about, she shared that during her prayer

time she has begun praying for God's grace to strengthen her during challenging times so that she might stand strong for His honor and glory. Preventative maintenance! That is, of course, the only way to succeed. We need only to rely on God—on His eternal strength—not fearing the reproach of men.

Psalm 55; Galatians 3:23-29; Mark 7:1-23

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lusaka – (Central Africa) The Rt Revd David Njovu

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Ordination to the Priesthood, Richard A. Pugliese, West Glover, VT; Birthday of Theresa, widow of The Rev. Canon Anthony C. Viton, Mt. Carmel.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Wardens and Vestry

*by Trip Tucker*

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