

Calendar of Weekly Lesson Topics on the UCCP Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE

In one God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, who provides order, purpose, meaning and fulfillment to all creation.

Trinity Sunday

First Sunday after Pentecost

May 27, 2018

LESSON 1: WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD: CREATOR, REDEEMER AND SUSTAINER

General Concept: We believe in one God who is the source of all life, always hears and responds to cries for redemption, and is always with us; we respond by giving of our whole self to our One God.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
Specific Concepts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God. • God gives life. • God helps at all times. • We give thanks to God for our life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God. • God is the source of life. • God helps at all times. • We give thanks to God for our life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God who is the source of all life. • God hears us when we ask for help. • God is always with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • God is the source of all life, hears and responds when we cry for help, and is always with us. • We give our life to our One God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • God is the source of all life, hears and responds to cries for redemption, and is always with us. • We respond by giving of our whole self to our One God.

Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that there is one God. • Affirm that God gives life. • Mention ways of how God helps us. • Say a prayer of thanks to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept that God is one. • Thank God for being the source of life. • Express their thoughts on how God helps people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their understanding about our One God, the source of all life. • Relate how they experience God's help. • Write their personal confession of faith in our One God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that there is one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • Declare that our God hears and responds to cries for redemption and is always with us. • Express ways by which one gives of oneself to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze how God responds to the people's cry for redemption from domination and slavery. • Express their perception of our One God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • Make a commitment to respond and to actively participate in the ministries God calls us to be part of.
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:1-14; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:1-14; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3: 13-14; Isaiah 6:3, 8; John 3:13-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7; Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3: 1-14; Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Biblical Background

As a Church, we believe in a God who creates life, redeems life and sustains life. “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” Deuteronomy 6:4, opens the *Shema*, the prayer that urges the people to ‘hear or listen’ to God’s commandments and emphasizes that people are to worship and love only God—the one God who helped them out of Egypt and who made a covenant with them. Obeying God’s statutes and ordinances and living a life of faithfulness and thanksgiving is the expected response from the people.

In Exodus 3:1-14, we read that God, through Moses, assured the Hebrews that God heard them, when they cried for help. God is a God who helps. God has seen the affliction of the people and resolved to rescue them. God instructed Moses to lead them out of Egypt and bring

them into a land where they can live freely and abundantly. This story pictures God as the One who helps and will never turn away when the people cry and ask for help. Truly, God desires liberty for God’s chosen people.

Isaiah 6:1-8 depicts the prophet’s vision of God in the Holy Temple. He is a witness to the heavenly council’s request to represent them and bring their message to the people. Isaiah properly responds, “Here am I; send me!” This text vividly describes the glory and power of God.

John 3:1-17 opens with an affirmation that indeed Jesus comes from God. The text talks about a discussion on the Kingdom of God. In an enigmatic manner, Jesus explains that being in the Kingdom of God means participating in the work of God through Jesus Christ and accepting God’s grace. The text ends with the declaration that God sent God’s Son in order that the world will be saved and receive eternal life.

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 3, 2018

LESSON 2: GOD OUR CREATOR

General Concept: God created the whole universe and instituted systems to benefit human beings and the rest of creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world. • God made me and you. • God made rules that help us to be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the universe. • God made human beings. • God gave rules that help us to be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe. • God created human beings. • God gave commandments to benefit human beings and the rest of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe and it was good. • God gave laws to benefit human beings and the rest of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe and it was good. • God instituted laws to benefit human beings and the rest of creation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the things that God created. • Accept and follow rules in order to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the things God has created. • Explain what commandments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how God created the whole universe as narrated in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe God as our Creator. • Elaborate the details of how God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate how they think God’s creation is good. • Express their

<p>good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express thanks for God’s creation. 	<p>and rules are for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express thanks and praise to God, our Creator. 	<p>text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down the God-given commandments mentioned in the text. Generate ideas on how they can follow the commandments. Express thanks and praise to God, our Creator. 	<p>created the universe as narrated in the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the benefits of God’s laws to human beings and the rest of creation. Demonstrate ways of protecting God’s creation. Resolve to be involved in environmental advocacies promoting the welfare and protection of all God’s creation. 	<p>reflection on the importance of God’s instituted laws in bringing about order in the whole of God’s creation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List down ways of declaring to others the goodness of God’s creation and the necessity of upholding the goodness and integrity of God’s creation.
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 81:1-10; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

Biblical Background

Genesis means “beginning”. In the beginning, God. God spoke and thus created. God is the Creator of all that is. Genesis 1:1-27 shows that creation is a process of order and putting in place systems that humanity must follow in order that they may benefit and so that creation can thrive. God made light: the sun and all the stars and the moon. God created the waters, land and sky, all kinds of plants, all kinds of animals, including the fishes and birds. God made human beings in God’s image, both male and female.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 is an exhortation to observe the Sabbath and allow time for rest. Just as God rested, so everyone must rest, especially those who labor hard. Sabbath also represents a day of liberation from oppressive structures, which the Hebrews experienced in their journey from being slaves with no rest in Egypt until they entered the Promised Land of rest and bounty. This day is set aside as holy, being offered back to God, and is instituted so that all of us may participate in God’s gift of rest. God created us and gave laws to govern us. God the Creator sets the laws and commissioned humankind to live by them.

Psalm 139:1-10 opens one of the most beautiful, and one of the most difficult, psalms in the Hebrew Bible. It talks about how God completely and intimately knows the psalmist from the very beginning of life and in all aspects of life. The psalmist cannot hide from God, the psalmist can only seek peace with God. Many are prone to think that we can only encounter God in church and in other so called “holy places.” This passage debunks this erroneous concept. God is Creator and is everywhere, even in the farthest reaches of the created order.

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 10, 2018

LESSON 3: GOD OUR REDEEMER

General Concept: God redeems and saves; we are called to participate in God’s work of redemption and salvation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is my friend. • God helps. • I help. • We help each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our friend. • God comforts and helps us when we are in trouble. • God wants us to help those who are in trouble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our friend. • God, through our family and friends, comforts us when we have problems. • God wants us to help those who have problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our companion. • God redeems and saves. • God wants us to help those who are in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our constant companion. • God redeems and saves. • God wants us to participate in God’s work of redemption and salvation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell how God helps and is a friend. • Point out similarities between God’s help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God is their friend. • Identify situations in the Bible where 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their understanding of our One God, our Redeemer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and understand why God redeems and saves us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruminates/reflect on why God makes God’s presence felt in all of life’s

<p>and our family's help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ways of helping others. • Express thanks to God for helping us. 	<p>people needed God's help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell of ways they can help those who are in trouble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate how they have experienced God's help when they asked for it • Write their personal confession of faith in God our Redeemer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware that God is our companion in saving the needy. • Make resolutions on how to help those who are in need. 	<p>situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize ways by which God strengthens persons especially in times of despair and degradation. • Unite in the biblical understanding of redemption. • Profess approaches by which every person can be a part of God's redemptive act.
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7; Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7; Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 138; Luke 1:68

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 130; Psalm 138; 1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20, (11:14-15); Genesis 3:8-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

Biblical Background

Exodus 3:7-8 and 6:5-7 narrates how God saw the sufferings of the Israelites and heard them when they cried for help. God could not endure listening to the cries of a long-enslaved and oppressed people and resolved to rescue them. These texts are part of the dialogue between God and Moses. God has called Moses to perform the task of liberating the people from their Egyptian taskmasters and to bring them into the land promised by God: a fertile land full of God's blessings, a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses, at first, was hesitant seeing the task ahead. But with God's assurance of divine help, Moses accepted the task to participate in God's work of redemption and salvation.

Psalm 138 is a song of praise and thanksgiving for God's deliverance, continued goodness, steadfast love and abiding solidarity. This chapter might have been written after the Babylonian exile when the people were allowed to return to their homeland. Once again, God has heard the cries of the people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68 forms part of Zechariah’s song of praise. God has redeemed God’s people in the past, and there is no stopping God’s liberating acts still to be manifested in the future. It is an affirmation of God’s continuing salvific act experienced by the Israelites long before and which God’s people in this time of the Pax Romana will experience as well. Israel’s life has not been easy being dominated by other nations and them being caught in the tug-of-war between these nations whose interest is to control the world. God is therefore proclaimed by the Lukan author to be a faithful and ever-present help in the life of the people.

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
June 17, 2018

LESSON 4: GOD OUR SUSTAINER

General Concept: God alone gives and sustains life; we are called to be instruments of God's sustaining grace so that all may experience abundant life.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God takes care of me. • I help take care of others. • Others are helped when I take care of them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God takes care of us. • We take care of each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God continues to provide for our needs • We take care of each other’s needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God sustains life • God wants us to be responsible in our life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God intends abundant life for all • We are called to be instruments of God’s sustaining grace
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention ways of how God takes care of them. • Show ways of caring others. • Express thanks to God for taking care of them. • Express joy in caring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways their parents and other people care for them • Express thanks to God for taking care of us. • Relate ways by which they can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify their needs for which God has given provisions. • Write a short story showing God’s provisions in their life. • Illustrate, through pictures, how they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God is our Sustainer. • Discuss how God sustains life. • Explain why God calls us to be channels of God’s sustaining grace. • State how God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the Biblical principle of abundant life as intended by God. • Figure out how abundant life could be achieved amid scarcity or deprivation.

for others.	show care for others.	can take care of each other's needs.	wants us to be responsible in our lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register their unwavering commitment to be agents of God's sustaining grace.
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Kings 17:7-16; Psalm 23:1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ezekiel 17:22-24; Mark 4:26-34; II Corinthians 12:7-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92: 1-4; 12-15; 2 Corinthians 12: 7-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 92: 1-4; 12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 92: 12-15; Ezekiel 17:22-24

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13; Psalm 20; Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15; Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

Biblical Background

I Kings 17:7-16 tells the story of Elijah, the widow of Zarephath and her son in a time of drought and famine. The story exemplifies God's sustaining grace even in times of calamity and want. The widow was about to prepare her and her son's last meal as food supplies were finally running out. A thirsty and hungry Elijah arrives and requests for water and food. Both requests are granted by the widow, despite knowing that what she was about to offer were the last of her provisions for food. Trusting God and the words of assurance of the prophet, she shares of the last that she had. Indeed, those who trust in God and does God's work can be found recipients of God's continuing sustenance.

Psalm 92: 1-4 and 12-15 celebrates God's steadfast love and faithfulness and those who practice righteousness. The righteous will continue to be on the receiving end of the blessings from God, the Sustainer, for as long as they live. The psalm reminds us of our moral duty to care of one another, just as God continues to take care of us.

Ezekiel 17:22-24 tells about God's sustaining grace and faithfulness to God's people despite all odds. The text gives us a picture of a plant planted by God that flourishes and grows strong and mighty and is able to in turn provide shelter, nourishment and sustenance to others. Ezekiel is believed to have lived during the Babylonian exile, the most tragic period of his people's life. His main task was to keep hope alive among his people. Exile is not the end of all things; it is not the last word for God keeps on speaking.

Mark 4:26-34 tells about the kin-dom of God which like seed when scattered on the ground will grow no matter what circumstances there would be. The seed will sprout, grow, bear fruit and again provide shelter and food for others. The message of God's Kin-dom is that when people continue to do good, they will flourish and thrive in the care and sustaining grace of God and nothing will be able to stop it.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 tells us that we must always be confident in the Lord. The verses tell about a lesson that Paul learned about the grace of God that continuously sustained him. All he needed to do was to be dependent on that grace.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
June 24, 2018

LESSON 5: GOD PROVIDES ORDER TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: God has ordered creation so that each created entity is set in its place and obeys God: the stars in the heavens, the seas within its bounds, the clouds in the sky, human beings living in unity.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world beautiful. • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world beautiful and good • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the world beautiful and good • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the heavens and the earth • God places everything in perfect order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is a God of order • Each created entity is set in its place and obeys God.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the world that God made • Match the things that God created with their habitat • Express thanks to God for the beautiful creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the right order of how God created according to Genesis 1 • Describe their immediate surrounding • Explain what makes God’s creation beautiful and good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that God created the world beautiful and good • Analyze why God’s creation is beautiful and good • Explain what makes God’s creation beautiful and good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how God created the world • Affirm that God places everything in perfect order • Express one’s role in preserving the unity of all creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the root causes of disorderliness in the world • Elucidate some of the ways by which God brings orderliness in situations of chaos • Enumerate approaches of safeguarding the order of God’s

				creation
<i>Biblical References</i>				
• Genesis 1	• Genesis 1:1 – 2:3; Psalm 107:29; Psalm 133	• Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:29	• Psalm 133; Mark 4:35-41	• Psalm 133; Mark 4:35-41

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 17: (1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; Psalm 133; Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

Biblical Background

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, the first chapter of the whole Bible, talks about the whole of God’s creation and how God put everything in order. In the beginning there was chaos, but when God spoke, God created and everything was in order. Creation, in its chronological and picturesque order, declares the beauty of all things and affirms life.

Job 38:1-11 records the dialogue between God and Job. This dialogue happened because of Job’s murmuring and complaint. God wants Job to realize that he has no reason to complain about life and his situation for God is in control, just as the natural world is under God’s power. God started questioning Job with a poetic description of God’s work in creating the world; something that God did long ago before Job or any other human being was born. Surely, Job should put his trust in God. The Creator of the universe cares for the whole universe; God cares for him too.

Psalm 107:29 states how God stills the storm and calms the waves. The sea was a symbol of chaos, dangerous force and hostility in Biblical times. Rendering God as having control over the sea shows that indeed God is all-powerful and to whom all creation must give obeisance.

Psalm 133 sings about the beauty of living in peace and harmony. Oil denotes peace, health and joy. Dew symbolizes blessings. Hermon is a very high mountain that reaches to the sky and is perpetually snow-capped, providing water to all the communities surrounding it. Indeed, all these signify creation that is in the right order.

Mark 4:35-41 is an affirmation that God through Jesus Christ is in control of all creation. Again, in Jewish mentality, the sea is a daily reminder of chaos. It is seen as a force of evil. This evil force can only be challenged and dispelled by the power of God. In commanding the stormy sea to be quiet and still, Jesus affirms his divine power over the forces of evil.

LESSON 6: GOD PROVIDES PURPOSE FOR ALL CREATION

General Concept: Responsible stewardship and equitable distribution of the world’s resources is God’s purpose for creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take care of my things. • I share what I have. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to take care of our surroundings. • God wants us to share what we have. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to take care of our environment. • God wants us to share fairly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to be responsible stewards of God’s creation. • Equitable distribution is sharing according to each one’s needs. • God intends for the world’s resources to be distributed equitably. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to be responsible stewards of God’s creation. • Equitable distribution is sharing according to each one’s needs. • God intends for the world’s resources to be distributed equitably.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention ways of caring for things • Have started to practice the habit of caring for things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the result of taking more than what we need • Express gratitude to God for letting human beings use creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record verses in the Bible regarding care for the environment • Write and design slogans calling for environmental protection and care • Cite ways on how they can practice fair share in everything they do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the meaning of responsible stewardship and equitable sharing • List down ways of how to be responsible steward of God's creation • Share ways of how to respond to the needs of other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the existing circumstances of God’s creation and state the factors affecting these • Affirm that God intends for the world’s resources to be distributed equitably • Determine basic

			people	and vital programs or ministries of the church and community that support the crusade towards equitable distribution of the world's resources
Biblical References				
• Acts 2:43-47	• Exodus 16:1-21; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15	• Exodus 16:12-22; 2 Corinthians 8:10-15	• Exodus 16:1-21; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15	• 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

Biblical Background

Exodus 16:1-22. The word “manna” literally means “what is it?” This reflects the first reaction of the Israelites when they first collected the food. They are to gather them every day except on the Sabbath. For 40 years, they have to rely on this food supplied from heaven. This also clearly demonstrates the enforced dependence of the people on God in order to survive. The provision of manna made it impossible for greed: it cannot be hoarded and was distributed with precise equity. Although some gathered much and some little, those who gathered much did not have an excess while, those who gathered less did not lack. The quail migrates across the Sinai Peninsula. They fly in great flocks between Europe and Arabia. Due to their long flight, the quail being so exhausted will roost to the ground or in low bushes at night. This makes it easier to capture them. Along with the manna, the quail was made available for the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness. God has provided and so now humanity must take on its duty of responsible stewardship and equitable distribution.

Acts 2:43-47 gives a profile of the early believers. They easily grew in number which led to the astounding spread of the early church. They held their possessions in common, they ate and prayed together, they took care of each other, they lived in harmony as a community, and were truly in solidarity one with each other. They exemplified God’s call for humanity to be responsible stewards and to share equitably of God-given resources.

