

Good News Daily
For St. Matthew's Church
Bloomington, IL
309-660-8515 (Fr. Halt Mobile)

Volume XV

February 22-28, 2015

Number 8

Sunday, February 22

Psalm 63 *You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.* (v.1 NIV)

I used to live in the Northeast where the sun would shine sparingly and cloudy days were the norm. As the psalm stated, sometimes it would feel as though my whole body longed for God and His creation to smile at me rather than frown on a blustery day.

Now, I am blessed to live in a warm, sunny climate. A blue sky and sunshine with a slight sea breeze is the most common weather where I live. I thrive in this type of atmosphere. Now, I am able to rejoice a little more in God's beautiful creation.

No matter the weather, God fills me up and satisfies my longings. I can say, like the psalmist, "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1).

Deuteronomy 8:1-10; Psalm 98; 1 Corinthians 1:17-31; Mark 2:18-22

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Maseno North – (Kenya) The Rt Revd Simon Oketch; Maseno South – The Rt Revd Francis Abiero

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Church of the Redeemer, Cairo, The Rev. James K. Muriuki, Priest-in-charge; Goweko Parish: The Rev. Tiyishime Amon, Tabora, Tanzania; The Mission of St.

Matthew, San Juan de Lurigancho, Lima, Peru, The Rev. Jorge Águilar, and The Rev. Jerry Acosta; Birthday of Michael, husband of The Rev Christine C Hopkins, Champaign; and Alison, wife of The Rev Philip M Lewis, Pueblo, CO.

ST. MATTHEW'S: The Martyrs of Libya; A Holy Lent; Birthday of Lynn Gray.

Monday, February 23

Deuteronomy 8:11-20 *...so that in the end it might go well with you.* (v.16b)

Have you ever been tempted to read the last chapter in a book before reading the preceding chapters? Sometimes we want to know all the loose ends are tied up, the plot and themes are understood, and that it ends well.

Spiritually speaking, we want to know that in the end all will be well. God promises this to be true. God promises us a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no more pain or crying. God reminds us, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5).

It's even better than the best ending we could imagine to any book we have ever read. Thank God for His indescribable grace and mercy towards us who believe.

Psalms 41, 52; Hebrews 2:11-18; John 2:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Maseno West – (Kenya) The Rt Revd Joseph Wasonga

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, we ask for protection, but even more for guidance.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Altar Guild; Women's Fellowship.

Tuesday, February 24

Hebrews 3:1-11 *For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.* (v.4)

When we moved into our house there was a lot of work that needed to be done. There was a need for repainting rooms, moldings, new flooring, and even new countertops. It was an investment of time, money and, energy to get it all done. But, in the end, everything looked fresh and new.

This is how I view my spiritual life as well. God has a lot of work to do in me on the inside. Some things He has to tear out and completely replace. Other areas just need some tidying up or are like needing a fresh coat of paint.

It's not always comfortable or painless but I know it is for my good. God says He will work together all things for my good (Romans 8:28). I'm glad the process will make me more like Christ. This is His purpose, not only for me but also for everyone who calls Him Lord.

Deuteronomy 9:4-12; Psalm 45; John 2:13-22

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Masindi-Kitara – (Uganda) The Rt Revd George Kasangaki

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Anniversary of the Consecration of The Rt. Rev Edward L. Salmon, Jr., St. Louis, MO; St. Paul's Carlinville, Anniversary of the Consecration of church building, 1881.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Carlos Levine.

Wednesday, February 25

Hebrews 3:12-19 *But encourage one another daily...* (v.13)

In my closet there is small box stuffed with old notecards, birthday cards, and other notes of encouragement. I call it my "encouragement file." When I am feeling down and discouraged, I take the box down off the closet shelf and read through the many notes and cards in it.

After reading the uplifting words and sentimental thoughts people have written to me over the years, I am able to be more thankful and feel less discouraged. If it weren't for people who were obedient to God's urging in sending me a note, there would be no "encouragement file" at all.

I'm grateful when people have taken the time and thoughtfulness to send me a handwritten note to let me know they were thinking of me.

Will you be an encourager to someone else today?

Deuteronomy 9:13-21; Psalm 119:49-72; John 2:23—3:15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Massachusetts – (I, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Alan McIntosh Gates; Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts – The Rt Revd Gayle Harris; Western Massachusetts – The Rt Revd Douglas Fisher

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev T. Larison Phillips, Champaign.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Ember Day (special day of intention for the ministers of the Church), For those to be ordained (BCP 256).

Thursday, February 26

John 3:16-21 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* (v.16)

When my daughter was expecting her first child, she knew she was going to be a single mom. Because of some legal and moral issues, the father would not be involved with her or her child's life in any capacity. This was deeply grieving and saddened us in many ways.

Despite knowing the road and upbringing of this child would be marked with some challenges, she chose to give birth anyway. Today he is a happy and healthy little toddler who brings much joy to our lives.

God knew the road to our salvation would not be an easy one for Jesus to accomplish either. Yet He still gave His one and only Son so we could know God on an intimate level. And He gives the promise of eternal life when we believe.

What a great God we serve, who chose the way of suffering for His Son so we would not have to. Thank You, Father, for the gift of Your one and only Son.

Deuteronomy 9:23—10:5; Psalm 50; Hebrews 4:1-10

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Masvingo – (Central Africa) The Rt Revd Godfrey Tawonezwi;

Matabeleland – The Rt Revd Cleophas Lunga.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: For the LORD God is both sun and shield; he will give grace and glory.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Men's Fellowship; Youth Group.

Friday, February 27

Psalm 40 *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)

My husband is great at keeping our car clean. He regularly vacuums the inside of the car and washes the outside with special carwash soap. When other people ride in our car, most will comment on how clean it is. This is no small feat as our soil is very sandy. Millions of tiny sand particles get dragged into the car on a daily basis. After a few weeks and sometimes after a day at the beach, areas of sand are noticeable on the floor mats and in the trunk.

Just think: all the grains of sand in the whole world do not add up to the thoughts God thinks of us. Even the psalmist tells us they are too many to declare. Psalm 139:18 reminds us, “they would outnumber the grains of sand.”

Imagine a God who thinks such thoughts. God runs the universe, but thinks about us. What a great God we serve.

Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Psalm 54; Hebrews 4:11-16; John 3:22-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Matlosane – (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Stephen Diseko

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord of creation, show us your purpose for our life that we may truly live in your will.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Bob Cooper; Ember Day For the choice of fit persons for the ministry (BCP 256)

Saturday, February 28

Hebrews 5:1-10 *He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.* (v.2)

It's easy for me to have empathy for people because one of my spiritual gifts is mercy. This means I can feel for other people and what they are going through. I am able to feel their pain. It seems as if it comes naturally to me because I am human too.

Jesus was a gift to us in the flesh. He also had many temptations, yet was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). God purposely made him to be like us so he could understand the difficulty of temptation. Jesus knew what it was like to be in a human body and have weakness.

Like Jesus, we are overcomers and can boldly say, “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). He understands and wants us to be victorious. Thanks be to God for the gift of His Son who knows our daily struggles.

Deuteronomy 11:18-28; Psalm 55; John 4:1-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mbaise – (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Chamberlain Chinedu Ogunedo

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Anniversary of the consecration of The Rt. Rev Peter H. Beckwith, X Bishop of Springfield, Feb. 29, 1992.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Alexis Ogunmokun; Ember Day For all Christians in their vocation (BCP 256).

by Pamela Newton

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