

AUGUST 2, 2020  
NINTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST

# taking+ faith home

*God's generosity is like no other.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 14:13-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand
Monday	Isaiah 55:1-5	An invitation to abundant life
Tuesday	Romans 9:1-5	God's choice of Israel
Wednesday	Genesis 32:22-31	Jacob wrestles at Peniel
Thursday	Psalms 17:1-7, 15	Prayer for deliverance
Friday	1 Timothy 6:11-19	The good fight of faith
Saturday	Psalms 145:8-9, 14-21	The Lord is kind and merciful
Sunday	Matthew 14:22-33	Jesus walks on water

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. **Isaiah 55:1 (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, we thank you for inviting us to the banquet feast that has no end and is filled with joy and life in your presence through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, the eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. Amen. (Psalm 145:15-16)

### A Blessing to Give:

May the God of abundance fill you with joy and peace in believing.



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AUGUST 2, 2020

## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*You Satisfy the  
Hungry Heart*



## WEEKLY MILESTONES



Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

## CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is a dream you have for your future?
- Tell or think about a time you had a dream that came true.
- How do your dreams reflect your faith in Christ?

## DEVOTIONS



Read: Isaiah 55:1-5.

Feasting is a biblical image of God's providence and grace. In Matthew 14 we have Jesus feeding the masses, not just five thousand people, but five thousand men plus the women and children. It comes right after the beheading of John the Baptist at another feast, the banquet of King Herod. Just as Jesus' banquet is a far cry from other earthly feasts, so is God's invitation to eat and drink without payment unique to other economies we experience. Isaiah 55 includes a challenge to all who want glory and feasting: "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" (55:2). Isaiah gets to the heart of the problem of life: pursuing that which is not important, not essential. And now, ever since Jesus fed the masses, God has reached out to all people with the promise of true joy envisioned in a banquet feast that never ends. What is it that you want to pursue in life? Does your pursuit reflect the faith and joy of being invited to God's banquet? Why or why not?

**Pray: God of abundant joy, help us to remember and believe that your kingdom gives us a joy like no other through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SERVICE



The crowds followed Jesus. Jesus "had compassion for them and cured their sick" (Matthew 14:14b). There are many organizations that are treating and researching cures for diseases. Think or talk about ways to support or donate to an organization that is doing this work.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



God's love and care for people is shown in the Bible with stories of meals and feasts. Invite friends or someone you may not know very well for a meal in your home. Begin the meal with a prayer and engage in caring conversations as you enjoy the meal together. After guests leave, take time to think about what you enjoyed the most as you prepared and hosted the meal. End your day with this or a similar prayer: **Lord, help me to find joy in your abundant care for us. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

AUGUST 9, 2020  
TENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*Beautiful are those who bring good news!*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 14:22-33	Jesus walks on water
Monday	1 Kings 19:9-18	The Lord appears to Elijah
Tuesday	Romans 10:5-15	Anyone can be saved
Wednesday	Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28	Joseph is sold by his brothers
Thursday	Psalms 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b	God's faithfulness to Israel
Friday	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13	Timothy brings good news
Saturday	Psalms 85:8-13	Restoration of God's favor
Sunday	Matthew 15:21-28	A woman's faith

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

**Romans 10:15 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Lord Jesus, just as you saved Peter from the stormy waves, we praise you for saving us from the things that overwhelm us. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

You who walked upon the sea, come and join our meal, we plea. Thank you for your care this day; lead us, Jesus, in your way. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the Lord give you what is good and make a path for your steps. (Psalm 85:12-13)



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AUGUST 9, 2020

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*We Are Marching in the Light*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Would you use the word beautiful to describe feet? Why or why not?
- Describe something you think is beautiful. What makes it beautiful?
- The Apostle Paul quotes an Old Testament passage about someone who is beautiful because he or she brings good news. What is beautiful to you about the message of Christ?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Romans 10:5-15.

Paul continues an intricate dance of balancing the covenant given to Abraham, Moses, and the larger Jewish community with the new covenant given in Jesus. Finally, it is the same God and the same promise: salvation is meant for all (v. 10). Therefore, our job is not to judge (vv. 6-7) but to proclaim the good news that Christ is the fulfillment of the law. That message only helps if it is heard (vv. 8 and 14). What is so beautiful is not really people's feet—perhaps the least attractive part of a person's body—but the person him/herself. People cannot receive this message of salvation without hearing. We are those sent to share good news with others. We are the beautiful souls not because of feet or noses or eyes, but because of the good news of Christ told to others. Who in your life is beautiful because of his or her sharing Christ with you?