2 Corinthians 8:7-15 is part of a letter of appeal for funds Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. The collection was for the poor, starving and persecuted community in Jerusalem. The believers there were persecuted by the Roman Empire and the Jewish authorities that they had to go underground. Many of them had been killed. Paul urged the Corinthians to reach out to those in need and to practice their Christian obligation and privilege of sharing. Paul also put forth the concept of “fair balance” (verses 13-15). The Corinthian church was rich and had

the capacity to help while the Jerusalem church was needy and suffering. This call of Paul advocates true partnership, equality and stewardship.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 8, 2018

LESSON 7: GOD GIVES MEANING TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: Each created being has integrity and worth; our role is to do good and to uphold the worth and integrity of creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am special. • I belong. • I do good. • I help take care of plants and animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all special. • We belong to each other. • We do good. • We help protect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being is special. • All created beings are interrelated. • Each one of us must do good. • We help protect and respect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being has integrity and worth. • All created beings are interconnected and interrelated. • Our role is to do good. • We uphold the worth and integrity of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being has integrity and worth. • All created beings are interconnected and interrelated. • Our role is to do good. • We uphold the worth and integrity of creation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that each one is a special child of God • Realize that we belong to one another • Mention acts of goodness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish what makes them special • See how we are all connected to each other • Show their concern for the protection of environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, in own words, how God created each being special • Analyze how all created beings are interrelated • Plan on how they can do good and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm the greatness of God as manifested in creation • Discuss that all created beings are interconnected and interrelated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and assert the role of persons in upholding the integrity of God’s creation • Affirm the necessity of celebrating each person’s uniqueness and potential for a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have demonstrated acts of goodness to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express thanksgiving to God for being made special 	<p>protect the whole of creation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate actions that show caring for all creation • Make a commitment towards upholding the worth and integrity of creation • 	<p>more harmonious relationship and journey towards a transformed community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare commitment to take part in church and community ministries in upholding the worth and integrity of God's creation
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 139:14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 2:10a; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 2:10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-5; Ephesians 2:10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-5

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; Psalm 123; Ezekiel 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

Biblical Background

1 Samuel 16:1-13 tells about the anointing of David by the prophet Samuel as king over Israel. God chose Samuel. The people were not consulted this time; unlike with Saul who was the people's choice. Indeed, David had inherent gifts and was worthy to become king. He was sensitive and wise; he was a brave warrior; and he had faith in God. Just like every created being, he has intrinsic integrity and worth; and he exemplified good leadership and mostly upheld what was right during his reign.

Ezekiel 2:1-5 begins the story of the prophet's call and commissioning. God empowers Ezekiel to be God's voice. He is sent to the people of Israel, who in this passage is described as rebellious, impudent and stubborn. These descriptions remind us of the frailty of humanity. Despite this, God continues to call them and invites them to participate in the work of God of and upholding God's order. The people can respond and change the course of their lives. Even if they are defiant, they are not without hope and God gives them a second chance at obeying and following the purpose of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 contains an oracle or piece of truth that the grace of God is sufficient. Paul is empowered in that Christ's power indwelt in him. Despite his weaknesses, he was made strong. God also finds strength in each one of, and when there are points of weakness, God will likewise give us strength to continue to do God's will.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 15, 2018

LESSON 8: GOD GIVES FULFILLMENT TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: In God, all creation finds fulfillment, abundance and grace.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God provides for our needs. • I thank God for what I have. • I am happy when I do good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God provides for our needs. • We thank God for what we have. • We are happy when we do good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are happy when we do good to others. • God intends for our basic needs to be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants for all creation to experience life in all its fullness. • Fullness of life means everyone's basic needs are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants for all creation to experience life in all its fullness. • Fullness of life means everyone's basic needs are met.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name some of the things that God provides • Express thankfulness to God for all the things provided by God • Enumerate the good things that they can do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name some of the things that God provides • Express thankfulness to God for all the things provided by God • Enumerate the good things that they can do • Articulate their feelings about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what their basic needs are • Cite Bible verses about God's intention in meeting our basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm God's intention for creation to have fulfillment, abundance and grace • Define the meaning of fulfillment, abundance and grace • Analyze whether the world's present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify manifestations in the Biblical text of God's desire for the whole creation to experience life in all fullness • State that God intends for each person to experience the fullness of life

	things and experiences around them		situation manifests fulfillment, abundance and grace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enumerate practices that can contribute to creation's having fulfillment, abundance and grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List down concrete ways they can do to help others meet their basic needs
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Hebrews 13:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Ephesians 1:3-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Ephesians 1:3-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24:1-6; Psalm 85:8-13; Amos 7:7-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29

Biblical Background

Psalm 24:1-6 reminds us who God is and whose we are. The psalm declares God as Creator who owns the world and everything that lives in it. It also says that people can only find worth and fulfillment when they are faithful to God. Blessings would come to those who are with pure heart and clean hands, meaning those who do the will of God.

Ephesians 1:3-14 is part of Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus. It tells us how God chose us, that Christ gave his life in order that we may have life in abundance, and that the Holy Spirit is with us to guide, help and protect us. Being adopted to God's family, no longer an orphan, Paul wanted to tell the Christians in Ephesus that all have received these "spiritual gifts" when they believed in Jesus Christ. The verses speak about the bestowing of God's blessings. It is worthy to note that blessings from God are the result of our union with Christ Jesus. It declares that God wants us to experience fulfillment, abundance and grace through the spiritual blessings from Christ.

That in Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, God became human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 22, 2018

LESSON 9: JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, obedient and faithful in doing God’s ministries of feeding, teaching, healing and preaching.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
Specific Concepts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. • Jesus is obedient and faithful to the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. • Jesus is both human and divine. • Jesus is obedient and faithful to the will of God.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is the Son of God • Describe how Jesus obeyed God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert that Jesus is the Son of God • Portray the works of Jesus • Affirm that Jesus was obedient to God • Express thanks to Jesus who helped people in their sufferings and difficult conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Jesus’s identity as the Son of God, basing on the Bible • Examine Jesus life and find out how Jesus obeyed God • Write their personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God • Describe Jesus’ obedience and faithfulness to the will of God • Recognize the manifestation of Jesus’ obedience to God by doing the ministries of feeding, healing, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expound on the nature of Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God • Affirm that Jesus’s compassion to the lowly is a manifestation of obedience and faithfulness to God • Articulate approaches by which persons can

			preaching and teaching • Choose to offer time, talents and work in promoting the different ministries of the church	emulate Jesus as an obedient child of God
Biblical References				
• Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-56	• Psalm 23; Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-56	• Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	• Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56; 8:27-30	• Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 23; Psalm 89:20-37; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Biblical Background

Psalm 23 says that God is like a shepherd. A shepherd loves and cares for his or her sheep, watches them closely, protects them from danger and makes sure that the sheep will have enough food to eat and water to drink. This allegory about God being a shepherd which is common in the Old Testament means that God watches over us and shows us what is best for us. The New Testament also follows this line of thought as exemplified in John 10, this time as attributed to Jesus. The shepherd life is a nomadic form of life as a shepherd has to keep on looking for green pastures for his or her sheep. Such kind of life is also dangerous for there may be various perils along the way. Israel’s life was a life of movement in search for land. As a people, they have been through so many difficulties. There were threats from powerful nations and oppositions from other tribes who were also searching for land. Yet like a shepherd, God continued to pilot them in their journey, protecting them from danger, and providing for their needs.

Matthew 16:13-16 narrates the exchange between Jesus and his disciples when he asked, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” It was Peter who answered, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” This affirmed Jesus’ messianic identity. Jesus wanted his disciples to express what they believed him to be and what they understood about him. It had to be clearly spelled out that Jesus’ mission was to God’s will. Jesus’ understanding of his task as the Messiah came from his experiences with the people with whom he grew up and lived with. Jesus saw the suffering and struggles of the people and made him realize that he must do the task set out for him.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 shows that Jesus’ ministries include preaching, teaching, healing and even feeding just as a compassionate shepherd would do, “shepherd” being a metaphor for one who guides people, protects them from danger and restores them to the fold when they wander. This was how Jesus showed faithfulness and obedience to God.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
 July 29, 2018

LESSON 10: MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

General Concept: Mary accepted the great honor to be the mother of the Son of God, despite her self-perception of her being of lowly estate, proclaiming that indeed God is a God who lifts up the lowly and brings down the powerful, modelling what it means to be a faithful disciple.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary is the mother of Jesus. • Mary was a loving mother. • Mary obeyed God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary is the mother of Jesus. • Mary was a loving mother. • Mary was obedient to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary was honored to be the mother of Jesus. • Mary was obedient to God’s will. • We should be like Mary and be obedient to God’s will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary was honored to be the mother of the Son of God. • Mary was an active participant in bringing about the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary accepted the great honor to be the mother of the Son of God. • Mary was an active participant in God’s liberating acts.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Mary is the mother of Jesus • Mention ways how Mary showed her love for Jesus • Describe how Mary obeyed God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the mother of Jesus • Describe Mary as a woman and a mother • Make comparisons between Mary the mother of Jesus and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express what they know about Mary • List down some traits they know about Mary • Discuss how Mary became obedient to God’s will found in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how Mary accepted her call to be the mother of Jesus • Discuss the significance of Mary’s acceptance of her call as an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that God employs people in the work of establishing God’s Kingdom on earth • Affirm that lowliness does not hamper God’s call

	their own mother <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that being Jesus' mother is Mary's way of obeying God 	the Gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	active participant in bringing about God's will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express how one may accept God's call to serve 	to be channels of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express firm obedience to God's call of societal transformation through dynamic involvement in church and community ministries
Biblical References				
• Luke 1:26-38; 2:6-7	• Psalm 14:5b-7; Luke 1:26-56	• Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38, 45-55	• Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-56	• Psalm 14; Luke 1:26-46

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 11:1-15; 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 14; Psalm 145:10-18; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

Brief Biblical Background

Isaiah 7:14 has been attributed to be a prediction of the conception and birth of Jesus, but the context of this quotation is the Prophet Isaiah's assurance of God's continued protection and accompaniment of the nation Judah despite all that threatens them. Isaiah was trying to elucidate his point by giving a concrete example of a pregnant young woman: "...Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." As sure as a young woman who is pregnant will give birth, God will save Judah. A pregnant woman is a very hopeful image of God's care, sustenance and protection. Immanuel, meaning "God with us", denotes that God would be with the nation as its protector and the birth of this child would be the sign or promise of it. The pregnant woman would then be a channel of this promise, just as Mary the mother of Jesus is an obedient channel of God's saving grace.

Psalm 14 talks about people who think that there is no God. They are referred to as "fools" and live a life that is contrary to the will and purpose of God. They are the powerful and get what they covet even if it entails corruption and abuse of power. The psalmist laments that the world is full of this kind of people. Still, the psalmist declares that God takes action and will save God's people from the clutches of the "fools." God will seek those who choose to remain wise. Wisdom then is understood as adhering to and obeying the will and purpose of God.

Luke 1:26-56 tells of the announcing of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, and the celebration that ensued. A significant character in these passages is the mother of Jesus, Mary. She is a young woman who comes from a lowly, poor and insignificant family from Nazareth, but she humbly submits herself to the will of God. Her active participation in God’s liberating acts, despite doubts and uncertainties due to her lowly estate, would bring greater celebration to all of God’s creation. The story of God’s liberating acts through Jesus Christ could never be complete without Mary. Mary’s song, which is now called the “Magnificat”, is Mary’s proclamation of hope that God continues to care for, sustain and protect God’s people. It is a song of praise to God who has acted always in justice, mercy and grace, a God who listens to the cries of God’s people and will always be with God’s people, Immanuel.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 5, 2018

LESSON 11: IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD BECAME HUMAN

General Concept: God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth and lived among us to bring fullness of life for all.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is like me. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is a human being like us. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth. • Jesus grew in wisdom, in years and in favor with God and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth and lived among us. • The name Jesus means “God redeems” and is a symbol of the fulfillment of God’s promise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name Jesus means “God Redeems” and is a symbol of the fulfillment of God’s promise. • Jesus is the actualization of fullness of life.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus was a human being. • Describe how Jesus lived and grew as a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is a human being like us. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how Jesus spent his life with the people • List some Bible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God in Jesus Christ came to earth and lived among us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify how God’s redeeming act is readily seen in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ

person.	me.	verses that tell about Jesus' growing up in favor with God and the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why God chose to become human and lived among us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate the name "Jesus" (which means "God redeems") to the nature and purpose of Jesus' life on earth • Realize that Jesus became human as the fulfillment of God's promise • Choose to experience fullness of life through Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert that to be human is to be humane as exhibited in the life and ministry of Jesus • Determine means by which the church can help in the transformation of persons into becoming more humane
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 2:41-52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 4:9-10; John 1:14; John 10:10-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 51:10-12; John 6:29-35; Luke 2: 52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 6:24-35; 10:10-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 4:9-10; John 1:14

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a; Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15; Psalm 78:23-29; Ephesians 4:9-10; John 6:24-35

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 51:10-12 is part of a prayer of repentance and supplication for God's accompaniment, renewal and rejuvenation. Being in sin is departing from God. It is only through God that we experience fullness of life. The request for God to "create a clean heart" signifies that only God can do this, and once this is done, the new created being becomes whole and integrated, having a right or steadfast spirit.

Luke 2:41-52 is the only narrative in the New Testament that tells about Jesus' growing up years. It shows to us that even at a very young age, Jesus was already studying Scripture. Not only that, he took all the opportunity to discuss it among the Temple leaders. This passage also shows us that Jesus had an intimate relationship with God. He was also obedient to his parents. Jesus therefore developed into his fullest potential as a human being.

John 1:14; John 6:29-35; John 10:10-11. The writer of John is not like the writers of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John is not very interested in facts, on what happened, but focuses more on the meaning of what Jesus said and did. John 1:14 is part of John’s introduction of Jesus. According to John, God’s word came to life and took the form of a human being. The ‘Word’ becoming flesh means that God wants to fully communicate with us. God spoke in a way we can truly understand—by becoming one of us. The use of the word “flesh” underscores the total humility of God, the full self-expression of God to humanity. John 6:29-35 tells about Jesus identifying himself as the ‘bread from heaven’. Just as the ‘Word became flesh’ this “bread” that gives life to the world descended in order that fullness of life may be experienced by all. John 10:10-11 also tells about how we may have abundant life in Jesus. In this passage, Jesus identifies himself as the good shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep. Jesus’ whole life and ministry is God’s message to all. Through this person in Jesus Christ, we may have a foretaste of what is to come—a life in God’s reign where there is abundance and fullness for all.

Ephesians 4:9-10 tries to explain that he who went up to heaven has come down even to the deepest parts of the earth, referring to God who came down to the world in and through Jesus Christ and lived as a human being. He experienced the sufferings and struggles of the people. He even understands their hope for salvation from everything that negates life and the promise of fullness of life. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ brings across the message that God is indeed with us, Immanuel.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 12, 2018

LESSON 12: GOD, IN JESUS CHRIST, IS SOVEREIGN LORD OF LIFE

General Concept: In Jesus, God made manifest God’s saving acts and offers eternal life. We therefore must believe and follow Christ and be bearers of fullness of life for others.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is good. • I will be good like Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our Lord. • We will follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our Lord and Savior. • We believe in and follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty. • Jesus is the sovereign Lord of Life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty. • Jesus is the sovereign Lord of Life. • Like Jesus, we must

				be bearers of fullness of life for others.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is good • Imitate the good deeds of Jesus • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what Jesus did to help people • Tell ways on how we can follow Jesus • Thank God for sending Jesus to the world to help people in need • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate through artwork the stories about Jesus’ healing and feeding ministries • Discuss why Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of Life • Contrast the kind of life that God wants us to have with the life majority of people are experiencing today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss that in Jesus, God made manifest God’s saving acts and offers eternal life • Realize that Jesus is the sovereign Lord of life • Express creatively their belief and obedience to Jesus as the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare that God’s sovereignty is made evident in the life of Jesus • Indicate that Jesus’ Lordship over all of life is manifested in his resurrection • Enumerate some of the ways by which we can be bearers of the fullness of life
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 11:38-44 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 5:1-2a; John 6:1-14, 51 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 6: 30-40, 47-51 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 5:2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; John 6:35,38-40

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Psalm 34:1-8; Psalm 130; 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35,38-40, 47-51

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 34:1-8 is part of a hymn of praise for God’s saving grace and presence. It is uttered by a person or people who has/have suffered affliction and oppression and experienced the gift of deliverance. It shows that indeed God heeds the cry of the poor and helps those who are in trouble. One Hebrew word for deliver is *natsal* which in English means “snatching or pulling away”. Another Hebrew word and which is used by the psalmist in this passage is *yashah* which means “to take full care of or to help.” The psalmist further exhorts the people to “taste and see” the goodness of the Lord. The fullness of life that God brings means experiencing it in tangible ways such as tasting and seeing God’s compassionate care and grace.

John 6:1-14, 30-40, 47-51. Verses 1-14 tells of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Indeed, the fullness of life in God involves tasting and feeding. John treats Jesus’ miracles a step further from how they were treated in the other gospels. He called them “signs”. As with all signs, it points to something or somebody. People were so excited by this sign performed by Jesus. Jesus used this sign of the feeding to make an important lesson on the bread of life talked about starting in verse 30. The kind of bread that Jesus offers will give eternal life. Jesus is not just offering bread. He is the bread that sustains life. To come to Jesus is to believe in him and follow his teachings, thus becoming bearers of fullness of life for others. To partake of the bread of life is to be one with Christ in the building of God’s Reign. Such may mean facing persecution or even death just as Jesus had experienced. However, death does not hamper the victory of eternal life.

