

**WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Acts 2:1-21 **The Coming of the Spirit/
Peter's Speech at Pentecost**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When the day of Pentecost had come,
they were all together in one place.

And suddenly from heaven
there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind,
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them,
and a tongue rested on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in other languages,
as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven
living in Jerusalem.

And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered,
because each one heard them speaking
in the native language of each.

Amazed and astonished, they asked,
“Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

And how is it that we hear, each of us,
in our own native language?

Parthians, Medes, Elamites,

and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene,
and visitors from Rome,
both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs
— in our own languages
we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”
All were amazed and perplexed,
saying to one another, “What does this mean?”
But others sneered and said,
“They are filled with new wine.”
But Peter, standing with the eleven,
raised his voice and addressed them,
“Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem,
let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.
Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose,
for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.
No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:
‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
shall be saved.'

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:22-28 **Peter's Speech at Pentecost**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:29-39 **Peter's Speech at Pentecost**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”’ Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:40-47 **Communal Life**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

He testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 3:1-10 **Cure of a Crippled Beggar**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 3:11-21 **Peter's Speech**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 3:22-4:4 **Peter's Speech**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people.' And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days. You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways." While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. So they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand.

Praise be to God always!

**SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST:
TRINITY SUNDAY**

Romans 11:25-36 **God's Irrevocable Call/
Triumph of God's Mercy**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are,

I want you to understand this mystery:

a hardening has come upon part of Israel,

until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

And so all Israel will be saved;

as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer;
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."

"And this is my covenant with them,
when I take away their sins."

As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake;

but as regards election they are beloved,

for the sake of their ancestors;

for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Just as you were once disobedient to God

but have now received mercy because of their disobedience,

so they have now been disobedient in order that,

by the mercy shown to you,

they too may now receive mercy.

For God has imprisoned all in disobedience

so that he may be merciful to all.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments
and how inscrutable his ways!
“For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?”
“Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?”
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 4:5-12 **Before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’ There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 4:13-22 **Before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. They said, “What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.” After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 4:23-31 **Prayer of the Community**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.’ For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 5:1-11 **Ananias and Sapphira**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

A man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!" Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. The young men came and wrapped up his body, then carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 5:12-21a **Signs and Wonders of the Apostles/
Trial before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured. Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life." When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching. When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: SECOND WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 5:21b-33 **Trial before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.” When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

Praise be to God always!

**THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Corinthians 2:1-10 **The True Wisdom**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

When I came to you,

I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you
in lofty words or wisdom.

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ,
and him crucified.

And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

My speech and my proclamation

were not with plausible words of wisdom,

but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom

but on the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom,

though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age,
who are doomed to perish.

But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden,

which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

None of the rulers of this age understood this;

for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,

nor the human heart conceived,

what God has prepared for those who love him”
— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit;
for the Spirit searches everything,
even the depths of God.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 5:34-42 **Trial before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

A Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. Then he said to them, “Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared. After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them — in that case you may even be found fighting against God!” They were convinced by him, and when they had called in the apostles, they had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 6:1-12 **The Need for Assistants/ Accusation against Stephen**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

During those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.” What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous

words against Moses and God.” They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:1-8 **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Then the high priest asked him, “Are these things so?” And Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.’ Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. He did not give him any of it as a heritage, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him as his possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. And God spoke in these terms, that his descendants would be resident aliens in a country belonging to others, who would enslave them and mistreat them during four hundred years. ‘But I will judge the nation that they serve,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.’ Then he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.”

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:9-16 **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“The patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions, and enabled him to win favor and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. Now there came a famine throughout Egypt and Canaan, and great suffering, and our ancestors could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there on their first visit. On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five in all; so Jacob went down to Egypt. He himself died there as well as our ancestors, and their bodies were brought back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.”

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:17-29 **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“But as the time drew near for the fulfillment of the promise that God had made to Abraham, our people in Egypt increased and multiplied until another king who had not known Joseph ruled over Egypt. He dealt craftily with our race and forced our ancestors to abandon their infants so that they would die. At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful before God. For three months he was brought up in his father’s house; and when he was abandoned, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds. “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his relatives, the Israelites. When he saw one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. He supposed that his kinsfolk would understand that God through him was rescuing them, but they did not understand. The next day he came to some of them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you wrong each other?’ But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ When he heard this, Moses fled and became a resident alien in the land of Midian. There he became the father of two sons.”