*Pray:* **Living God, may we see the beauty of the gospel and the beauty of those who share your saving message with others through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Serving others reminds us of the breadth of the Kingdom of God and that our faith is personal but not private. Faith motivates us to serve the world in love. In what ways do you serve in your home, your congregation, and in the community?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus died for us. That is how much God loves us. This is good news! "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Trace your foot on a piece of paper. Write a list of ways you can use your feet to tell others about the good news of Jesus. On another piece of paper draw lips. Write a list of ways you can use your lips to tell others about the good news of Jesus. Keep your drawings as a visual reminder of the good news.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

AUGUST 16, 2020  
ELEVENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST

# taking faith home

*God's saving work is for all people.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 15:1-28	A woman's faith
Monday	Isaiah 56:1-8	God's saving power is everywhere
Tuesday	Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32	God saves Jews and Gentiles
Wednesday	Genesis 45:1-15	Joseph and his brothers
Thursday	Psalms 133	Living together in peace
Friday	Matthew 28:16-20	The Great Commission
Saturday	Psalms 67	Tell the nations to praise God
Sunday	Matthew 16:13-20	Peter's confession of Christ

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. **Psalm 67:12 (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of the nations, we thank you for your mercy and grace that is meant not only for those we know and love but for all people through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Gracious God, we thank you for this food and for all those who have planted, harvested, transported, processed, and prepared it for us this day. Amen.

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May God's face shine upon you, be gracious to you, and bless you. (Psalm 67:1)



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AUGUST 16, 2020

## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*All Are Welcome*



## WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

## CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or tell about a time you went to or met someone from a foreign country.
- What do you learn by meeting people from different cultures?
- It is easy to overlook how God's grace and mercy is not just for ourselves but for all people. How can you extend kindness to someone of a culture that is foreign to you?

## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 15:21-26.

The Canaanite woman is central to this story for many reasons. She is a woman and she is a foreigner, both good reasons for Jesus not to talk to her and especially not to address her plea before addressing the needs of the Jewish people, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v. 24). This woman is also a critical figure because her plea for help changes Jesus' response to her (v. 28). It is not easy to understand how this woman seems to teach and change Jesus, but she does. The result, however, is clear: Jesus' ministry, like that of the God of the Old Testament (see Psalm 67) is for all the nations, not just the sons and daughters of Abraham. This story lifts up the essential mission of Jesus and the church of all generations. It is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20. Directed by Jesus, we are to make disciples of all nations, not just our ethnic group, not just "our people," and especially not just our nation. With whom might Jesus be calling you to share God's love and mercy?

*Pray:* **Generous God, help us to see the breadth and depth of your love for all people in the world through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SERVICE

The words we say to others can sometimes be hurtful. In Matthew 15:11, Jesus is warning us to be careful of what you say, "It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles". Is there someone you know who needs to hear kind, caring words, rather than hurtful ones? Take time to say loving and encouraging words to that person by writing a note, calling, or sending an email.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The theme this week is, "God's saving work is for all people." Psalm 67 is a song of praise to God and a reminder of God's continual blessings on us. Write the words from Psalm 67:3 on a piece of paper and place it near your bedside so that when you rise and when you lie down, you can recite: **"Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you."**



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AUGUST 23, 2020  
TWELFTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*Disciples do not conform to the world.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 16:13-20	Peter's confession of Christ
Monday	Isaiah 51:1-6	Blessings for God's people
Tuesday	Romans 12:1-8	Christ brings new life
Wednesday	Exodus 1:8—2:10	Israelites are oppressed
Thursday	Psalms 124	Thanksgiving for Israel's deliverance
Friday	1 Peter 1:13-25	A call to holy living
Saturday	Psalms 138	Praise God with all your heart
Sunday	Matthew 16:21-28	Take up your cross and follow

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. **Romans 12:2 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty God, in a world that can divide us from one another, we pray for your rule of mercy and grace that binds us together in faith and love through Christ, the Son of God. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we thank you for this meal and pray for all to have food to eat through your abundant and fruitful creation. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May you be transformed by the will of God to know and to do what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)



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AUGUST 23, 2020

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Send Me, Lord*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you are tempted to do that you know is not helpful or right?
- What influences a person to do something wrong?
- How is the kingdom of Jesus different from other powers that want to shape your life?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 16:13-20.