John 11:38-44 tells of Jesus raising Lazarus to life. Jesus reassures Martha, the sister of Lazarus, that if they believed they would see the glory of God. This life-giving scene only confirms that Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty and saving acts. It just proves that He is indeed the resurrection and the life.

Ephesians 5:1-2 is a command to believers as children of God to be imitators of God: to love others as Christ loved. It is in this manner that we can also be bearers of fullness of life for others. As persons made new in Christ, we must compassionately care for and love each other. It is the only way that we can show that we truly believe in Jesus—by following his teachings.

Thirteenth Sunday after
Pentecost
August 19, 2018

LESSON 13: GOD, IN JESUS CHRIST, IS SOVEREIGN LORD OF HISTORY

General Concept: God has always been with God’s people throughout history. We must be wise and discerning, always doing the will of God, imbibing the life Jesus lived.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is with me. • I will follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus walks with us every day. • God wants us to be obedient like Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our companion in our everyday life. • We must be wise and understand the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our companion and guide in all of our life. • We must be wise and discerning of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has always been with us throughout history. • We must be wise and discerning of God’s will, imbibing

			God's will.	the life Jesus lived. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is present in the life and struggle of the people.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is with them • Decide to follow Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the times when they feel Jesus is with them • Express how they can follow Jesus in their own ways • Thank God for being in the people's lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the life of Solomon and list down some of his traits as a King • Compare the leadership of obedient and faithful leaders in the Bible from those who are not • Write a prayer asking God to lead our life as a nation, discerning and following God's will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God in Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of history • Share their experience of God in Jesus being their companion and guide • Identify concrete examples of God's work in their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey how God solidly moves in history to realize God's plan of total salvation of the whole of creation • Ascertain God's design for humanity and the whole of creation by imitating the life Jesus lived and the lessons He taught • Proclaim that promoting the agenda expressing solidarity with the struggles of the people proves God's constant presence in the world
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 21:1-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 111; Matthew 16:24-25; John 6:57-58 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Kings 3: 5-14; Acts 17: 24-27; Ephesians 5:15-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-17; John 6:57-58 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Psalm 111; Proverbs 9:1-6; Psalm 34:9-14 Ephesians 5:15-17; John 6:57-58

Brief Biblical Background

1 Kings 3: 5-14 narrates King Solomon's dream where he spoke with God. Solomon is King David's successor. He was very much aware of God's kindness to his father and to himself. He recognized his weaknesses and limitations—that he did not have much experience. In that dream conversation, God is impressed that Solomon only asked for an understanding mind to govern God's people. Because of this, God also gave him riches, honor and a long life. When God's people walk in the ways of God, doing God's will, then God will be with them.

Psalms 111 proclaims God and the work of God's hands. This song of thanksgiving expresses the singer's gratefulness to God for the gift of deliverance from all forms of oppression, from enemies and from life-threatening situations. While the psalm may have been sung by an individual, it recounts a delivery of a whole community and not of just one particular person. The psalmist describes God's gracious dealings with Israel as "wonderful deeds", *niphla'oth* in Hebrew. These are deeds which go beyond anything the human mind can think of. The great works of God establish God's sovereignty over all things and reflect God's graciousness, faithfulness and uprightness as witnessed throughout the life-story and journey of God's people.

Matthew 16:24-25 is an exhortation to faithfully follow Jesus to the point of self-denial. Just like Jesus, we must strive to be completely obedient to God, to the point of losing oneself for the sake of the many. We must strive to imbibe the life Jesus lived.

John 6:57-58 is part of Jesus' speech about who he is: the bread of life. Jesus particularly cited an event in the past where people actually were fed by God with the "bread from heaven". Jesus was trying to tell them that the God who fed them before—the God who sustained them throughout their journey to the Promised Land—is the same God who feeds them with another kind of bread. To eat this "bread of life" means the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah who will offer his life so that others may live. As Jesus' followers, we must be ready to do the same.

John 21:1-14 narrates a post-resurrection event where Jesus appears to his disciples. According to the story, this is the third time that he appears to them but the story shows that the disciples were so surprised to see Jesus, as if they see him for the first time after he rose. It is only John that tells the story this way. Jesus is cooking and invites them to a meal. They eat together, and seemingly Jesus is reminding them to continue the work he has started, even as they have gone back to becoming fisherfolk.

Acts 17: 24-27 is part of Paul's sermon addressed to believers in Athens. Here, Paul expresses his disappointment of their idolatrous ways, even though they are quite religious. Paul discusses about an altar that he saw inscribed "to an unknown God". Paul stresses that God is known and respected among believers as the Creator of all things. He talks about God as the Creator of the world, opposing their opinions about many gods. Paul taught them that all things were made by our One God.

Ephesians 5:15-17 talks about the advice to believers to be wise and discerning, as befitting of God’s people. The triune God is the God of history—this is one of the basic affirmations of the Christian Church. This text centers on the connection between wisdom and the proper use of time. For Paul, wisdom is knowing the will of God. Knowing God’s will should lead every believer to make wise use of the time just as Jesus Christ did. The evil times did not hinder Christ from knowing and doing God’s purpose, but all the more pushed him to work hard in order to usher in the Reign of God.

That in the Holy Spirit, God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ.

Mission Sunday
 First Sunday in Kingdomtide
 August 26, 2018

LESSON 14: THE HOLY SPIRIT

General Concept: The Holy Spirit is the moving and empowering presence of God.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit in us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the world. The Holy Spirit empowers people to do God’s mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is the presence of God. The Holy Spirit moves and empowers God’s people to do God’s mission.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that the Holy Spirit is God’s spirit. Describe how the Holy Spirit can help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that The Holy Spirit is God’s spirit Express appreciation for sending the Holy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the significance of God’s presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the world Cite examples of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe situations that indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit in individuals,

us be good.	Spirit to the believing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the distinct work of the Holy Spirit from those of the Creator and Redeemer • Discuss how the Holy Spirit works and empowers us 	<p>how the Holy Spirit empowers the people to do God's mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a mission project to manifest God's empowerment 	<p>churches and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinpoint Christian characteristics that demonstrate empowerment to realize God's mission • Articulate commitment to participate in the task of declaring God's comforting and empowering spirit to all and in all situations
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 6:63; Ephesians 6:18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 6:63; 14:15-21; 15:26-27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua 24:16-18; Ephesians 6:10-18; Acts 1:8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63, 68-69 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Kings 8: (1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43; Psalm 84; Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; Psalm 34:15-22; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63, 68-69

Brief Biblical Background

Joshua 24:16-18 is part of a narration telling us how God moves through the Holy Spirit in the life of God's people. The tribes of Israel are renewing their covenant with God, and the people are promising that they will serve God.

John 6:62-63; 14:15-21; 15:26-27. The statement of Jesus in chapter 6 verses 62 and 63 presents the direction of God's movement as explained by John. Christ was with God as the Word. Then God descended through Christ and dwelt with humanity. The presence of the spirit of God gives life and the gift of understanding and discernment, unlike the flesh which is mortal. Without the spirit the body is useless. The body may move but it moves without meaning and purpose. The spirit is the message of peace, hope and love that Jesus proclaims. Understanding the message proclaimed by Jesus draws people to God. This gift of understanding leads a believer to be transformed and empowered. The words that Jesus proclaims are life-giving and life-empowering. In John 14:15-21 and 15:26-27, Jesus talks about a Helper

or Advocate who comes from God. This is the Spirit of Truth who can only be seen by those who love Jesus as shown by keeping His commandments. God’s participation in the lives of the people will not end in the death of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit is in us and stays with us. When we need strength to obey God’s commands and to testify or witness to the good news that Jesus brings, the Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us.

Acts 1:8 proclaims that the Holy Spirit indeed empowers believers to be witnesses in all the places that they need to be.

Ephesians 6:10-20 comprise Paul’s final instruction to the Ephesian Christians. The city of Ephesus was a Roman colony. The Roman kind of peace has long been imposed on them. The citizens are free to do as they want as long as they give what the Roman Empire demands. This is a clear indication that the kind of peace the Roman Empire brings is provisional. Most people in Ephesus lived under modest means. They were not rich but they were not poor either. Some of them were freed slaves. They embraced the Christian faith at a time when it cost them little. Because of the Roman kind of peace, they did not experience the kind of persecution the Christians in Jerusalem experienced. Being a provisional kind of peace, Paul knew that it will not last long. He therefore warns the Ephesian Christians of the imminent coming of tumultuous times. They must be prepared for such. In emphasizing preparedness, Paul uses the imagery of a soldier, specifically a Roman soldier, preparing for battle. For some Christians, this imagery is a bit problematic. Paul is not talking about war between and among people, but a war against principalities and forces of evil. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be prepared and to persevere in prayer and to continue professing and proclaiming what Christ has left us: truth, faith, the Word of God and salvation. This kind of strength can only be achieved when the Spirit of God moves and works within them.

**Christian Education
Sunday**

Second Sunday in Kingdomtide
September 2, 2018

LESSON 15: THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD IS PRESENT IN THE WORLD

General Concept: The Holy Spirit is manifested through God’s teachings, and through the Advocate, the spirit of truth.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
• The Holy Spirit helps me to love God,	• The Holy Spirit is felt when there is	• The Holy Spirit leads us to love, to	• The Holy Spirit moves us to live out	• The Holy Spirit empowers us to

family and friends.	love and goodness.	be peace-loving, patient, kind and good.	love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control	manifest love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control in our daily lives.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that the Holy Spirit helps us to love God, our family, and our friends • Be thankful for the leading and inspiration of the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express how God can be found and felt • Articulate that the Holy Spirit is there when we do good and in loving others • Resolve to be more loving and good to others Express how God can be found and felt • Articulate that the Holy Spirit is there when we do good and in loving others • Resolve to be more loving and good to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and explain the manifestations of God's presence in the lives of the learners through the work of the Holy Spirit • Dramatize how to live out and witness to their faith in God, demonstrating how the Holy Spirit works in our lives • Plan a project the learners can offer or share to the church or community as manifestations of the fruits of the Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God is present in the world through the Holy Spirit • Articulate that the Holy Spirit is manifested in Christ's teachings • Cite examples of how the fruits of the Holy Spirit are lived out today • Make a self-assessment on how we live out the fruits of the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring to the foreground the significance of the various fruits of the Spirit in the task of fulfilling the mission entrusted by God to God's people • Discover and acknowledge whatever fruit of the Spirit each person has • Convey their commitment to hone and share their spiritual gifts towards the realization of a society where the reign of God marked by love, justice and peace is evident
Biblical References				
• John 19:26-27;	• Deuteronomy 4:1-2,	• Deuteronomy 4:1-2,	• John 16:5-15;	• Deuteronomy 4:1-2,

James 1:17-27	6-9; James 1:19-27	6; James 1:17-27; Galatians 5:22-26	Galatians 5:22-23	6-9; James 1:17-27; Galatians 5:22-23
---------------	--------------------	--	-------------------	--

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9; Psalm 15; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Brief Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 and 6-9 tell us about Moses telling the people of Israel to obey God’s laws and teachings. He emphasizes complete obedience to the laws that not even a word should be added or subtracted. The laws represent the covenant relationship between God and the people, making both parties bound to the agreement. God’s teachings signify the constant presence of God in the lives of the people. Through obedience, the people continue to experience a unique privilege: knowing personally the God who created the universe. Israel sees the land of promise as God’s greatest blessing to them. Land is important in the road to nationhood. This text emphasizes that success in the acquisition of the land depends on their faithfulness to the covenant. Moses reminds the people of Israel to be faithful and to ensure that the law will be taught to the next generations so that the blessings will forever be with them.

John 16:5-15; 19:26-27. John 16:5-15 reiterates the teaching that God is also manifested in the Advocate that Jesus will send. There are things that Jesus cannot tell them as yet, but which the Spirit of truth will reveal later. John 19:26-27 tells about Jesus’ final instructions to his mother and the beloved disciple. These instructions manifest how the faithful must truly care for each other like one cares for family.

Galatians 5:22-26 lists the manifestations of the Spirit. Christians ought to live a Spirit-filled life, living out these fruits that show a change of heart. This way, believers participate in bringing about the Reign of God, putting into flesh God’s presence in the world.

James 1:19-27 encourages believers to live and act like true Christians. Our integrity as Christians depend mainly on the kind of life we live and the character we have. Christians should both be hearers and doers. We need to hear the Word rightly so we do things rightly. Hearing and doing ought to go together for us to achieve the kind of life that God requires. Listening to the Word and knowing the laws are not enough. Real-life faith should manifest action. Real faith is doing something that shows our faith to be real. In verse 27, James clearly describes an example of the specific spiritual actions expected from Christians: “to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

LESSON 16: THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS AND GUIDES BELIEVERS

General Concept: The Holy Spirit guides, empowers and enables believers to testify to the truth and to do what is good and upright.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit helps me to tell the truth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit teaches us to tell the truth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit guides us to testify to the truth and to do what is good and upright. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit enables us to witness to the truth and to do what is good and upright. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live out their faith.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that the Holy Spirit helps us to tell the truth Thank God for helping us to tell the truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell stories about the times they did not tell the truth Express how they felt when they did not tell the truth Ask forgiveness from God and ask help to tell the truth always 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the concept of truth Practice doing good and living an upright life with the guidance of the Holy Spirit Always value the truth just as Jesus did 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit guides and empowers believers Articulate that the Holy Spirit helps us to testify and witness to the truth Analyze how the Holy Spirit helps us to choose what is good and upright Commit to participate in the quest for social transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss ways of how we may maximize the fruits of the spirit in the daily living out of our faith Determine potential challenges in the current times that may hamper the living out of our faith and in testifying to the truth Detail different approaches in surmounting the challenges and

				impediments encountered in the living out of one's faith
Biblical References				
• Acts 7; John 16:13	• Proverbs 22: 17-23; James 3: 1-6	• Psalm 125:4-5; James 2: 14-17; John 16:13a	• Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Isaiah 35:4	• Proverbs 22:1-23; Psalm 125; James 2:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125; Psalm 146; Isaiah 35:4; James 2:1-10; (11-13), 14-17; Mark 7:24-37

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 125 is a prayer for guidance in the dark and difficult moments in life. The psalmist probably wrote this psalm at a moment when he or she felt powerless in the face of injustice, corruption and impudence. Righteous and faithful people are not free from trials and tribulations but the psalmist affirms that in the midst of all these, there is a powerful God who is an ever-present help. The loving embrace of God is a permanent protection for all people. The key to victory against all sorts of tribulation is trusting in a God who loves and protects God's people.

Proverbs 22:1-23 stresses the important teaching of the significance of having a good name. Having a good name is about integrity. It is about how a person performs her or his responsibilities. It is about having a relationship with others founded on love, respect and acceptance. All persons are created by God whether rich or poor. Since all persons are created by God, each has the responsibility to ensure having a good name. Being righteous and doing what is just are some of the core foundations of having a good name. This passage also tries to remind the people to take into heart the counsel of the wise so that they are guided in always telling the truth. It also guides people against exploiting the poor.

Isaiah 35:4 empowers those who are afraid to be strong and unafraid as God is there with them and will save them. This important promise is Isaiah's central message. This is also where the people's hope lies. The restoration of God's people after difficult and painful times encourages them to do what is good and upright.

Acts 7 records Stephen's speech about Israel's relationship with God. From Old Testament history, he narrated that the Jews had constantly rejected God's message and God's prophets, and that the Council had rejected the Messiah, God's Son. He made three main points: that Israel's history is the history of God's acts in the world; that people worshipped God long before there was a temple, because God does not live in a temple; that Jesus' death was just one more example of Israel's rebellion against and rejection of God. This is the truth that Stephen testified to and defended before the Council and for which he was stoned to death.

John 16:13 enables believers to imbibe the Spirit of truth who will guide them to the truth and will reveal to them the things that Jesus left unsaid.

James 2: 1-10; 14-17; 3: 1-6. James 2:1-10 raises a question of what faith really is. James condemns showing partiality to people who show signs of wealth. Wealth and influence come together. It seems that in the time of James, people who had wealth and influence were given top priority and special places in the community of faith. James disparages such kind of attitude which seems to be evident in the church and among people who claim to believe in Jesus Christ. This message of James is a call to the church to examine itself on the way members treat each other. James 2: 14- 17 argues that faith without works of mercy is not gainful and advantageous. Paul is clearly stating that faith is not true if not coupled with works. Faith is an operative grace: it works by love and kindness, both to God in Jesus Christ and to our fellow human being. Christ is the only cause and author of salvation. But Christ, in his life and ministry, showed compassion and value to people and responded to their needs. James 3: 1-6 is an admonition to people who cannot hold his or her tongue. James compares the tongue to three things: the bit, the rudder, and fire. With a small bit one can make a horse go wherever one wants. With a small rudder, one can steer a large ship. With a small spark, one can start a forest fire. James warns Christians to guard their tongue to keep them from trouble.

