

February 24, 2021

In Community with Creation

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious Creator, you fashioned us in your image in the midst of a world beyond our knowledge and understanding. Continue to weave us together in community with all created things, and deepen our awareness of the ways you connect us to the earth. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DWELLING IN THE WORD

This ancient way of hearing God's Word involves multiple readings and your reflection. The texts will be read twice with silence to follow to that you might reflect on what you heard. You will then be invited to share your thoughts and observations with the people in your small group; you may hear their thoughts as well. Then we will come back together to share final thoughts.

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER will follow our Bible study.

MARK 4:35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

March 3, 2021

In Community with All the Saints

OPENING PRAYER

Timeless One, you renew your promises in every generation. Deepen our awareness of the communion of saints who have gone before us, the saints in our own time, and the saints who will carry on your message of grace after us. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DWELLING IN THE WORD

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HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER will follow our Bible study.

MARK 9:2-8

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

March 10, 2021

In Community with our Neighbor

OPENING PRAYER

Neighbor to all people, you call us into human communities to serve and be served by one another. Open our hearts to the needs of all our neighbors, and teach us to recognize the gifts you have given each of us to use in service to others. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DWELLING IN THE WORD

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HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER will follow our Bible study.

MARK 2:1-12

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³ Then some people^[a] came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." ¹² And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

March 17, 2021

In Community with Those on the Margins

OPENING PRAYER

Mender of division, you sent Christ to heal the world and to gather those on the margins. Bring your healing power to us. May we extend your power and grace to those separated from their communities and those longing for a tangible sign of your love. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DWELLING IN THE WORD

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HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER will follow our Bible study.

MARK 5:1-20

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.² And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him.³ He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain;⁴ for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him.⁵ Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones.⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him;⁷ and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."⁸ For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many."¹⁰ He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.¹¹ Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding;¹² and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them."¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.¹⁴ The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened.¹⁵ They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.¹⁶ Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it.¹⁷ Then they began to beg Jesus^[d] to leave their neighborhood.¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him.¹⁹ But Jesus^[e] refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you."²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

March 24, 2021

In Community with Christ

OPENING PRAYER

Mysterious One, in Jesus you redeem us and invite all people to a place in your glory. Draw us closer to you, and in so doing, draw us closer to one another, that we may be strengthened to follow in the way of Jesus' cross and resurrection. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DWELLING IN THE WORD

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MARK 10:32-45

³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴ they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."