To be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2) is to be shaped by the powers of domination in an attempt to influence—or even control—people's thoughts, actions, and loyalties. In Matthew 16 Jesus and his disciples are in Caesarea Philippi, a place where many gods of the ancient world were recognized and worshiped, fickle gods that were seen as ruling human life rather arbitrarily. Jesus as the "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (v. 16) will transform lives like the Canaanite woman and her daughter in Matthew 15. Jesus has the power to bind and to loosen lives (16:19) and Jesus intends to loosen lives from death to life, from sickness to health, from despair to hope, from broken relationships to a life of mutual forgiveness, from lives that are judged and condemned to lives that receive mercy. How does Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God free your life to be a servant of mercy to others?

*Pray:* The Lord's Prayer.

### SERVICE

In Romans 12:6-8, the Apostle Paul lists a number of gifts that God has given people to support the work of the church like serving, teaching, encouraging, giving generously, leading, and being compassionate. Make a list of gifts you have been given and can use to support the church in the world. The entire faith community (body of Christ) is needed to do God's work. Take action by using one or more of the gifts you listed to help people in your community or the larger world.

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalms 138 is a song of thanksgiving and praise: "I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart" (v. 1a). Draw a heart on a piece of paper. Inside the heart write a list of things you are thankful for. Take the heart and put it in a visible place as a reminder to give thanks and praise for God's steadfast love and faithfulness.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)



AUGUST 30, 2020  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*To follow Jesus is to be open to suffering.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Matthew 16:21-28</b>	<b>Take up your cross and follow</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Jeremiah 15:15-21</b>	<b>Jeremiah is reassured</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Romans 12:9-21</b>	<b>Rules for Christian living</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Exodus 3:1-15</b>	<b>Moses at the burning bush</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b</b>	<b>God's faithfulness</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>2 Timothy 2:1-13</b>	<b>A good soldier of Christ Jesus</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalm 26:1-8</b>	<b>Prayer of an innocent person</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Matthew 18:15-20</b>	<b>Seeking reconciliation</b>

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

**Matthew 16:24 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Dear God, help us to pick up our cross as a way to love others through Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Loving God, we thank you for the toil and efforts of others that we may have and enjoy this meal today. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the cross of Christ give you good courage, hope, and love now and always.



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AUGUST 30, 2020

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*What Wondrous  
Love Is This*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Tell or think about a time when you or someone you know was in pain.
- Reflect on a time you felt someone's pain. What makes you take on someone else's pain?
- How does your faith in Christ help you when you are in pain?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 16:21-28

In an era where we can do so many things to avoid or stop the pain, it can be surprising that suffering is still part of life. It is part of the Christian life because Jesus shows us that the way of the cross—an excruciatingly painful way to die—gets at the heart of the Christian faith. Peter didn't get it, even if he knew Jesus was the Messiah. Peter had to be humbled and corrected. And we do, too. God shows the depth of love from the cross of Christ. We are invited to join the great movement of divine love by caring, suffering, and celebrating Christ's victory over sin, death, and evil. Part of that celebration is our openness to the pain of the world, the pain of others for the sake of love. It is also the path that allows us to see the kingdom of God at work. Why do you think suffering is an important aspect of the Christian faith?

*Pray:* **Compassionate God, help us to see in suffering and death the very path of life and love through Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Most people have someone in their life who is ill, declining in health, or in hospice care. It can be painful to experience the suffering of a loved one. Those serving in the role of caregiver can often times be exhausted and in need of a break. Do you know of someone for whom a visit, meal, or call may give them the break they need?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Jesus' time, the cross was about death. It is not easy to understand or talk about Jesus' death on the cross. The cross is a Christian symbol. It reminds us that Jesus is with us through easy and hard times. We see crosses in many places in our lives. As a follower of Jesus, notice the number of crosses you see in your home and in the community this week. Each time you see one, take a moment to pray: **Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross to save us.**



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