Youth Sunday
 Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide
 September 16, 2018

LESSON 17: UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING OUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: Believers must keep the Word of God by understanding and living out their faith in Jesus Christ, through the help of the Holy Spirit.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love to listen to stories about God. • I love to tell stories about God to my friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We love to listen to stories about God. • We share stories about God to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learn lessons from stories about God. • We relate to the life and witness of faithful servants of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and live out the Word of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit inspires believers to obey God and understand and live out their faith.

Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate stories about God • Be excited to tell others the stories they hear about God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell their favorite stories about God • Devise ways to share their favorite stories about God • Thank God for letting them know about God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate stories from the Bible of experiences of some faithful servants of God • Choose a person in the Bible whose faith and life is worth following • Write a letter of commitment to God expressing their desire to be a faithful and obedient servant of Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss their understanding of faith • Explain the relationship between faith and deeds • Express their commitment to live out their faith in their daily lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how living out our faith in Jesus is akin to keeping the Word of God • Exemplify the means by which the Holy Spirit enthralls us to proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ • Express determination to be faithful to the will of God through active involvement in the work of proclaiming God's Kingdom
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; James 2:14-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; Luke 19: 1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; James 2:14-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; Mark 8:27-38

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 19:7-14; Proverbs 1:20-33; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 116:1-9; James 3: 1-12; Mark 8:27-38

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 19: 7-14 exults the Word of God, the Law. Unlike the preceding verses where God is referred to by the common name 'el or God, the author in these verses has changed tone by using *Yahweh* or Lord, the name which has been revealed to Moses during the burning bush experience. This shows that God is revealed more intimately through the Law or the Word of God—the personal voice of God to God's people. This choice of name also proves the people's choice to follow God as shown in their reliance on the Word of God to instruct, direct and guide them as they live out their faith.

Mark 8:27-38 tells about the full disclosure of who Jesus is, but this disclosure is confined to the disciples only. In the preceding chapters of Mark, there have been enough situations where questions were raised about the person of Jesus. In this chapter, we see two levels of

questioning. The first question is general: “Who do people say that I am?” The answers to this question reflect the people’s confusion of Jesus’ identity. The second question is specific: “But who do you say that I am?” directed to the disciples. It requires a more intimate answer and not one based on what they have heard. It is also an evaluation of the depth of the disciples’ understanding of Jesus as well as that of the ministry they are to continue doing. Peter is the first to answer and make a declaration that Jesus is the Messiah (anointed or the chosen one), understood as the long-awaited Savior of the world. In these passages, we see an abrupt shift from Peter’s declaration to Jesus teaching about the reality of suffering, a reality that Peter failed to grasp. It is one thing to declare Jesus as the Christ and another thing to accept the reality of persecution that comes with living out this declaration and faith.

Luke 19: 1-10 tells about the conversion of Zacchaeus. He is a chief tax collector thus plays quite an important role in the corrupt system that perpetuates economic oppression. With so much curiosity about Jesus’ life and ministry, Zacchaeus climbs up a tree in order to see Jesus. When Jesus sees him, Jesus declares the intention to stay at his house. Zacchaeus then confesses and repents of all the ill that he has done to the people. To show his genuine repentance, Zacchaeus promises to repay with generous interest (more than what was required by law) those he had cheated. He even promises to give half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus appreciates his act of restitution and declares that salvation has come to him and his household.

Acts 3 tells about the prophetic witness that one does as a believer of Christ: doing and preaching God’s Word as empowered by the Holy Spirit. Peter and John heal a lame man which prompts the lame man to praise God. Peter takes this opportunity to preach the Word of God and share Jesus Christ to the crowd gathered there who witnessed the healing. Peter’s main point was that God continues to work and this time has taken a new form in the life and ministry of Jesus. He clearly presents his message by telling who Jesus is and how we must respond to what Jesus did: truly following Jesus as their Messiah and as their Lord.

James 2: 14-17 argues that faith without works of mercy is not gainful and advantageous. Paul is clearly stating that faith is not true if not coupled with works. Faith is an operative grace: it works by love and kindness, both to God in Jesus Christ and to our fellow human being. Christ is the only cause and author of salvation. But Christ, in his life and ministry, showed compassion and value to people and responded to their needs. As we have gained new life in Jesus Christ, we must live out our faith through good works.

WE BELIEVE

Persons are created in the image of God and destined to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation.

Fellowship of the Coins

Fifth Sunday in Kingdomtide
September 23, 2018

LESSON 18: PERSONS ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

General Concept: God created persons in God’s image, with dignity and worth, with God’s spirit dwelling in all of us.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made you and me in God’s likeness. • I am loving like God. • I am important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made us in God’s likeness. • God created children with God-given rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made us in God’s image. • God created persons with God-given rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created persons in God’s image. • God created persons with inherent rights to ensure that each person’s dignity and worth is upheld. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created persons in God’s image. • God created all persons with dignity, each contributing to the work of building God’s reign. • God created all persons with worth, with each person’s contribution being appreciated. • God created persons with inherent rights to ensure that each person’s dignity and worth is upheld.

Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God made them in God’s likeness • Be good and loving like God • Feel that they are important and special children of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell how human beings are created in the image of God • Know the rights of children • Thank God for creating children in God’s likeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover some traits or values that manifest God’s image in a person • Identify ways of how the learners should respect each one’s God-given rights • Point out reasons why people’s God-given rights are, oftentimes, violated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss their understanding of the concept that persons are created in God’s image • Enumerate or mention the inherent human rights of each person • List down ways on how we can uphold the rights, dignity and worth of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate how each one can be a true image-bearer of God • Enumerate how they can uphold the image of God in each one • Articulate steadfastness in living out the true essence of being a person created in God’s image
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27; Mark 9:37 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8: 4-9; Colossians 3: 12-17; Mark 9:37 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27; Mark 9:37

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 1; Proverbs 31:10-31; James 4:5-8a; Mark 9:37

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 1:27 talks about God creating human beings in God’s image. It is one of the most important faith statements in the Old and New Testaments. Human beings are created in the likeness of God. This does not mean we look like God or that we are equal to God. It means that we are given the capability to be friends with God, to talk to God and connect with God just like one person to the other. After creating all things, God finished the creative work by creating man and woman. “Created in God’s image” is best understood to mean that in human beings, God is reflected. We see in human beings the character of a God who creates, participates, relates and puts things in order. Human beings therefore are able to discern the will and purpose of God for creation and be an active participant in achieving God’s ultimate design for the whole of creation. Another significant point to be noted is that the word *created* is used three times. In Hebrew, thought repetition means emphasis, certainty and dignity.

Psalm 8 is a hymn of praise that invites us to reflect upon God’s concern and care for humanity and on how God created human beings with dignity and worth. God is mightily praised because of all that God has created and is thanked for giving to human beings an esteemed place in the created order. With this honor comes the responsibility of taking care of all the others that God created and on which God also bestows divine grace.

Mark 9:37 illustrates what greatness means for Jesus. In teaching his disciples about greatness, Jesus brought a child before them to challenge them to rethink their understanding of greatness. In Jesus’ time, a child was the best depiction of persons deemed as unimportant, had no influence, and was rendered very dependent on others, especially male adults. Children in Jesus’ society were the “last of all”, a term that Jesus mentions in the preceding verse. But for Jesus, children are equated to himself and to the One who sent him, rendering them important, with inherent rights, dignity and worth, and able to participate in the work of building God’s Reign.

Colossians 3: 12-17 prompts believers to live out what it means to be God’s children and new beings in Christ. The passage envisions a life in God where all are equal, united and in service to God and each other. Within the community of faith, all can live together in harmony, allowing God’s spirit to dwell in each one, guiding and directing each person’s actions as one created in God’s image.

Sixth Sunday in Kingdomtide
September 30, 2018

LESSON 19: PERSONS ARE DESTINED TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY WITH GOD

General Concept: Persons are destined to live in community with God, co-creators with God in building a just, peaceful and compassionate world, reflecting God’s light.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I belong to a family. • I belong to a church. • I help at home and in church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We belong to a family. • We belong to a church. • We help at home and in church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a relationship with God, manifested in right relationships within the family and the church. • We participate in the different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a relationship with God, manifested in right relationships within the family and the church. • We are partners with God in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are destined to live in community with God. • We are co-creators with God in building a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.

		ministries and activities of the church.	work for a just, peaceful and compassionate world.	
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe their own families • Mention the tasks they do at home and in church • Thank God for their families and the church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share about one's family to the class • Tell the reasons why they come to church • Express ways they can help in family and church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express their understanding and definition of a community • Classify different kinds of community according to its situation and composition • Name some ministries and activities of the church • Share some ways on how they can participate in these ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the concept of living in community with God • Enumerate church and family activities that manifest right relationships with others • Affirm that we are partners with God in the work for a just, peaceful and compassionate world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a concrete description of a community that is just, peaceful and compassionate • Determine measures that would guarantee the building of a community where justice, peace and compassion is experienced by all • Present ways of carrying out existing ministries of the church that would foster the establishing of a just and compassionate social order
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 2, Mark 9:50c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 6:8; 1 Peter 2:4-9; James 5: 13-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther 7; Matthew 15: 21-28; James 5: 13-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 6:8; James 5: 13-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 6:8; John 1:1-4; James 5: 13-20

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22; Psalm 124; Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29; Psalm 19:7-14; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50

Brief Biblical Background

Esther 7 narrates how Queen Esther advocates for her community and people for a just, peaceful and compassionate world for them and for everyone. King Ahasuerus is invited by Queen Esther to a dinner banquet so that she could make an urgent and serious request to spare the life of her people the Jews because Haman, the king's assistant, has plotted to kill them. Esther's people were spared and were able to continue to live in community with God and others, but Haman was punished. Esther was instrumental and very helpful in the deliverance of her people from death threat and annihilation. She was able to participate in the work of fulfilling God's plan for God's people.

Micah 6:8 reminds us that God's covenant people should live in community with God. God only requires us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. The message of Prophet Micah is set in the 6th or 5th century BCE. Micah knew very well the dangers of war and the suffering of the people due to their tyrannical leaders and colonizers. God liberated them from bondage in Egypt before and delivered them from their enemies. Given what God has already done, how then must the people respond? Micah in this verse provides a simple yet profound answer. Thanking God is not about the rituals we do in church. The appropriate way to show thanks is by doing good. Being in community and in fellowship with God is really about treating others with justice and kindness.

Matthew 15: 21-28 discusses Jesus' encounter with a Canaanite woman. Because of the woman's faith, Jesus was able to heal her daughter. It shows that Jesus' ministry is about reaching out to other people. Doing God's ministry of building a just, peaceful and compassionate world involves everyone: young and old, male or female, those inside or outside the faith community.

Mark 9:50 encourages us to be at peace with one another. We must remember that doing God's work is a community effort and that we should work peacefully and cooperatively with others.

Luke 2 tells the story of Jesus' birth. He was born into a poor family, but was loved and brought up in a loving environment. Jesus grew to be good and kind, and for sure, loved by many. Because of this upbringing, he was able to launch God's ministry for a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.

John 1:1-4 defines Jesus' identity in in this Gospel. Jesus is described as the Word that existed even before the creation of the world. He is also described here as the creator and giver of life and the light that shines in darkness. In using the analogy of light, the gospel writer emphasizes the relationship of Jesus to the people. In being the light, Jesus shows what it means to be in communion with God: that of being co-creators with God in building a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.

James 5:13-20 contains advice addressed to two kinds of people: the rich and the poor. It was hard to send a common message to both groups. At one time, James addressed the rich and privileged, and at another time he addressed the poor. The two groups had different problems. The rich were insensitive to the plight of the needy and were selfish. On the other hand, the poor responded with grumbling and

blamed God for their poverty. James further explained that there is a common struggle between the two groups of people—that of their being single-minded in their participation in doing God’s mission and in following Christ.

In 1 Peter 2:4-9, the writer constructs a metaphor out of a very common object: a stone. Peter refers to the stone as Jesus who was rejected by the builders. This stone may seem useless and may even cause one to trip over, but this stone becomes a cornerstone of a new structure composed of “living stones” who are believers of Christ. We are invited to take part in building this new structure of a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.

Seventh Sunday in Kingdomtide
October 7, 2018

LESSON 20: PERSONS ARE DESTINED TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS

General Concept: Human beings are not meant to live alone; they are meant to live in partnership with other human beings, mutually supporting and helping each other, bringing each other into the fold of God’s Kin-dom.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I belong to a community. • I am a community helper. • I help others experience God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We belong to a community. • We are community helpers. • We help each other experience God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings are meant to live in community. • We help each other in our community. • We help each other experience God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings are meant to live in partnership with other human beings. • We support and help each other in community. • We help each other experience God’s Kin-dom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings are meant to live in partnership with other human beings. • We mutually support and help each other in community. • We help each other experience God’s Kin-dom.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that it is not good to be alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the importance of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss why human beings are meant to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cull out important characteristics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention ways of helping the community • Thank God for their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portray how the early believers met the needs of other believers • Enumerate the ways they can show that other people are important to them 	<p>in community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how the early believers manifested community life based on Jesus' teachings • Examine how the early believers lived a rightful life that encouraged others to be a part of the community of God 	<p>live in partnership with other human beings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how we can support and help each other in community • List down ways of how human beings can live together in partnership • Express their commitment to help each other experience God's Kin-dom 	<p>Christians must possess to be effective partners in the ministry of stewardship and in working toward the fullness of life for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish approaches necessary in empowering each other to build community • Envision possible and doable partnerships between and among individuals and organizations that would promote establishment of compassionate communities
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark 10:13-16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 2:18-24; Acts 4:32-35; Hebrews 2:11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 2:18-24; Acts 2: 42-47, 4:32-35 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 2:18-24; I John 3:23

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Genesis 2:18-24; Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 8; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10: 2-16

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 2:18-24 emphasizes that human beings are not meant to live alone. In this passage, the Hebrew word translated as man is *adam*, meaning 'from the ground'. This word is gender inclusive, and is not a specific male figure; this word is a representation of the whole of

humanity. In this passage we come face to face with a God who sees and knows the innermost feelings of every human being. God assesses what has been created and thinks of things that still need to be done. This presents the understanding that creation is a continuing process. God saw that the human was lonely and needed a helper. The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer*. The word does not bring with it a sense of inferiority; in Psalm 121 God too is described as a helper. A helper is a partner or a companion with whom a person could connect and communicate with. Human beings, both men and women, *ish* and *isha*, must be in partnership with one another in being stewards of God's creation. They must bring one another into the fold of God's Kin-dom in partnership, connectedness and kinship.

Psalm 8 underscores the important place of human beings in the created order as they have been given the responsibility of being stewards of God's creation. It is important to note that in this chapter, divinity is attributed to a council. God is mentioned not in the singular but in the plural, *Elohim*, denoting divine rule as communal with a deep sense of mutuality and partnership.

Mark 10:13-16 reminds us that children belong in the Kin-dom of God. What kind of people belong in the kingdom of God? Belonging in God's Kin-dom is not about having power or status. It is about one's openness to and acceptance of God's grace and one's willingness to commit to the work of Kindom-building. It is about cooperating with each other, helping each other, and being a blessing to one another. For Jesus, children are the best examples of all these.

The early Christian community portrayed in Acts 2: 42-47 and Acts 4:32-35 was able to live out the teachings of Jesus. Through the leadership of the Apostles, the believers continued to learn about their faith, fellowshiped with one another, ate and prayed together. They shared of what they had and held things in common. No one was in need. They rapidly grew in number and were of one heart and soul. They were able to establish a real community: a community with genuine love and sensitive care for each other.

Hebrews 2:11 tells about Jesus treating believers as his brothers and sisters. Indeed, Jesus was true kin, a brother to the people and became one with them. He experienced what they were going through and was one with them in their plight, especially the poor.

1 John 3:23 declares that true children of God hold the true faith marked by their loyalty to the community of faith and by their love for one another. A constant theme in John is the love of God which makes Christians the children of God. The children of God are expected to love as Christ loved. They are expected to be self-giving as Christ gave his life for all. Children of God are expected to be obedient just as Christ obeyed God and fulfilled the mission given to him.

