

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 6

Amos 6:1-14 (*If the relative asks*) “*Is anyone else with you?*” and he says, “*No,*” then he will go on to say, “*Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD.*” (v.10b NIV)

My sister-in-law was visiting at a retirement home. She had been playing hymns on the piano for a large number of residents gathered in one of the visiting areas, many of them singing along softly. Then a lady pointed to one resident who was frowning and said, “We should stop. She doesn’t like this.”

There were plenty of powerful people who didn’t like it the first time Jesus showed up either. It should not be a surprise we continue to see many express that rejection today. The prophets foretold the reception the Messiah would get. Their prophecy is being fulfilled. Nevertheless, we need to keep our lights (and Christmas lights!) shining. No matter the cost, his is the Light that needs to be seen.

Psalms 148, 149, 150; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Luke 1:57-68

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Western Louisiana - (Province VII, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Jacob W Owensby

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. James Chapel, Marion, The Very Rev. Kathryn Jeffrey, Rector; Kalemela Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Gideon Kalumiye, Vicar; The mission posts of the villages of Choco, Cañon de Colca, Peru, Rev’d Justo Maqqe Deacon.

ST. MATTHEW’S: St. Nicholas of Myra, pray for us.

Monday, December 7

Psalms 25 *The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.* (v.14)

The discipline of “centering prayer” is based on the realization that we should make space in our lives where God has a chance to get a word in. Instead of us doing all the talking, be still and see if the Lord will reveal to us what is on His mind for a change. It took me awhile to see that. Perhaps God was waiting to know how sincerely I wanted to listen!

Amos had an actual conversation with God about His plans to judge Israel. John said the revelation he received was one God gave him in order to show it to His servants. There’s a theme here! When we fail to pay attention, it shows. Jesus rebuked the error of the Sadducees, saying, “You do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” And that was not the fault of the God who wants us to listen when He speaks.

Amos 7:1-9; Revelation 1:1-8; Matthew 22:23-33

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Western Michigan - (V, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Wayne Houglund

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, we pray for our world, especially for those nations where there is war and unrest.

ST. MATTHEW’S: For the repose of those who died on December 7, 1941 and in the conflict that followed and for those who still bear the scars.

Tuesday, December 8

Amos 7:10-17 *Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”* (vv.12-13)

I mentioned yesterday that it took me awhile to get into the discipline of centering prayer. During that slogging season I mostly kept going out of respect for the mentor who had introduced me to the ancient tradition. And I hoped that one day I would finally get a glimpse of glory for all my patient waiting before the Lord.

That was when I was still assuming I would like it when God began speaking to me. I found you cannot tell God what to say. He has His own list of things to discuss. I faced a decision. Do I ask God to stop talking about what He wants to talk about? Do I get up and walk away?

David wrote, “If you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit.” But it’s that or sit up straight and let God speak—even if I don’t always like what He intends to say.

Psalms 26, 28; Revelation 1:9-16; Matthew 22:34-46

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Western New York - (II, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd William Franklin

DIOCESAN CYCLE: G. Williams Howard, Mt. Vernon, Ordination to the Priesthood.

ST. MATTHEW’S: For those who teach and those who learn.

Wednesday, December 9

Matthew 23:1-12 “*You must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. Everything they do is done for people to see.*” (vv.3, 5a)

I have worked in churches and Christian organizations the bigger part of my life. When I think back, it surprises me that it was the co-workers and fellow servants who were easier to deal with than a lot of the leaders. Even Jesus took note of this odd fact. Sometimes leaders don’t live out the principles they teach. It is a challenge since Jesus commands us to keep listening, even if we can’t watch their example.

The last thing we need is a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. If we let what we see alienate us from the teaching of the available servants God has at His disposal, we are in a fix. The beam in our own eye might make us deaf! Listen: yes. Follow: with caution.

Amos 8:1-14; Psalm 38; Revelation 1:17—2:7

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Western Tanganyika - (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Sadock Makaya

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Gus L. Franklin, Springfield, Ordination to the Priesthood.

ST. MATTHEW’S: For those who offer the ministry of music.

Thursday, December 10

Matthew 23:13-26 “*You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.*” (v.23b)

Here’s what I hate: I step up to the vending machine, put in my money, press the button and nothing comes out. Here’s what I hate more: the guy behind me steps up, puts in his money, and the machine gives him what he wanted. And maybe my selection, too!

It’s not right. It’s not justice. Justice is impartial and doesn’t make distinctions according to individuals. Much of what is wrong with the world today comes from us trying to achieve justice by showing favoritism. It’s not right.

Also, showing justice is not a matter of personal spirituality. It always involves my interaction with others. Through my interaction with others I reveal God’s heart to them—or hide it. That’s why it is more important to Jesus than our personal spiritual disciplines.

Amos 9:1-10; Psalm 37:1-18; Revelation 2:8-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Wiawso (Ghana) - (West Africa) The Rt Revd Abraham Ackah

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Benjamin D. Hankinson, Jr., Mt. Vernon; Birthday of Sarah Bancroft, wife of The Rev. Dr. David W. Peters, Austin, TX.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Birthday of Collin Bennett and Mary Hunt.

Friday, December 11

Psalm 31 *In my alarm I said, “I am cut off from your sight!” Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.* (v.22)

Would I have any reason to feel alarmed if I knew my Heavenly Father was carefully watching over me? That doesn’t seem likely. So, when I feel alarmed, it must be because I am forgetting that truth,

or am being distracted by a lie, something contrary to the facts. God has not moved or blinked. When I call, and even before I call, He has heard and is responding. My rescue is assured.

Today's psalm has a couple other memorable statements: "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (v.5) and "My times are in your hands" (v.15). Both of these declarations express the confidence we are to know as children of God. And so David concludes with an exuberant exhortation: "Love the LORD, all his faithful people! The LORD preserves those who are true to him" (v.23).

Haggai 1:1-15; Revelation 2:18-29; Matthew 23:27-39

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Willochra - (South Australia, Australia) The Rt Revd John Stead

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O LORD, teach us your paths and instill in us your trust – that we may soar to your honor and glory.

ST. MATTHEW'S: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Saturday, December 12

Psalm 32 *Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found.* (vv.5-6a)

The same week I was studying today's readings I had an appointment with an individual (and spouse) who were struggling with the consequences of some bad decisions. I patiently listened as they took time to cry and vent one regret after another. But when they spoke of their fears that there was no way out and no way back, I stopped them. I read the promise in this psalm out loud and then I slowly read it again.

We both took time to tell Jesus how grateful we were for this promise. When we make an honest confession, God grants honest forgiveness to us. That promise has not yet expired. So, while it's still available, and while God is still listening, let's act on it and claim it!

Haggai 2:1-19; Psalm 30; Revelation 3:1-6; Matthew 24:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Winchester - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Tim Dakin; Winchester -

Basingstoke - The Rt Revd David Grant Williams; Winchester - Southampton - The Rt Revd Jonathan Frost

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O God, free us from all false pride, for we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast.

ST. MATTHEW'S: For a holy Sabbath as we prepare to worship in God's sanctuary.

by Rick Hoover

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