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: THIRD WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:30-38 **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight; and as he approached to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ‘I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’ Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt.’ It was this Moses whom they rejected when they said, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ and whom God now sent as both ruler and liberator through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up.’ He is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living oracles to give to us.”

Praise be to God always!

**FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Corinthians 2:11-16 **The True Wisdom**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within?

So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God,

so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

And we speak of these things in words

not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them,

and they are unable to understand them

because they are spiritually discerned.

Those who are spiritual discern all things,

and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:44-50 **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 7:51-8:1a **Stephen's Discourses**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.” When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died. And Saul approved of their killing him.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 8:1b-8 **Persecution of the Church/
Philip in Samaria**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 8:9, 13b-25 **Simon the Magician**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

A certain man named Simon had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place. Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money! You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness." Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me." Now after Peter and John had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 8:26-40 **Philip and the Ethiopian**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the

water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: FOURTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 9:1-6,10-11,15-19 **Saul's Conversion/Saul's Baptism**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying. But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus.

Praise be to God always!

**FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Philippians 3:7-14 **Righteousness from God/Forward in Christ**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 9:19b-30 **Saul Preaches in Damascus/Saul Visits Jerusalem**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

He regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah. After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 9:31-43 **The Church at Peace/
Peter Heals Aeneas at Lydda**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. Now as Peter went here and there among all the believers, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!” And immediately he got up. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, “Please come to us without delay.” So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.” Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive.

This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 10:1-10,19-23a **The Vision of Cornelius/
The Vision of Peter**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa. About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them." So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion,

an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 10:23b-27,34-43 **The Vision of Peter/Peter's Speech**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him. The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled. Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 10:44-48 **The Baptism of Cornelius**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: FIFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 11:19-30 **Paul's Address in the Synagogue**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians." At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Praise be to God always!

**SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Corinthians 12:12-13,27-30 **One Body, Many Parts/
Application to Christ**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body,

though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body

— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free —

and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

And God has appointed in the church first apostles,
second prophets, third teachers;

then deeds of power, then gifts of healing,

forms of assistance, forms of leadership,

various kinds of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?

Do all work miracles?

Do all possess gifts of healing?

Do all speak in tongues?

Do all interpret?

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 12:1-11 Herod's Persecution of the Christians

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his

angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 12:12-24 Herod's Persecution of the Christians/
Herod's Death

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying. When he knocked at the outer gate, a maid named Rhoda came to answer. On recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the gate, she ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she insisted that it was so. They said, "It is his angel." Meanwhile Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the gate, they saw him and were amazed. He motioned to them with his hand to be silent, and described for them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he added, "Tell this to James and to the believers." Then he left and went to another place. When morning came, there was no small commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. When Herod had searched for him and could not find him, he examined the guards and ordered them to be put to death. Then Peter went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they came to him in a body; and after winning over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for a reconciliation, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the platform, and delivered a public address to them. The people kept

shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!” And immediately, because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 12:25-13:12 **Mission of Barnabas and Saul/
First Mission Begins in Cyprus**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark. Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they met a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, named Bar-jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. But the magician Elymas (for that is the translation of his name) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now listen — the hand of the Lord is against you, and

you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 13:13-25 **Paul's Arrival at Antioch in Pisidia/
Paul's Address in the Synagogue**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem; but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it.” So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak: “You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance for about four hundred fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.’ Of this man’s posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised; before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as

John was finishing his work, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet.’

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 13:26-39 Paul's Address in the Synagogue

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“You descendants of Abraham’s family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’ As to his raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy promises made to David.’ Therefore he has also said in another psalm, ‘You will not let your Holy One experience corruption.’ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption; but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: SIXTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 13:44-52 **Address to the Gentiles**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul. Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers. Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Praise be to God always!

**SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

2Corinthians 3:1-6 **Ministers of a New Covenant**

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?

Surely we do not need, as some do,

letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we?

You yourselves are our letter,

written on our hearts,

to be known and read by all;

and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us,

written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,

not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

Not that we are competent of ourselves

to claim anything as coming from us;

our competence is from God,

who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant,

not of letter but of spirit;

for the letter kills,

but the Spirit gives life.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 14:1-7 **Paul and Barnabas at Iconium**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them. But the residents of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. And when an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 14:8-18 Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man sprang up and began to walk. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, “Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good — giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.” Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 14:19-28 **Paul and Barnabas at Lystra/
End of the First Mission**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed. When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 15:1-12 **Council of Jerusalem**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.” The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the

contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 15:13-21 **James on Dietary Law**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord — even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.’ Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.”