LESSON 21: PERSONS ARE DESTINED TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY WITH ALL CREATION

General Concept: Human beings must live in community and harmony with all creation, working for and proclaiming the good news of redemption to the whole of creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am part of God’s world. • I help take care of God’s world. • I tell others to take care of God’s world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are part of God’s world. • We help take care of God’s world. • We tell others to take care of God’s world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings must live in community with all creation. • We have a responsibility to take care of God’s creation. • We teach others that they have a responsibility to take care of God’s world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings must live in community with all creation. • We have a responsibility to participate in the work of redeeming God’s creation. • We teach others that they have a responsibility to take care of God’s creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings must live in community and harmony with all creation. • We have a responsibility to participate in the work of redeeming God’s creation. • We empower others to participate in the work of redeeming God’s creation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that they are part of God’s world • Describe the world that God made • Mention ways to take care of God’s creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect their selves to other beings created by God • Tell ways of how God’s world should be taken care of • Invite others to take care of God’s world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that human beings must live in community with all creation • Name some responsibilities they could extend to care for God’s creation • Prepare materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why it is important that human beings live in community with creation • Point out and discuss that we have the responsibility and work of redeeming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the various factors that have contributed to the current state of God’s creation • Reflect on the different ways by which we can participate in the task of redeeming

		that can be used to teach others of their responsibility to take care of God's world	God's creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express commitment to teach others to work and proclaim the good news of redemption of all of creation 	God's creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare commitment to participate in the work of redeeming God's creation
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 2:15-22; Psalm 22:10b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 2:18-20a; Mark 16:15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1: 26-30; Romans 8:19-23; Mark 10: 29-30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romans 8:19-23; Mark 16:15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 104:1-23; Mark 10: 29-30; 16:15

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 1: 26-30 and 2:15-22 affirm that humanity is responsible for, must look after and take care of all creation. This is our God-given task. Human beings giving names to the rest of creation signifies this responsibility. It should not be understood as an authority to dominate other creatures but a privilege and honor to exist with them in God's garden. The whole of creation is supposed to reflect the goodness of the Creator, all belonging to the community. Within community, life, respect and dignity are essential. That is why human beings are responsible and accountable to God for the life and welfare of all creation.

Psalm 22:10 and 104:1-23 emphasize that humanity belongs to God, that God created all things, that God did not just create and leave, but continues to be with the whole of creation as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. As co-creators with God, human beings must participate in the work of sustaining, taking care of and redeeming God's creation from all forces that hinder life.

Mark 10: 29-30 and 16:15 tell us that the good news about Jesus' resurrection is not just for the people who believe and follow him. Jesus wants the whole world to understand that the message of the resurrection brings hope not only to people suffering and in pain, but also to the rest of creation suffering and groaning in pain. Creation needs to be saved as well. Salvation includes healing and restoration of all things created by God. With the commissioning of the disciples, we are told that people who are renewed in Jesus Christ are to be the agents of the movement toward the healing and restoration of God's creation. When human beings participate in the redemptive work of God, the reward is more than a hundredfold. The reward for this work is eternal life, meaning life in all its fullness not just for humanity but for the whole of creation (*ktisei* in Greek).

Romans 8:19-23 presents how the whole of God’s creation is groaning in pain. The passage talks about the ‘time that is to come’ in which the whole of creation will be liberated. In God’s time, both human beings and the rest of creation will be freed from suffering and pain. Paul emphasizes that it is not only people who are suffering because of sin, creation suffers as well. The rest of creation is affected by the decay and sinfulness of people in the world. Therefore, human beings are accountable and responsible for their sinful actions. Human beings need to do something to take care of God’s world and restore the relationship established since the beginning of things.

That by disobedience, they have become sinful, but, by grace through faith, they are redeemed in Jesus Christ.

Ninth Sunday in Kingdombide

October 21, 2018

LESSON 22: SINFULNESS IS DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

General Concept: Disobeying God means following our own selfish will: refusing to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation. It means playing like God, making ourselves the center of everything, lording it over other people and the rest of God's creation.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I make mistakes. • My mistakes make my family unhappy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We make mistakes. • Our mistakes make our family and friends unhappy. • Our mistakes make God unhappy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commit sin when we disobey God. • Disobedience is following our selfish will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disobeying God means following our selfish will. • Pursuing our selfish will destroys relationship with God, with other persons and with the whole of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disobeying God means following our selfish will • Human beings are free to fulfill the image of God in themselves but this same freedom can also be used to oppose the will of God for themselves, for others and the

				whole of creation. • This abuse of freedom is playing like God.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell how Adam and Eve made a mistake • Share to the class the mistakes they have made • Describe the reactions of their friends or parents or teachers when they make mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admit their mistakes • Say sorry to family and friends for the mistakes they have made • Ask forgiveness from God for the mistakes made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what sin is • Recognize that we sin when we disobey God • Relate how selfishness results to disobedience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that disobeying God means following our own selfish will • Point out and discuss how relationships are destroyed when one pursues selfish desires • Express commitment to always follow the will of God and not our own selfish desires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out ways by which human beings fail to follow God's plan and will for the whole creation • Reflect on how sinfulness of people affects the whole creation of God • Enumerate significant things they could do to remain obedient, faithful and loyal to God
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 3:1-7; Psalm 91:14a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew 23:25-26; Hebrews 5:8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 3:1-7; Mark 10:35-45; Hebrews 5:8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job 38:1-7, 34-41; Hebrews 5:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amos 5:11-15; Hebrews 5:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Job 38:1-7, 34-41; Psalm 91:9-16; Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 33-35; Isaiah 53:4-12; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 3:1-7 is a story of the beginnings of sin. It talks about human beings' disobedience to God. In this story, God's instructions were that they may eat of every tree in the garden, except that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But, they followed their own desire and disobeyed God's instructions. This was the beginning of sin, and it caused them separation from God and from the community that God appointed them to. The story also depicts human beings' unawareness of their dependence on God.

Job 38:1-7 and 34-41 depicts part of a conversation between God and Job where God challenges Job and his friends of their apparent sense of independence, power and pride. It is like a long reminder of God's covenant with humanity where God promises "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God" (Exodus 6:7), asking human beings to put their utter trust in God. We have a God who is all powerful, who created the heavens and the earth and everything in it. Human beings must be assured that God is always and will always be with us, even in suffering and pain. All we need to do is to trust and obey.

Psalm 91:14 is part of a song that reminds us of God's love and saving grace, even when we sin and commit mistakes. All we need to do is repent, trust, follow and love God.

Amos 5:11-15 enumerates examples of sins that human beings commit. During Amos' time, the rich lorded it over the poor and powerless. Small properties were disappearing and the resources of the nation were in the hands of the few. As the rich became richer, the number of the poor increased. Amos denounced the prevailing social evils and warned the people of God's wrath and punishment. These verses declare that God is aware of the sins of the people of Israel—that of treating others unjustly, but God is gracious and gives chance for renewal.

Matthew 23:25-26 talks about Jesus warnings against the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. These people who Jesus called hypocrites are supposed to be more educated and knowledgeable of what is right and wrong. So much is expected from them. Yet, they committed the worst mistakes against their fellow human beings and God. Jesus mentioned seven reasons why these people are in trouble with God. The woes mentioned by Jesus show the mistakes one can commit that displease God.

Mark 10:35-45 narrates the request of James and John for power and position in the kingdom Jesus is about to establish. Although they have differing understanding of the kingdom Jesus' was referring to, still his disciples wanted to ask for positions: to sit at the right and left of Jesus. When the other disciples heard about their petition, they expressed anger and started to fight with each other. Jesus' then reminded them of the highest goal a follower should aim for, and that is to serve rather than to be served. Jesus' aim and purpose in his ministry was to serve people and help them improve their way of life. He did not aim for the kind of power that people usually understood. The kind of power Jesus manifested was the radical concept of self-emptying service. The kind of power that often puts the self first is the root cause of sin and greed. It separates people from right relationship with God and each other. We miss God's purpose of self-emptying service when we aim for power and greater position.

Hebrews 5: 1-10 is part of a letter addressed to the Jewish Christians. The letter talks about Christians who have turned away from God and do not obey God. Disobeying God is an act of sinfulness. These verses talk about how God has appointed someone to offer sacrifice for the sinfulness of people—a high priest. This high priest is Jesus himself. A high priest should sympathize with people in their frailty and limitations and must be called by God. Jesus did not only take upon himself his weaknesses as a human being but also the sins of the

people. Jesus is revealed as the High Priest who intercedes for the people of God. Having an intercessor in Jesus Christ, who has been in solidarity with all humanity, means that right relationships will be restored if only we repent and obey.

Tenth Sunday in Kingdomtide
 October 28, 2018

LESSON 23: GRACE THROUGH FAITH

General Concept: Grace is a gift that we receive through faith; we respond with a life of thanksgiving.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is happy when I say “I’m sorry.” • I can forgive others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is happy when we say “I’m sorry.” • We can forgive others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is merciful and forgiving when we confess our sins. • We, too, can be merciful and forgiving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grace is God’s gift to us. • Confession of sins is an act of restoration of right relationships with God and others. • God’s grace is shown in God’s initiative of redeeming persons through Jesus Christ. • We respond through offering our lives to God in gratefulness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grace is an unmerited gift we receive through faith. • Confession of sins is an act of restoration of right relationships with God and others. • God’s grace is shown in God’s initiative of saving persons through Jesus Christ. • Gratefulness to God is manifested through concretely participating in God’s act of reconciling the whole creation.

Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say “I’m sorry” when they have done wrong • Forgive others who have done wrong to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture out an experience wherein God’s love and mercy is present • Say “I am sorry” to God and to others • Thank God for the gift of love and mercy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the meaning of the words grace, mercy and forgiveness • Explore Bible verses that talk about grace, mercy and forgiveness • Write a prayer of repentance for all of their acts of disobedience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give their own definition of “grace” • Point out the importance of confession of sins • Narrate one’s faith journey as a recipient of God’s grace • Offer their lives to the service of God as the appropriate response to God’s grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine biblical stories of how God bestows grace to errant but repentant persons • Explain that God’s abiding grace is for all people of faith and is available at all times • Respond to God’s grace by conveying gratitude through actual involvement in the works of reconciling the whole creation
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 15:11-24; I John 1:9a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job 42:10-17; Ephesians 2:8-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark 10:46-52; Ephesians 2:8-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeremiah 31:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark 10:46-52; Ephesians 2:8-9

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22); Psalm 126; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

Brief Biblical Background

Job 42:10-17 depicts how God forgives Job and his friends. Job had experienced so much pain and loss. He raised honest questions to God which received rebuke from his friends. Job’s friends reminded him that suffering and pain is the punishment for sin to which Job refused to accept. Job tried so hard to understand God even if his words sounded disrespectful. In the end, Job acknowledged his mistakes before God and repented for what he had said. God was pleased with Job, healed him, showered him with more than what he had before and gave him a new family. But God was angry at his friends because they had spoken things which only sounded good but was not the truth about God. God told Job’s friends that Job will pray for them and that God will hear Job’s prayer.

Jeremiah 31:7-9 is part of the “book of consolations” which tries to console the exiles. It is also a prophecy of the restoration of Israel. Israel was captured by Assyria and its people scattered, an event viewed as punishment for the sins of the nation. Hope is restored when the people hear God’s promise to gather them home. God’s saving grace is offered and this the people can only truly accept with repentance, gratitude and obedience.

Mark 10:46-52 portrays Jesus’ healing of a blind man named Bartimaeus. His name means son (*bar*) of the honored one (*Timaeus*), which is quite ironic given his condition. People during that time believed that if a person is born with physical disabilities, then she/he must be bearing the sins of her/his ancestors. Bartimaeus’ struggles in life is not just limited to his physical disability but includes the hostility of cultural traditions. Hearing that Jesus was around, Bartimaeus calls out, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” His shouting annoys the crowd, but despite this, Jesus calls Bartimaeus to him. After asking Bartimaeus what he wants, Jesus tells him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Bartimaeus is healed and follows Jesus. From this story, we discern how faith helps us see that God’s grace is ever-present. Because of Bartimaeus’ great faith, God granted him mercy and grace, and the gift of sight. Mercy is not a charitable act that is done because of an obligation or duty. It is expressed with compassion and the concern to help others, especially those who need help the most. The person who experiences mercy should become merciful, compassionate and forgiving of others as well.

Luke 15:11-24 tells the parable of the prodigal. He asks for his share of his inheritance and spends everything in a far-off land. He becomes a worker who fed pigs. This meant becoming like a Gentile, a nobody. He became so hungry he wanted to eat what the pigs were eating. That is when he thought of going home, ask for forgiveness, and ask to be accepted not as a son but as a servant. But when his father saw him even from far off, his father ran to him and embraced and kissed him. Despite of all that he has done, his father still loves him and is always ready to forgive him. This is a great example of what unconditional love is.

I John 1:9 emphasizes the importance of recognizing that people sin. When people are sorry and repent of their sins, forgiveness will be given. Forgiveness is needed to restore relationships. This is an essential component of healing and freedom. Forgiveness is possible because of the grace of God.

Ephesians 2:8-10 is part of Paul’s letter to the Christians in Ephesus while he was in prison. This passage emphasizes that salvation and eternal life comes not through following rituals and keeping rules, which Paul calls as “works”, but by the grace of God. This grace from God is a gift to all. Doing good works cannot help us gain God’s favor, but is a response to God’s forgiveness and love. The grace of salvation is entirely God’s work. By grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive new life. Salvation is given, but it must be received through a believing heart. Grace is the mercy that is extended towards people even though they do not deserve it. It is the undeserved favor of God. In God’s grace, forgiveness is ready for those who repent and are ready to have a total change and be reconciled. Grace however should not be seen as freedom to do what we want. Paul continues to remind that the gift of salvation should lead us to make Christ’s way our way of life—a life that is in total accord with the will of God. Good works therefore is the result of God’s transforming power in every human being. We are not saved because of our good works but rather God’s work of salvation in us should result to good works.

LESSON 24: WE ARE REDEEMED IN JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: God’s redemption from everything sinful is experienced through Jesus Christ by grace through faith.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus loves and cares for me. • Jesus keeps me from harm and from doing wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus loves and cares for us. • Jesus protects us from harm and from doing wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commit sin, but God’s love shown through Jesus Christ saved us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons are vulnerable to sin on their own and therefore require God’s redemptive act through Jesus Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons are vulnerable to sin on their own and therefore require God’s redemptive act through Jesus Christ.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus loves and cares for them • Thank Jesus for keeping them from harm and helping them do good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how Jesus saved us • Commit to do good for others • Thank Jesus for giving his life to save the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the meaning of redemption • Identify the ways by which a person could experience redemption • Thank Jesus for giving his life to save the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how persons are vulnerable to sin • Explain how the redemptive power of God is manifested in Jesus Christ • Express gratitude and thanks to God for Jesus Christ who redeemed us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what societal conditions cause persons to plummet into sin • Discuss the different ways God’s redemption is experienced through Jesus Christ • Practice being channels of God’s redeeming love wherever they are
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Luke 19:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrews 9:13-14; Mark 12:28-34 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 146; Romans 3:24

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 119:1-8; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

Brief Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 spells out the Shema, the basic commandment that must be taught to the people of God. Because God loves us, we must love God in return, and we must do so with all our heart, soul and might. God's redemptive love is shown to God's people through God's Word and commands. If we follow these diligently, then we should not go wrong. This therefore should be taught to all the people at all possible opportunities and must be applied in all aspects of life. Our One God is alone worthy of absolute obedience.

Psalms 146 is a song of praise attributed to God who helps and saves the people, whose faithfulness lasts forever, who gives food to the hungry, sets prisoners free, gives sight to the blind, and sustains the widows and orphans. God is utterly dependable and is caring for all in need—the people's hope rests on God. God does not allow the plans of the bad people to prosper. God's faithful dealing with God's people deserves wholehearted praise. The act of praise should not just be lip service. It must be manifested in our deep-rooted trust in God. Trusting God should supersede trusting in human authorities. In fact, it reminds us not to put our trust in oppressive structures and principalities. Principalities usurp their power, but God does not. God is forever faithful and loving especially to the weak and those who are at a disadvantage because of poverty and injustice. The sermon of Jesus at a Synagogue in Nazareth, though it was based on Isaiah's prophecy, mirrors the same message proclaimed in this Psalm. God liberates the poor. God's salvation is all encompassing and this salvation is fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

Mark 12:28-34 portrays Jesus' conversation with a scribe of the Law who asked about which commandment was the most important. Jesus answers by quoting Scripture, specifically Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18, to which the scribe agrees by quoting Hosea 6:6. Jesus summarizes God's commandments into two: love of God and love of neighbor. He provided His listeners another way of looking at the law without necessarily breaking it. By following such commandments, people are guided how to obey God as well as how to be good to others. Indeed, loving one's neighbor as oneself, just as Jesus exemplified, is way more important than ritualistic offerings and sacrifices. Believing in and following Jesus is the way to experiencing God's redemption.

Luke 19: 1-10 tells about the conversion of Zacchaeus. He is a chief tax collector thus plays quite an important role in the corrupt system that perpetuates economic oppression. With so much curiosity about Jesus' life and ministry, Zacchaeus climbs up a tree in order to see Jesus. When Jesus sees him, Jesus declares the intention to stay at his house. Zacchaeus then confesses and repents of all the ill that he has done to the people. To show his genuine repentance, Zacchaeus promises to repay with generous interest (more than what was required by law) those he had cheated. He even promises to give half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus appreciates his act of restitution and declares that salvation has come to him and his household. This story depicts Jesus' great love for all humanity—everyone that has sinned and done wrong.

