

Good News Daily
For St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
www.stmattsblm.org
(309) 662-4646
(309) 660-8515 (Fr. Halt's Mobile)

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Num. 3

Sunday, January 18

Isaiah 43:14—44:5 *“For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”* (v.19 NLT)

I thank God that He is a God of new beginnings! Creating pathways and rivers to heal and enrich our lives. I look at the current “wilderness” in my life and remember other wilderness times and issues of health, relationships, budgets and finances, focus and purpose. Times of wondering how I would pay bills, would I ever feel alive and strong again, where and with whom do I fit and belong; would I find a purpose and feel useful in that season of life? This reminder, “See, I have already begun!” gives hope and faith. When I learned to ask, “Lord, show me what I need to know about what You are already doing?” and stopped to obey and receive, I could “sing a new song” and know the blessings of His provision and wisdom.

Psalms 148, 149, 150; Hebrews 6:17—7:10; John 4:27-42

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity London – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Richard John Carew Chartres; London – Edmonton – The Rt Revd Peter William Wheatley; London – Fulham – The Rt Revd Jonathan Mark Richard Baker; London – Kensington – The Rt Revd Paul Gavin Williams; London – Stepney – The Rt Revd Adrian Newman; London – Willesden – The Rt Revd Peter Allan Broadbent.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for the Postulants and Candidates for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Springfield; Tura Parish: Rev. Ernest Lugenzi, Tabora, Tanzania; The Mission of Jesus the Nazarene & Shalom Mission, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Patricia Blanchard, Deacon-in Charge; Patronal Feast of St. Peter's, Chesterfield; Birthday of The Rev Carl R. Bloom, Chandler, AZ

Monday, January 19

Psalm 25 *Show me the right path, O LORD, point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me. All day long I put my hope in you.* (vv.4-5)

Change is often hard—transitions not always smooth. My life has been a series of seasons—seasons of waiting, seasons of fruitfulness, or seasons of pain and loss. Years ago as I was coming out of a season of grief and loss, I agonized over what I would do “for the rest of my life.” I was looking for a focus, a purpose, a secure goal to grab ahold of and run with for security. I had not arrived at the understanding that “there is no other Rock” but God (Isaiah 44:8)—that the right path for me to follow comes not from my own understanding and plans but

by being led by the truth and teaching of Jesus. I am learning to hope proactively as “all day long I put my hope” in the Lord.

Isaiah 44:6-8, 21-23; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 3:7-19a

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lincoln – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Christopher Lowson; Lincoln – Grantham – The Rt Revd Timothy William Ellis; Lincoln – Grimsby – The Rt Revd David Eric Court

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for Christian Unity.

Tuesday, January 20

Isaiah 44:9-20 *“Who but a fool would make his own god—an idol that cannot help him one bit?”* (v.10)

Sometimes I catch myself making my own idol—looking to something that cannot help and may harm in order to soothe and/or distract me from a tough life situation. When I am lonely or worried do I choose to turn to the Lord who has “heard my cry for mercy” (Psalm 28:6b)? Or do I turn on a favorite TV show? Do I distract myself with work or “pray to You, O Lord, my rock” (Psalm 28:1)? Do I grab a bag of chips and smother my pain with salt and carbs, or do I kneel before Him who is “my strength and shield” (Psalm 28:7)? As my relationship with my Lord grows and strengthens, I trust Him more and more. I am learning how to trust Him with all my heart. And to experience how “He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.” Then “I burst out in songs of thanksgiving” (Psalm 28:7b).

Psalms 26, 28; Ephesians 4:17-32; Mark 3:19b-35

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Litoral Ecuador – (IX, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Alfredo Morante

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Bruce U. DeGooyer, Bloomington; Pray for Christian Unity.

Wednesday, January 21

Ephesians 5:1-4 *For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.* (vv.8-9)

To live as a person of light! Once I was full of darkness—fear, sadness, loneliness. Sometimes acting out in anger, “but now you have light from the Lord.” The offer of the light from the Lord was and is always there—a gift. But I had to receive that gift—open my hands, heart, and mind to the light and receive it deep within me. Receiving can be a hard thing. We don’t always realize we aren’t really receiving His light but only observing and thinking about the light. I had to step outside the observation post and to absorb the light until He was deep within me—a part of me.

Isaiah 44:24—45:7; Psalm 38; Mark 4:1-20

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Liverpool – (York, England) The Rt Revd Paul Bayes; Liverpool – Warrington – The Rt Revd Richard Finn Blackburn.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Grant us the grace of your holy spirit to devote our heart to you; Pray for Christian Unity.

Thursday, January 22

Mark 4:21-34 *Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade."* (vv.30, 32)

Have you ever seen a mustard seed? It is tiny—about 1/8 the size of a peppercorn! The tree it grows into is a very large shady tree, big enough to shade a picnic table. Letting God plant that seed of His Kingdom in my heart and in the hearts of those in my community is an incredible vision. Yet, that is exactly what I must do. I must make myself available for the planting, watering, and fertilizing of the seed Jesus will plant in me. I open my hands and heart to receive the gift of the seed that will take root and grow in me. Without the germination and growth of that seed within me, I have nothing of value to give—no birds can nest in the shade of my branches!

Isaiah 45:5-17; Psalm 37:1-18; Ephesians 5:15-33

ANGLICAN CYCLE: The Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan Archbishop of Wales & Bishop of Llandaff; Assistant Bishop of Llandaff – The Rt Revd David Wilbourne

CYCLE: Pray for Christian Unity.

Friday, January 23

Isaiah 45:18-25 *"I would not have told the people of Israel to seek me if I could not be found. I, the LORD, speak only what is true and declare what is right."* (v.19b)

Believing God is who He says He is has been a journey. Do I trust in Him? Can I say, with David in Psalm 31, "But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, 'You are my God!' My future is in your hands" (v.14)? Knowing Him more and more; learning He is unlimited! Grace, forgiveness, wisdom, and love continue to flow when I open myself to His leadership of my life. It is amazing to ponder how "my future is in your hands, O Lord." And to rest in the absolute safety of knowing He is our always, everywhere, omnipotent, omniscient God. He is already in my future. Can I not put fear aside and trust in Him? Follow Him into that future?

Psalm 31; Ephesians 6:1-9; Mark 4:35-41

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lokoja – (Lokoja, Nigeria) The Most Revd Emmanuel Sokowamju Egbunu

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O God, give us work 'til our life shall end, and give us life 'til our work is done; Pray for Christian Unity.

Saturday, January 24

Mark 5:1-20 *A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw a man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.* (v.15)

The man who was "sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane" had been tormented and driven by a legion of demons. Now he was sitting calmly in the presence of Jesus and his

neighbors. The demons fled. The power and authority of the presence of Jesus had restored the man. Our times of torment and trouble may or may not include demons. Yet we, too, may be rescued and restored by the power of his presence and authority to bring truth to our minds and hearts. I savor the gift we have of sitting fully clothed in his love and protection with his Spirit residing in us and with his truth available to bring us freedom and keep us free.

Isaiah 46:1-13; Psalms 30, 32; Ephesians 6:10-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Limerick & Killaloe – (Dublin, Ireland) The Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for Christian Unity.

by Barbara Maybee

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