Romans 3:24 signifies that redemption can be experienced in Jesus Christ—all we need to do is believe and have faith. In the preceding verse, Paul has established that all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. The actual state of humanity is not how God planned it to be. God created humanity to be in communion with God but such is no longer the case because of humanity’s folly of stumbling into sin. But this is not the end of the story. In fact, we should stop quoting this verse by itself. While Paul has established this reality, he also established that there is good news! Sinners have the opportunity to be justified and redeemed. “Justified” is a legal term which means a person is acquitted and therefore free from guilt. “Redemption” on the other hand is a term from the market in Paul’s time. Slaves who were sold in the market can redeem themselves by paying their master. Paul used this term to show that those who were once slave to sin are now redeemed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:11-14 is part of a letter addressed to the Jewish Christians. It talks about Jesus being appointed as a high priest by God to offer sacrifice so that many will be redeemed from sinfulness. This time, the sacrifice does not require goats, bulls or heifer. The sacrifice is the high priest instead—the perfect sacrifice of the perfect high priest. Jesus’ sacrifice involved his own blood, and through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God. The sacrifice of Jesus’ blood calls for people to serve God and God’s people as manifestation of worshipping the living God. This we can do because the barrier to God’s presence has been permanently removed. We are forgiven. We can come to God. No further sacrifice is needed.

That being entrusted with God’s creation, they are called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order.

Twelfth Sunday in Kingdomtide
November 11, 2018

LESSON 25: WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH GOD’S CREATION

General Concept: We are created to be faithful and responsible stewards of God’s creation, enabling us to respect and preserve its integrity.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature is my friend. I will take care of nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature is our friend. We will take care of nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The earth is our home. All creation sustains and gives us life. God needs us to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The earth is our only home. The fruits of the land sustain us and give us life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The earth is our only home. Persons are created to be faithful and responsible stewards of God’s

		take care of creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God mandates people to take care of creation and uphold its integrity. 	<p>creation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation's integrity ought to be respected and preserved.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the things that God created • Make a work plan to take care of God's creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why nature is a friend • Enumerate the things God allows for us to do with nature • Commit to take care of nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what it means to be a responsible steward • Identify the responsibilities of a faithful and responsible steward • Practice in their daily lives their commitment to be faithful and responsible stewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that the earth is our only home and the fruits of the land sustain us and give us life • Give reasons why God mandates us to take care of creation and uphold its integrity • Resolve to participate in caring for the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine necessary approaches that could be used in the work of reconciliation and restoration of God's creation • Plan how to exercise responsibility as stewards of God's creation • Make a unified stand to promote the integrity of God's creation
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:27-30; Psalm 146 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:28-30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Kings 17:8-16; Mark 12:41-44 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:28-30; Isaiah 65:17-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:28-30; Isaiah 65:17-25; Mark 12:41-44; Revelation 11:18

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Psalm 127; 1 Kings 17:8-16; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 1:27-30 contains God's first command to human beings. Humans are charged by God to be fruitful and multiply. Many interpret this as a command to bear offspring. Even the Israelites understood it this way, that is why they view barrenness as a curse. But this passage is not limited to such understanding. This command has to be understood from the affirmation that God created human beings in God's image or likeness. To be fruitful is to fill the universe with God's glory, which is visibly manifested in human beings as created in God's image. Such can only be done if the likeness of God is multiplied and reflected in every living being. Being created in God's image entails great responsibilities. The priestly writers used the words *kabash* and *radah* which in English really means to subdue and to have dominion. So, is this charge a marching order to destroy God's creation? When God first created the world, it was created good. Therefore, God would never command human beings to destroy and abuse God's creation. To subdue and have dominion is about power. Power could either be used for good or it could be abused. To subdue and have dominion over God's creation is about being empowered by God to care for all creation. Human beings are not to lord over creation but are instead called to be stewards. This responsibility is unique to human beings. When people are steadfast in fulfilling God's command to steward or take care of God's creation, all needs will be met and no one will be in want. Similar to the saying that if we take care of the land, the land will take care of us—if we take care of God's creation it will also take good care of us.

1 Kings 17:8-16 portrays the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in a time of drought. We see in this story that even at a time of great need and despair, God's providence was still available. The fruits of the earth still continued to sustain life even in the midst of scarcity and need. Being a good and responsible steward of God's creation importantly includes sharing with others even the very little that we have. This is exemplified by the widow of Zarephath when she graciously and unselfishly gave to Elijah the last of her family's provisions in a time of drought. God's constant presence and blessings were felt by everyone in the story, despite the harsh realities.

Psalms 146 is a song of praise for God's ever-constant accompaniment. God who is the creator of all there is—the heavens and the earth—is the same God who gives help especially to those who need it the most. The greatest manifestation of our praise and gratitude to God is to likewise be a helpful presence to others, including all of creation. In our time, the environment is perhaps the most helpless of all and in need of the most help. "Singing praises to God all my life" only means that we must dedicate our whole life to God's work as enumerated in the psalm, and which importantly includes being faithful and responsible stewards of God's creation. In this way, God's Reign will be "for all generations". This is what true worship is all about.

Isaiah 65:17-25 gives a glimpse of the future: new heavens and a new earth. Though Isaiah is written during a time of great despair, the writer opens the door of hope for Israel. The text is trying to describe a new time for the people of Israel—a time of triumph and peace where tears are no more, where people live out their days, where they will live in their own houses and eat the fruit of their labor, where wild animals lie down together. It depicts a time of rejoicing and abundance and not a time of groaning and desolation. It speaks of

communal harmony and prosperity. God is faithful. Isaiah declares that this new heaven and new earth will become a reality if all people will turn to God and be faithful. God will restore all creation, and human beings have the greatest hand in this task.

Mark 12:41-44 focuses on a widow and her offering. The widow’s stewardship is exemplary. In the Court of the Women in the Temple, there were 13 boxes, wide at the base and narrow at the top. People put money to help pay for the sacrifices and other Temple costs. Many people threw in large amounts but they still had plenty left. The widow’s two coins were called “lepta”, the smallest of all the coins. The coin was also called “the thin thing”, for it had a very tiny value. Jesus told his disciples that the widow’s gift was, really, very generous—more generous than the gifts of those who gave large amounts. They had given what they could easily afford and still had money to spare. But the widow had given at great cost to herself. This kind of stewardship is more pleasing and worthier to God for it was equivalent to an offering of oneself, thus, an offering of life and faith. This is what God expects of us as stewards of creation.

Revelation 11:18

The message of Revelation 11:18 is clear and simple. Those who do the will of God will be blessed. Those who help destroy the oppressive political, economic and cultural structures that perpetuate the destruction of God’s creation will also be blessed.

Reign of Christ
 Thirteenth Sunday in Kingdomtide
 November 18, 2018

LESSON 26: WE ARE CALLED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND COMPASSIONATE SOCIAL ORDER

General Concept: We are called to actively participate in establishing a just and compassionate social order, where the needs of everyone, especially the least of the least, are met.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will be caring to everyone. • I will share what I have with other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will care for everyone. • We will share what we have with our neighbors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being kind and caring is a sign of faithfulness to God. • We must treat everyone with kindness and love. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s creation is intended to provide abundant life for all. • God’s creation will benefit all humanity when generosity and compassion is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons must enthusiastically participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order.

			observed by all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No person will be in want when generosity and compassion is unswervingly observed by all.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mention ways of caring for others Share what they have with those in need Feel happy and thankful for being able to share and help others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the least of the least that needs our care Tell what they can share with others in need Affirm that God called us to help build a better world for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enumerate some duties and responsibilities that God wants us to fulfill, as recorded in the Biblical references Recall some acts of kindness and care they have done to others Identify the least of the least that needs our care Commit to continue to do acts of kindness and love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assert that a just and compassionate social order is where the needs of everyone, especially the least of the least, are met Advocate actions and undertakings that the church need to do to build a just and compassionate social order, like education and mobilization Rally the people of God to be in solidarity with the least of the least in ensuring that basic needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assert that a just and compassionate social order is where the needs of everyone, especially the least of the least, are met Advocate actions and undertakings that the church needs to do to build a just and compassionate social order, like education and mobilization Rally the people of God to be in solidarity with the least of the least in ensuring that basic needs are met
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts 4:32-37 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 82:1-4; Matthew 25:34-39 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 16; Isaiah 58: 6-9; Hebrews 10:24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah 58: 6-9; Psalm 132:13-18; Hebrews 10:24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah 58: 6-9; Psalm 132:13-18; Hebrews 10:24

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 1:4-20; Psalm 16; Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18), 19-25; Mark 13:1-8

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 16 highlights God's faithfulness and constant presence in the lives of God's people. The text gives assurance of God's protection and guidance. As God's faithful people, we must participate in the work of God as individuals and as a Church. We must help bring about God's Reign of justice, compassion and love where no one is left behind, knowing that God is always with us in this work.

Psalm 82:1-4 is an indictment against the judges, the leaders, of Israel. The text states the judges' duties and responsibilities as leaders of the nation. This Psalm was composed at a time when injustices and oppression were widespread in the country, when leaders were corrupt, when they could be bribed, when they forgot their obligation to defend the poor and the orphan, the afflicted and the needy, and when those in power were superior and arrogant. Humans, being created in the image of God, have a tendency of thinking of themselves as "gods" or being god-like. They believe they can do anything they want. This psalm poses a challenge for human beings who are created in the image of God to manifest this responsibility by treating justly the poor and the needy, defending the orphans and the rights of the poor and oppressed, and to rescue the weak from the wicked people.

Psalm 132:13-18 has a twofold message. First and foremost, it gives promises of blessings to those who abide by the will and purpose of God. While the word peace or shalom is not mentioned, the psalm describes the prevalence of the manifestations of peace: the needs of God's people will be fully met and salvation will truly be experienced by God's people. Second, it gives warning to perpetrators of evil: enemies will be clothed with disgrace or will be put to shame.

Isaiah 58:6-9 is a list of conditions for gaining God's favor: liturgical fasts will be accepted if people will act justly and care for those who need care the most. This is emphasized because the powerful and elite of the land have fallen short of God's requirements. They oppress their workers and fight with one another. They practice ritual fasting not because they are truly humble before God but because they hope God will be impressed with their actions. They act and dress in a way that shows they are fasting, but such fasting is worthless before God. God commands them to instead cease oppressing others and begin to help the poor and needy. Only then will God be pleased with them; only then will God accept their worship and answer their prayers.

Matthew 25:34-39 is part of Jesus' speech about the coming days where the "sheep and goats" are separated. Jesus was giving clues as to who will qualify to stay on the right side of God. According to Jesus, only those who treat their neighbors with mercy, kindness, justice and love can be considered sheep: the ones who can enter the kingdom. These qualities have more value in the eyes of God and have been revealed since the beginning of creation. Jesus himself demonstrated these values—feeding the hungry, healing and taking care of the sick, welcoming the outcasts, caring for women and children. Whoever accepts and wishes to follow Jesus will embrace and live out these values.

The early Christian community portrayed in Acts 4:32-35 was able to live out the teachings of Jesus. Being of one heart and soul, the believers shared of what they had and held things in common. No one was in need. They rapidly grew in number and were able to establish

a real community: a community that practiced justice, genuine love, and sensitive care for each other. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they continued spreading the good news about Jesus.

Hebrews 10:24 reminds the early believers that they must persevere in faith, not lose hope, and encourage one another in love—the three cardinal virtues the Christians must hold fast to. This way, they should not falter in fellowship as they work for and anticipate the coming of God’s Reign.

WE BELIEVE

That the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God’s ministry.

Reign of Christ
 Fourteenth Sunday in
 Kingdomtide
 November 25, 2018

Lesson 27: THE CHURCH

General Concept: The Church is the people of God, anticipating the fulfillment of God’s Reign.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is people who love God. • I go to church with my family. • My family belongs to the UCCP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is people who love God. • We go to church with our family. • We join in church activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is people who love God. • We go to church with our family and friends. • We participate in church activities. • Within the church, we experience God’s goodness and love for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is a gathered people of God responding to God’s goodness. • We participate in the ministries of the church in response to God’s goodness and love. • The church is a manifestation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is a gathered people of God responding to God’s goodness. • We are called to build a harmonious relationship with each other and the whole of creation. • The church is a manifestation of

			God's reign.	God's reign.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that the church is people called by God • Recognize that the church shows love for God and people • Express thanks that she/he belongs to the UCCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe that the church is composed of people including children • Name families they can see in the church • Identify the church's activities throughout the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what church is • Express their feelings about going to and participating in church activities • Identify ways to encourage others to participate in church activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what "church" is • Express support for the different ministries of the church • Mention ways by which the church becomes a manifestation of God's reign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the church as people of God • Mention ways to foster harmonious relationship with each other
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Samuel 23:5; Revelation 1:5-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Samuel 23:5; Revelation 1:6; Mark 10:14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Corinthians 12: 27-28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Samuel 23:5; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Samuel 23:5; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 93; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

Brief Biblical Background

2 Samuel 23:5 is part of the "last words" attributed to David. The text emphasizes the steadfastness of God's covenant with God's people. Because of God's unwavering faithfulness, people are enabled to respond with corresponding commitment to doing God's will, even as our desires must be aligned with God's will. As God's people, the Church, we must be faithful in return as we do the work of ushering in God's Reign and be confident that as we do this, God is always with us. To manifest God's reign, we must strive to build a harmonious relationship with each other and the whole of creation.

Mark 10:14 narrates Jesus' reaction when his disciples scolded people who were bringing little children to him. He berates them by stressing that the Kingdom of God belongs to children. People often forget this important characteristic of the Reign of God: it is where the least of the least are prioritized. In Jesus' society and in today's society, these are the children. Here, the essence of being community is manifested where everyone is accepted and works together in fulfilling the Reign of God.

Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 gives very clear descriptions of the life and nature of the Early Church. The word “church” is the English translation of the Greek word “*ecclesia*” which means “called out” by a herald or a messenger to meet or gather in a public place for a special purpose— all people who belong to a particular community. Later on, this word came to mean the “assembly of the people who belong to God”. From these texts, we can get four distinguishing marks of the early church.

1. The early Christians built up a serving community. They practiced a lifestyle of sharing. Everything was to be shared according to the needs of everyone. They also shared their wealth and gave much attention to the orphans and the least of the least during their time.
2. The early Christians built up a worshipping community. They had a holistic experience, practicing the so-called action-reflection approach with what they experienced. They did not only try to be of service but they also maintained regular reflection about what they did—whether it was helpful or not, whether it was successful or not— to check if it was truly according to the will of God. They always had time set aside for listening to the Word of God through the words of the Apostles.
3. The early church built up a witnessing community. The most striking nature of the early church was their bravery and courage in witnessing to a Risen Lord who offered salvation to God’s people. They were not afraid to be identified with the Apostles who at that time were branded as subversives simply because they opposed the evil ways in their society. (*We Believe in the Church: A Study Guide on the UCCP Statement of Faith*)
4. The early church built up a harmonious community. Day by day, it became the practice of the early Christians to spend their time together in the temple, breaking bread and eating together, and sharing with each other what they had. They were of one heart and soul.

1 Corinthians 12: 27-28 discusses about the variety of spiritual gifts God has poured out upon the Corinthian church. These gifts should be used for God’s glory and the church’s edification in its task of ushering in the Reign of God. One should not claim superior honor above others as each one has a specific function and purpose in doing the work of the church. Paul prompts the members of the body of Christ to foster mutual relationship, to honor one another, and to share joys and sorrows. In the body of Christ, no one is useless. Each member possesses a gift and grace given by God for ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ, each one being an integral part of the whole.

Revelation 1:5-6 tells about to whom the Church belongs. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Because of God’s love in Jesus Christ, the people of God have been freed and saved to serve God and God’s people. In response to God’s goodness, God’s people the Church participate in ushering in God’s Reign of love and peace even as they manifest the same in their daily lives as a community. This is the best way by which God is given glory.

LESSON 28: THE CHURCH IS THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

General Concept: The Church belongs to God, redeemed by God through Christ, welcoming, affirming and accepting everyone.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am welcome in the church. • I welcome others. • I am happy when other children join me in praising God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are welcome in the church. • We welcome others. • We are happy when other children join us in praising God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are welcome in the church. • The church welcomes and accepts everyone. • We worship God together as one big family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is the body of Christ. • The church is composed of people coming from all walks of life. • The church manifests God's inclusive nature in celebrating each person's uniqueness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is the body of Christ. • The church is composed of people from all walks of life. • The church manifests God's all-embracing nature in celebrating each person's uniqueness.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express how it feels to be a member of the church • Mention names of friends in the church • Invite other children to come to church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite examples of welcoming gestures in the church • Show acts of welcome for others • Demonstrate acceptance of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why the church is called the body of Christ • Name some characteristics of the church as the one body of Christ • Discuss how the churches today demonstrate unity as the one body of Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate their understanding about the Church as the body of Christ • Affirm that members of the body of Christ come from different walks of life • Express one's thankfulness for the inclusive nature of God manifested through the church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the church to the human body and how each part is expected to function • Describe church membership in terms of capacity to contribute to the ministry of the church • Identify attitudes/behaviors that contribute to the building up or

				breakdown of the body of Christ
<i>Biblical References</i>				
• 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	• Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-12	• Jeremiah 33:14-16; Romans 12: 4-5	• Jeremiah 33:14-16; I Corinthians 12:12-27	• Jeremiah 33:14-16; I Corinthians 12:12-27

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 25:1-10 talks about the people’s covenant relationship with God. We belong to God and God will always love us. Just as these verses clearly suggest, King David, to whom this Psalm is attributed, seeks God’s guidance. He believed that God is faithful. He knew that God’s Word (what we have now as the Bible) will guide him because the Bible tells a lot about God. The people of God, the Church, will know more about God’s love and care, God’s assurance through constantly learning about it in the Bible. God’s Word will give direction to all in the Church. As David sought God’s guidance and direction, so will the Church. This way, the Church will be obedient to God and manifest God’s ways in their lives. God will always lead and guide those who seek God in everything they do. David asked forgiveness for his sins. David’s attitude and close relationship with God is a good model for the Church to follow as the church is composed of human beings prone to sin but want to be reconciled with God.

Jeremiah 33:14-16 is part of the chapters that talk about Israel and Judah’s life in exile. Jeremiah, the Prophet of God (God’s Spokesperson to the people), offers hope that the time will come when God’s promise to the people of Israel and Judah will be fulfilled. It is a promise of restoration where people will be rescued and will live in safety. The prophet said that God will make things right by drawing people to return to God. God will help the people stop the evil some were doing at that time. The rich and powerful were oppressing the poor. God promises that they will know righteousness by following and obeying God. The poor of the land will know deliverance from their sorrows. This is the same hope that God offers to the Church. Faithful to the covenant with God, the Church must strive to follow in righteousness. Even though problems arise in the church such as lack of resources, disagreement and misunderstandings, God’s people should strive to be welcoming, affirming and accepting of each other. God is faithful and we must be faithful as well. The God of Jeremiah is still the God of the Church today.

Romans 12: 4-5 depicts how the church is like the human body composed of different parts. All the different parts of the body are necessary and important. In the same way, all members of the Church are important and should work together as one and a whole. In our body, when each part functions regularly and properly, the whole body works well. The Church, likewise, is composed of many members having a variety of gifts and talents, each necessary for the work and ministry of the church. In Jesus Christ, we are gathered together, with a variety of gifts, complementary to and dependent on each other. We are all members of the one Body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:12-27 shows how Christ and the Church is like the human body. As the one and united body of Christ, the Church shares in the gift of the Holy Spirit, doing the work of God, using the multitude of gifts and abilities of its members. We must not think that a certain gift is more important than another. Instead, we should use the gifts we have been given and encourage others to use theirs. Each member has a specific function that is necessary to the well-functioning of the body as a whole. In these differences and variety, people must work together. We must celebrate each one’s uniqueness, and together, manifest being the one body of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 expresses gratitude for the fellowship and love of the Church in Thessalonica. Paul conveyed to the Christians there how their life served as an encouragement for Paul and the other churches. They were an inspiration to others, and thus they were likewise encouraged to let their love be abound and overflow to others. God’s love binds the Church. We must express our love one for another, so that others may see God’s love in us. God’s love must be shared with everyone. This is how it is to be the one Body of Christ.

Second Sunday of Advent
December 9, 2018

LESSON 29: THE CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

General Concept: The Church is a redeemed community of persons having God in their midst; each member possessing different gifts, each equally important, everyone working together.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
Specific Concepts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am part of the Church. • I am a gift from God. • I can dance and sing for God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are part of the Church. • God gives each of us talents. • We use our talents for God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all an important part of the Church. • We are unique persons with different God-given gifts. • We work together using our different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members are equally important in the Church. • Each member is unique and possesses different God-given gifts. • Having different gifts, we work together to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church is a redeemed community of persons. • Each member is unique and equally important to the community. • Each member is

		gifts for God and the church.	serve God and the people.	endowed with different gifts useful for the work of the Church. • We work together to serve God and the people.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the different good qualities of the church as a community of faith • Recite the different gifts given by God to her/him • Show their talents given by God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show their God-given talent • Enumerate the good traits of classmates • Recall God’s workings in the midst of God’s people in Bible stories they know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss about the church as a community of persons • Draw what kind of a community of faith they envision their church to be • Suggest activities and ministries of the church that children can participate in using their God-given gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason out how members have equal importance in the church • Identify the different skills and talents that manifest the uniqueness of each member • Commit oneself in working together to serve God and people through the church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the church becomes the redeemed community of persons • Make an inventory or list of all talents and skills that the members have • Appropriate each member’s talents or skills for the fulfillment of the church’s ministries
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippians 1:3-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 1:68; Philippians 1:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 133:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Philippians 1:3-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Ephesians 1:7-8; 4:11-17; Philippians 1:3-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Ephesians 1:7-8; 4:11-17; Philippians 1:3-6

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 133:1-3 is an illustration of the filial love that a faith community must manifest—the calm, gentle and sweet influence and attitude they have for each other. Indeed, how good, how proper and how suited it is for a community of faith to promote love, joy and peace.

Above all, what is pleasant and good is the unity among the members of the community. As God's redeemed community, we should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, to live in one accord and continue to glorify God in the work that we do, serving one another, bearing one another's burden and building up each other in all circumstances.

Luke 1:68 tells of the joyful praise Zechariah, the Father of John the Baptist, gives God because of Jesus' coming to save God's people. Israel has long been waiting for a Messiah or Savior to save them from all the suffering they have experienced in the hands of the Romans. They were so poor and could hardly eat because of heavy taxes imposed on them. Zechariah is so sure that God's promise is now fulfilled with the coming of Jesus. Praising God was Zechariah's way of welcoming the Messiah, Jesus. Indeed, God loves them and cares for them. God has come to redeem them and take part in the daily life of the people.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 and 12:4-6, 27-31, the Apostle Paul summons the Corinthian Church to stop quarrelling and be united. He has heard about the factions and loyalty to various leaders and groups within the community of faith. Paul reprimands all groups and leaders. He exhorts that Christians should be of one heart. They should devote their lives and gifts to service, being obedient followers. Since God, in Jesus Christ, aims for unity, the Christian community should live without discrimination, distinction and prejudice but must live in love, unity and peace. Believers are in the world together—there is no such thing as private or individualistic Christianity. We need to get involved in the lives of others, being part of one another in the body of Christ. Paul makes it clear that one gift is not superior to another. He urges believers to discover how they can serve the Church with the gifts God has given them, thus working together for the glory of God.

Ephesians 1:7-8 and 4:11-17 are parts of Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers that give them in-depth teaching about how to nurture and maintain the unity of the church. He wanted to put this important information in written form because he was in prison for preaching the gospel and could not visit the churches himself. The Church as a redeemed community must manifest the "one body of Christ." As one body, we are all united under one head: Christ. However, our oneness in Christ should not destroy our individuality. The Holy Spirit has given each Christian special gifts for building up the church in love. The tasks are many: preaching, teaching, healing, nurturing, giving, administering, building, among others. As the body of Christ, we can accomplish more as we work together, expressing the fullness of Christ.

Philippians 1:3-6 is part of the letter Paul wrote to the church in Philippi. He was in prison when he wrote to the Philippian Christians, expressing his joy for their faithfulness in living out the gospel. The Philippians indeed manifested how it was to be a redeemed community of persons having God in their midst. They continued to spread the gospel even in Paul's absence, of which Paul was so delighted. They cared so much for Paul who once served them. Paul saw how much God drew them close together. He prayed that they continue their good works, doing the best for God. They must show to all the world the love that was planted in them, so that the world may know indeed of the Good News about God in Jesus Christ. We, the Church of today, just like the Early Church, must therefore utilize all the gifts available to us to cooperatively do the work of serving God and God's people.

**Third Sunday of
Advent**

December 16, 2018

LESSON 30: THE CHURCH IS RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: Being a reconciled community, the Church becomes an agent of reconciliation in the world.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a friend. • I make friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all friends. • God forgives and accepts us when we hurt God and others. • We forgive and accept those who hurt us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all friends. • God forgives and accepts us back when we do wrong and hurt God and others. • We forgive and accept each other when we hurt and do wrong against each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church is a community of people whose broken relationship is healed through Jesus Christ. • We are tasked to work for the healing of broken relationships between persons and God, and among fellow human beings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church is a community bound together with a common experience of being reconciled to God, to fellow human beings and creation through Jesus Christ. • As a community reconciled to God, we become agents of reconciliation in the world.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that all children are friends of God • Feel that all children are loved by God through Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what friendship is all about • Describe how it is to be sorry when we hurt others and God • Cite an example when they forgive and accept others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a Bible story about reconciliation • Explain what reconciliation means • Start to practice acts of repentance and reconciliation in their everyday lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss that the church is a community of people whose broken relationships are healed through Jesus Christ • Formulate some plans on how to work for healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their stories of when and how they have wandered away from God • Mention experiences of how people are being separated from each other • Explain how Jesus reconciled humanity

			relationships as a response to the reconciling power of Jesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare creative activities to demonstrate commitment to help reconcile broken relationships 	and the whole creation back to God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite ways of reconciling with others, and fostering and nurturing relationships
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zephaniah 3:14-17; II Corinthians 5:18-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zephaniah 3:14-20; II Corinthians 5:18-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 37; 45:1-8; Zephaniah 3:14-20; II Corinthians 5:18-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zephaniah 3:14-20; II Corinthians 5:18-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zephaniah 3:14-20; II Corinthians 5:18-20

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 12:2-6; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 37 and 45:1-8 portrays some part of the story of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph, while in his youth dreams of being great, is sold into slavery by his older brothers. The passages in chapter 45 shows the most heartwarming and but well-loved part of this story. The moment Joseph sees his brothers again, he could no longer contain his emotions so that he bursts out weeping in their presence, and which the Egyptians hear. When Joseph asks his brothers about their father Jacob, they could not answer him and are terrified before him. They could not say a word, since they were hit by their conscience, astonished and frightened. But Joseph tenderly and lovingly uttered these prophetic words, “God sent me before you to preserve life.... God sent me ahead of you to preserve the remnant on earth and to save lives by a great deliverance.” These words from Joseph are more than enough to express his forgiveness of his brothers. Just as the brothers Jacob and Esau were earlier reconciled, Joseph and his brothers are likewise reconciled. They then become agents of reconciliation and deliverance of a people from the dangers of starvation and death.

Zephaniah 3:14-17 is the prophet’s song of joy for God’s love for God’s people. God’s loving forgiveness makes the repentant people new. Zephaniah declares the promise that God would restore God’s people, easing their suffering and removing from them the burden from their oppressors. God would gather them and bring them back to their homeland after the time of doom and destruction. They no longer have reason to be afraid because God will be in their midst, but they will have to let God be among them. This can only be manifested when they share God’s love and forgiveness with others, becoming agents of reconciliation in the world.

In II Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul declares that everyone who is reconciled to and becomes friends with God becomes a new creation. Herein is emphasized newness when we are in Christ. Having been reconciled to God, God then sends us to bring the ministry of reconciliation to others so that they too may be brought to God. The original meaning of the word ‘reconcile’ is “to bring together again”. Having experienced the love and grace of God, we are called to be ambassadors of God’s love, forgiveness and reconciliation that others may also experience the same.

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2018

LESSON 31: THE CHURCH IS ENTRUSTED WITH GOD’S MINISTRY

General Concept: The only ministry of the Church is the ministry of God, and this we must do faithfully and in unity.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am God’s little helper. • I help in the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are God’s helpers. • We all help in the Church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all God’s helpers. • We help in the Church doing God’s work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church does God’s ministry. • We participate in the ministries of the Church. • We unite ourselves with other members of the community to faithfully do God’s work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only ministry of the Church is the ministry of God. • We actively participate in the ministries of the Church. • We unite ourselves with other members of the community to faithfully do God’s work.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what they can do to help God’s church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name ways by which Jesus did His ministry • Discuss that to help is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State what ministry means • Name the different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the ministry of God that the church does 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the ministry of Jesus Christ as mentioned in the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer their help to the work of the church 	<p>to follow Christ's way of helping people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enumerate tasks in the church they can do 	<p>ministries of Jesus Christ that was entrusted to the church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express commitment to help in doing God's work and ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in ministries that maximize their gifts as young people • Resolve to use the ministries to equip the youth to do the work of God faithfully and in unity 	<p>gospel references</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the present ministry of the church against the ministry of Christ • Affirm the ministry of God as the church's own ministry
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:7a; Luke 1:46b-55 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 5:4-5a; Hebrews 10:7a; Luke 1:46b-55 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Luke 4:31 - 5:26; Hebrews 10:7a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah 5:4-5a; Hebrews 10:7a; Luke 1:46b-55 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 4:18-22; Matthew 4:23-25; 14:13-21; Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 10:7

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1: 39-45; 46b-55

Brief Biblical Background

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 is part of the story of how Samuel was consecrated to the work of the Temple even at a very early age. His consecration was borne out of a covenant between his mother Hannah and God. Hannah was barren, and through ceaseless petitions, asked for a child from God. She promised God that if granted her request, she would dedicate the child to God, which she did. Samuel was indeed a precious gift of God to Hannah. She visited Samuel each year and brought him a gift of a robe which she personally sewed to fit her son's growing body. Samuel spent his growing years under the mentorship of Eli, the priest. Samuel remained faithful and obedient and grew both in stature and in favor with the God and people, and was entrusted with God's ministry.

Micah 5:2-5a is part of the prophetic oracle declaring the advent of a leader that will guide and protect the people of God. This leader will hail from Bethlehem, also King David's birthplace. As certain as a laboring woman will give birth, God's people will be delivered, restored and secured by the one who is of peace and will be great to the ends of the earth. In these verses are the promise that God's people will never again be dominated—God will bring about a reversal of present conditions, and the people will continue doing God's work. The Prophet Micah speaks to the Southern Kingdom in the late 8th century BCE. He foresees that Samaria and Jerusalem, the capital cities of Israel and Judah, will be destroyed because of the people's injustice and corrupt religion. The people have abandoned the covenant God made with them. The rich and powerful are ruthlessly exploiting the poor, ignoring the Law of Moses. Micah warns that in punishment for their unfaithfulness and injustice, both the kingdoms will be invaded, conquered and exiled. As he predicts, Samaria falls to the Assyrians in

772 and Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians in 587/586 BCE. The prophet declares that in compassion and covenant faithfulness, God will save a remnant of the people and bring them back to their own land. There, they will be ruled by a righteous king and become a light to the whole world. Christian tradition attributes this oracle to Jesus. As God's people today, we must stand united and be faithful in continuing the work God has been doing since time immemorial.

Matthew 4:23-25 and 14:13-21 depict the three main aspects of Jesus' ministry: teaching, preaching, and healing. The teaching ministry shows Jesus concern for understanding. The preaching ministry shows his concern for commitment. Jesus preached the gospel, the Good News, to everyone who wanted to hear it. The gospel is that the kingdom of heaven has come. The healing ministry (including feeding) shows his concern for wholeness. His miracles of healing authenticate his teaching and preaching. Jesus' three-pronged ministry proclaims God's Reign of freedom, hope, peace, and life abundant and eternal with God. This we, the Church, must continue to do.

Luke 1:46b-55, 4:18-22, and 4:31 - 5:26 tell about what the ministry of God through Jesus is all about. The first verses are Mary's Magnificat that proclaims God as Savior who lifts up the lowly and feeds the hungry, but brings down the rich and mighty who oppress the poor. The next verses tell about what happened after Jesus was tempted for forty days. Jesus who was filled with the Spirit, started his ministry and began preaching, teaching and healing people from all walks of life. Quoting Isaiah, Jesus presents a gospel and a kind of ministry that sets people free, thus also presenting his self-understanding. "Bringing good news to the poor" is recognizing that poverty and wealth are always about political, cultural and economic relationships. Jesus announces that he will bring a new relationship to the poor, empowering them. "Proclaiming release to the captives" is setting free those who are imprisoned in the system of unequal distribution of wealth and slavery. "Recovery of sight to the blind" is healing all those afflicted with physical and socio-political maladies. "Letting the oppressed go free" is empowering them against their oppressors. "Proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor" is an allusion to the Jubilee where there will be a joyful restoration of persons, property and right relationships, and where all debts will be canceled. Jesus preached; He taught the people even on the Sabbath days. Christ's preaching affected much the lives of people. They were amazed at his authority for there was impact in every word he said. The miracles that Jesus did were manifestations of his control and conquer of evil powers. Jesus' power over evil was recognized and adored everywhere. In the succeeding miracles, Jesus showed himself to be a healer of diseases. Jesus' way of healing, either by word of mouth or by direct touch of his caring hands, showed Jesus' compassion for the people, most especially when they were in sickness and distress. The succeeding verses happen immediately after the preaching and healing accounts. Jesus' calling of his first disciples happened in the Lake of Gennesaret. Jesus invites them to leave their occupation as fisherfolk and become his followers in the task of bringing people into the Kingdom of God. The healing of the man with leprosy and the paralytic further displays Jesus' acts of powerful healing and genuine concern for the needy and the sick.

Ephesians 4:11 is an enumeration of the gifts of Christ to God's people in order that God's work may be accomplished. In order to do this, the church needs to be built up, the body of Christ empowered, and each member developed and capacitated to do her or his specific tasks. Everyone must work together in harmony and unity.

Hebrews 10:7a is part of a quotation attributed to Jesus of Psalm 40:6-8. It stresses that doing liturgical requirements is not all that necessary in doing God’s work. What is important is the willingness to listen to and obey God, and to commit one’s whole life to God’s work. Just as Jesus submitted to the will of God, so must we, the body of Christ. The nature and ministry of the Church is derived from Christ, the Church is only entrusted with God’s ministry through Christ. We have no mission or ministry of our own except God’s mission. The Church is only an instrument of God’s mission, “participating in the movement of God’s love toward people and the world”.¹

WE BELIEVE

That the Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ and in history to illumine, guide, correct and edify believers in their faith and witness.

First Sunday after
Christmas Day
December 30, 2018

LESSON 32: THE HOLY BIBLE AND GOD'S SELF-REVELATION IN JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: The Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
Specific Concepts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is my favorite book. • The Bible tells me about God. • The Bible tells me about Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is an important book for us. • The Bible is written to tell us about God. • The Bible is written to tell us about the life of Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is an important book for all who believe in God. • The Bible is written to tell and teach us about God and God’s work. • The Bible is written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is an important book written by people inspired by the Holy Spirit. • The Bible, though written by people with limitations, tells us of God’s self- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is an important book written by people inspired by the Holy Spirit. • The Bible, though written by people with limitations, faithfully tells us of

¹ Camba, Erme. “The Church: The Household of God” in *Unless a Seed Falls and Dies: Commentaries on the UCCP Statement of Faith* (Manila: Faith and Order Commission, UCCP), p. 132

		to tell and teach us about the life and work of Jesus.	revelation in Jesus Christ. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible affirms God's active participation in the life of the people. 	God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ and in history. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible affirms God's active participation in the life and struggle of the people.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that God reveals Self to children/people through the Bible • Appreciate the Bible as a book that tells about God • Express thanks to God for revealing Self through Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe why the Bible is an important book • Retell some of the stories that tell of God's amazing works • Enumerate stories about Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that the Holy Bible tells about God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ • Discuss how the Holy Bible can help believers in their everyday life • Recognize the importance of the Bible through constant reading and studying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the significance of the Bible as a reliable record of the life and ministry of Jesus • Discuss how the Bible narrates God's active participation in the life of the people • Make a commitment to regularly read the Bible, strive to understand God's Word and apply it in their daily life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about John as writer/author of the Gospel of John and other books in the Bible • Learn about other Gospel writers/authors • Discuss some stories about God revealing Godself in history through Jesus Christ • Affirm that the Bible is a book that tells the story of God and God's participation in the life and struggle of the people
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52; John 20: 30-31 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 2:41-52; John 1:1-18

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Brief Biblical Background

Luke 2:41-52 is the only narrative in the New Testament that tells about Jesus' growing up years. It shows to us that even at a very young age, Jesus was already studying and knew Scripture. Not only that, he took all the opportunity to discuss it among the Temple leaders. This passage also shows us that Jesus had an intimate relationship with God. He was a faithful Jew even in his younger years. He was obedient to his parents. He went with them to Jerusalem to attend the Festival of the Passover. This festival is to remember God's saving acts during the time when Jesus' people were being oppressed in Egypt. After the festival, Jesus intentionally stayed behind in Jerusalem to sit with the people to talk with them about theological concerns. People were amazed because he spoke with wisdom at such a young age. The text expounds that Jesus developed into his fullest potential as a human being: "growing in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor" (verse 52). This Lukan account signifies a segue and a connection between the past (the salvation history of a people called by God) and the present (the incarnation of God in Jesus as Savior of the world). As God actively participated in the life and struggle of the people in the past, so is God active in the flesh in the present. It is obvious in Luke that Scriptures (our Holy Bible) and Jesus belong to one continuum. It is through the Bible that we, Christ's followers today, know about Jesus, even as we strive to be faithful and to witness to this Good News.

John 1:1-18 and 20:30-31 testifies to Jesus' followers that God is revealed in Jesus Christ. The texts tell us that The Word who is God is incarnated and made manifest in Jesus Christ. The Word mediates between God and the world, creating and renewing life. Here, creation and redemption are linked and complement each other. God, the only Son, who has made God known (verse 18), is Jesus Christ, "full of grace and truth". This gospel, this Good News, must be proclaimed. All who welcome Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives are reborn, receiving new life from God. The Bible, therefore, "is the record of the ultimate Word of God that has become flesh but which is now accessible to us through the written word".²

Colossians 3:12-17 is part of the exhortations to the Christian believers on how to live a Godly life, prompting believers to live out what it means to be God's children and new beings in Christ. The passage envisions a life in God where all are equal, united and in service to God and each other. Within the community of faith, all can live together in harmony, allowing God's spirit to dwell in each one, guiding and directing each person's actions as one created in God's image. Love, the peace of Christ, and thankfulness must be internalized and exemplified in everything the believers do as individuals and as a community of God's people.

² Capulong, Noriel. "Like a Two-Edged Sword: The Bible in the UCCP Statement of Faith" in *Unless a Seed Falls and Dies: Commentaries on the UCCP Statement of Faith* (Manila: UCCP Faith and Order Commission, 2010), p. 107.

LESSON 33: THE HOLY BIBLE AND GOD'S SELF-REVELATION IN HISTORY

General Concept: The Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness to God's self-revelation in history.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is a story book. • The Bible tells me about God and God's people. • The Bible tells me that God cares for me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible is a story book. • The Bible tells us about God and the people God loves. • The Bible tells me that God cares for us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible tells us about God and the people God loves and cares for. • The Bible teaches us about God's commands that people should follow and obey. • The Bible tells us that God still cares for all of us today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible records the stories of God's people with whom God made a relationship. • The Bible teaches us of God's ways and commands, and the people's response to God's love and faithfulness. • The Bible continues to challenge us to reflect on God's work and ways in the lives of the people in our times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible narrates about the people of God with whom God chose to establish a covenant relationship. • The Bible teaches people of God's ways and demands, challenging them to live a faithful, responsible life, and in right relationship with God. • The Bible continues to be a faithful witness to God's intentions even in our present time.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a story from the Bible about the visit of the Magi to Baby Jesus • Affirm the stories in the Bible that tell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinpoint in the Bible the stories that tell of God's loving concern for God's people • Identify concrete ways of sharing God's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the people in the Bible that God loves and cares for • Recite and follow God's commandment that tell how we 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare that the Bible records the stories of God's people with whom God made a relationship • Explain that the Bible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall the story about God choosing and establishing a covenant relationship with God's people • Discuss God's ways

about God • Give thanks because God cares for them	love with others • Show through role-play concrete ways that God's love is shared	must love • Value passages that tell about God's care by showing care and concern for others	teaches us of God's ways and commandments, and the people's response to God • Express through creative work the various ways by which we can respond in our time	and God's demands of God's people • Mention situations or experiences wherein God's intentions, as mentioned in the Bible, are being realized at present
<i>Biblical References</i>				
• Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12	• Isaiah 60:2b-5; Psalm 72:1-7; Ephesians 3:9-10	• Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-4; Matthew 22:34-40	• Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12	• Genesis 12:1-9; Deuteronomy 6:1-7, 20-25; Psalm 72:1-4

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Brief Biblical Background

Genesis 12:1-9 narrates God's calling of Abram and the covenant that is forged between them. God promises Abram that a great nation will be descended from him. As God blesses Abram and his family, they are then called to be a blessing to all humanity. Because of this divine grace, reconciliation becomes possible for all. This passage is an example of how God reveals Godself in history as recorded in the Bible, and of how God establishes a covenant relationship with people.

Deuteronomy 6:1-7 and 20-25 discusses the importance of studying and obeying God's Word or commandments. The *Shema* is the prayer that urges the people to 'hear' or 'listen' to God's commandments and emphasizes that people are to love God with all their heart, soul and might—the one God who helped them out of Egypt and who made a covenant with them. This basic commandment must be taught to all the people of God—their children and their children's children. God's redemptive love is shown to God's people through God's Word and commands. Obeying God's statutes and ordinances and living a life of faithfulness and thanksgiving is the expected response from the people. If we follow God's Word, then we should not go wrong.

Psalm 72:1-7 is the beginning portion of a prayer for guidance attributed to King Solomon. It is a prayer for help in leading the people with justice and righteousness. It is a prayer for help in assuring prosperity for the people and for deliverance from their oppressors. It is a prayer for God's blessings as one leads and serves God's people, especially the poor, the needy and the oppressed. If a leader rules with justice and righteousness, if good governance is implemented, then God's peace, *shalom*, will prevail now and forever. This prayer

exemplifies what it means to strive to walk God's ways and fulfill God's demands, living a faithful responsible life, and being in right relationship with God. This passage from the Psalms is an example of how the Bible continues to be a faithful witness to God's intentions for God's people. Embedded in the text is the hope that these intentions continue to the present day.

Isaiah 60:1-6 is part of the pericope that tells about God's intentions for the people of God. It talks about light coming to God's people. In the Bible, and especially in the book of Isaiah, light is equivalent to God's teachings or God's Word. It also signifies being in God's presence. Light as a sign of God's presence indicates hope and consolation, especially during times of crisis, uncertainty and despair in the life of the people. The opening words in these verses attributed to the prophet Isaiah indeed give hope to the people. The first wave of return from exile had already started and they have begun to rebuild their lives and important infrastructures like the Temple. And yet, life continues to be harsh and oppressive. In God's words delivered by the prophet is the promise that God will soon deliver God's people from all oppressive forces. Soon, the rest of the exiles will come home and the people of God will celebrate in joy and abundance. God will reveal Godself to God's people and reestablish their covenant relationship.

Matthew 2:1-12 and 22: 34-40 both exemplify how God reveals Godself in the stories of the Bible. The account in the second chapter of Matthew tells of how magi or astrologers, those who study the movements of the stars, visited Jesus, the one they recognized as born king of the Jews. They brought him presents and paid him homage. Jesus was born at the time of the Pax Romana, a time of conquest and oppression by the Romans. Jesus' birth was seen as the herald of God's deliverance of God's people from all that oppresses. God will always be faithful to God's covenant people. In response, they are to love God with their whole heart, soul, and mind—their entire being. This is explicated in Matthew 22: 34-40, as quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, the *Shema*. Jesus adds the second command which is "love your neighbor as you love yourself" (quoted from Leviticus 19:18). When people really love God, then they would surely love others. We should love others as much as we love God and ourselves. This is the only way we can witness to God's love.

Ephesians 3:9-10 rightly suggests that "through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety" (verse 10) may be known to all the world. We, the church can do this by diligently reading and studying the Word of God in order that we may know of God's intentions as recorded in the Bible and share these with others through our words and deeds. These verses are part of Paul's prayer and exhortation that Gentile Christians be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out their faith and to fully know and share God's love through Jesus Christ.

Baptism of the Lord

First Sunday after the Epiphany

January 13, 2019

LESSON 34: THE HOLY BIBLE AND OUR FAITH AND WITNESS

General Concept: The Holy Bible illumines, guides, corrects and edifies believers in their faith and witness.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
Specific Concepts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible guides me. • I listen to Bible stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible guides us to do good. • We all have to read our Bible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible corrects us if we are wrong. • We need to read and study the Bible seriously to know more about God and our task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible gives light when we have questions about God and God’s ways; guides us in our path towards a meaningful life; corrects us when we make mistakes and strengthens us in our faith and task of witnessing to others about God. • We need to seriously read and study the Bible and be renewed in our awareness, our life and commitment to serve God and people. 	<p>The Bible is an instrument that illumines our understanding of God, guides us in our conduct and way of life, corrects us when we commit mistakes and edifies believers in their faith and task of witnessing to all people about God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to seriously read and study the Bible and be renewed in our awareness, our life and commitment to serve God and people.
Learning Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express that the Bible teaches children good values • Share their stories of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express that the Bible teaches children good values • Share their stories of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose some Bible verses that tell about correcting wrongdoings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how the Bible illumines us about God and God’s ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the Bible illumines us in our understanding and how it guides us in

God's guidance	God's guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a habit of reading the Bible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God corrects, disciplines and teaches us, but God is a God of forgiveness, compassion and love • Develop the habit of seriously reading and studying the Bible to know more about God • Practice repentance: doing right after committing wrongdoings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the Bible guides us towards meaningful life • Demonstrate practices showing seriousness in reading the Bible • Express one's appreciation of the role of the Bible in our lives as we commit ourselves to serve God and people 	our way of conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share stories about when they have used the Bible in correcting and edifying themselves and others • Commit to regularly read the Bible for their self-edification
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 3:15-17, 21-22; Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 29:4, 11; Acts 8:14; 2 Timothy 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaiah 42:21 – 43:7; Jonah 3 – 4; 2 Timothy 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 3:22; 2 Timothy 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Brief Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 spells out the Shema, the basic commandment that urges the people to 'hear or listen' to God's Word. This is a clear instruction that should be kept and must be taught to future generations. Keeping the law in their heart is the gist: because God loves us, we must love God in return, and we must do so with all our heart, soul and might. God's redemptive love is shown to God's people through God's Word and commands. If we follow these diligently, then we can live a life of faithfulness and live out our commitment to serve God and God's people. These verses provide the central theme of Deuteronomy. It sets a pattern that helps us relate the Word of God to our daily lives. It emphasizes the importance of parents' teaching the Bible to their children. The Hebrews were successful at making religion an integral part of life. The reason for their success was that religious education was life-oriented, not information-oriented. They used the context of daily life to teach about God. They made sure that their children follow God by making God a part of their everyday experiences.

Psalm 29:4, 11 and 119:105 portray the power of God and God's Word. Chapter 29, probably one of the earliest psalms, portray God as the all-powerful Creator who overcomes chaos in nature as exemplified by a great storm. It was used in liturgy to commemorate the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is a call to adore and praise God. Even just the voice of God is powerful and full of majesty. God gives strength and peace to God's people. Psalm 119 is both the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a prolonged contemplation on the presence of God and a repetitive meditation on the beauty of God's Word and how it helps people be attuned to God and grow in faith. It can be categorized as a wisdom psalm, with an intention to teach. It is God who teaches in order that lives are transformed. God's Word is kept through meditation and practice. Almost every verse mentions God's Word. Such repetition was common in Hebrew culture. People did not have personal copies of the Scriptures to read as we do, so God's people memorized God's Word and passed it along orally. The structure of this psalm allowed for easy memorization. God's Word, the Bible, is our light to show us the way ahead so we will not stumble as we walk, but be able to see our way clear enough to stay on the right path as we live out our faith in witness.

Isaiah 42:21 – 43:7 shows how God reproaches God's people while still teaching and loving them. Despite God's reproach, God is still ready to restore God's people. The One who creates will be the One to redeem. The people are God's and call them by name. Even in treacherous times, God is with God's people. This is how God's love is manifested. God will gather them into God's fold. God will always be there to guide us and correct us. We must be willing to be corrected through the Word of God and commit our life to serve God and God's people.

Jonah 3 – 4 is part of the story of the conversion of Nineveh. It teaches of God's grace and forgiving love for all peoples and all creation. It gives us a new perspective of looking at God's ways. It is a reminder that we can never put God in a box. God's grace is way beyond what we can fathom. God is a "gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing" (Jonah 4:2b). This story is an example of how the Bible sheds light on God and God's ways.

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 teaches of repentance: this must be shown not only through an outward sign, baptism, but through outward actions by living out our faith and showing God's love through our deeds and attitude. Even Jesus submitted himself for baptism. He has set Himself as an example to everyone. But His baptism was only the beginning of his public ministry to fulfill the mission of God. In his baptism was God's announcement that the Messiah is now here to personally fulfill all that was promised. Jesus witnessed to God by responding to the people's needs. As the Holy Spirit was present in Jesus' baptism, so it is with ours. We must give proof of this through the lives that we lead: lives of service to God and God's people.

Acts 8:14 tells how Peter and John, the two apostles, have significantly share the good news of Jesus Christ and how many have believed. We must allow the Word of God to teach us and nurture us in our faith in order that we may lead lives of faithful witness—sharing God's love with others in tangible and meaningful ways. As we strive to love God with our whole being, we must also strive to share this Good News of love with others so that they may also be blessed. As followers of Jesus Christ, this is the task that we must commit to.

2 Timothy 3:16 points out that inspired scripture works in the lives of the readers as follows: for teaching—to teach the will of God and to tell about Jesus; for reproof—to convince people of the truth; for correction—for correcting false notions and mistaken perspectives, for instructing or chastising; and for training in righteousness—righteousness having the connotations of justice, doing the right thing, and being faithful to God’s Word.