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: SEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 15:22-30 **Letter of the Apostles**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

Praise be to God always!

**EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Romans 8:1-11 **The Flesh and the Spirit**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

For God has done what the law,
weakened by the flesh, could not do:

by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,
and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,
who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh
set their minds on the things of the flesh,
but those who live according to the Spirit
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

To set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God;
it does not submit to God's law — indeed it cannot,
and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh;
you are in the Spirit,
since the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 15:36-16:1-3,6-10 **Paul and Barnabas Separate**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. Paul went on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily. They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 16:11-23 **Into Europe/Imprisonment at Philippi**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us. One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city;

they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.” The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 16:25-34 **Deliverance from Prison**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 17:1-12 **Paul in Thessalonica/Paul in Beroea**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.” Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason’s house. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go. That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether

these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women and men of high standing.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 17:16-20,22-24,30-34 **Paul in Athens/
Paul's Speech at the Areopagus**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him

from the dead.” When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” At that point Paul left them. But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 18:1-11 **Paul in Corinth**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together — by trade they were tentmakers. Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.” He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Praise be to God always!

**NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

2Corinthians 5:20-6:10 **The Ministry of Reconciliation/
The Experience of the Ministry**

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

We are ambassadors for Christ,
since God is making his appeal through us;
we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
As we work together with him,
we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.
For he says,
“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”
See, now is the acceptable time;
see, now is the day of salvation!
We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way,
so that no fault may be found with our ministry,
but as servants of God
we have commended ourselves in every way:
through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships,
calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors,
sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience,
kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech,
and the power of God;

with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;
in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;
as unknown, and yet are well known;
as dying, and see — we are alive;
as punished, and yet not killed;
as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
as poor, yet making many rich;
as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 18:18-28 **Return to Syrian Antioch/Apollos**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow. When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; but on taking leave of them, he said, "I will return to you, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 19:1-10 **Paul in Ephesus**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied — altogether there were about twelve of them. He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 19:11-22 **Paul in Ephesus/The Jewish Exorcists/
Paul's Plans**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit said to them in reply, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. When this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, everyone was awestruck; and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised. Also many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices. A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Now after these things had been accomplished, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go on to Jerusalem. He said, "After I have gone there, I must also see Rome." So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 19:23-29, 35-40 **The Riot of the Silversmiths**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the Way. A man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans. These he gathered together, with the workers of the same trade, and said, “Men, you know that we get our wealth from this business. You also see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost the whole of Asia this Paul has persuaded and drawn away a considerable number of people by saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her.” When they heard this, they were enraged and shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” The city was filled with the confusion; and people rushed together to the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s travel companions. But when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Citizens of Ephesus, who is there that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the statue that fell from heaven? Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. You have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius and the artisans with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let

them bring charges there against one another. If there is anything further you want to know, it must be settled in the regular assembly. For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.”

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 20:6-16 **Return to Troas/Eutychus Restored to Life/
Journey to Miletus**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them in Troas, where we stayed for seven days. On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.” Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted. We went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there; for he had made this arrangement, intending to go by land himself. When he met us in Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and on the following day we arrived opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos, and the day after that we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: NINTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 20:17-24,28,32,35 **Paul's Farewell Speech at Miletus**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. When they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house, as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God’s grace. Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Praise be to God always!

**TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Corinthians 12:1-11 **Unity and Variety/
Contrast with the Old Covenant**

A Reading from the First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians.
Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Concerning spiritual gifts,

I do not want you to be uninformed.

You know that when you were pagans,

you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.

Therefore I want you to understand

that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says

“Let Jesus be cursed!”

and no one can say “Jesus is Lord”

except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;

and there are varieties of activities,

but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit

for the common good.

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,

and to another the utterance of knowledge

according to the same Spirit,

to another faith by the same Spirit,

to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

to another the working of miracles,
to another prophecy,
to another the discernment of spirits,
to another various kinds of tongues,
to another the interpretation of tongues.
All these are activated by one and the same Spirit,
who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 21:1-14 **Arrival at Tyre/Arrival at Ptolemais and Caesarea**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. When we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, we went on board and set sail. We came in sight of Cyprus; and leaving it on our left, we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. We looked up the disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. There we knelt down on the beach and prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we greeted the believers and stayed with them for one day. The next day we left and came to Caesarea; and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and

breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Since he would not be persuaded, we remained silent except to say, “The Lord’s will be done.”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 21:15-26 **Paul and James in Jerusalem**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After these days we got ready and started to go up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came along and brought us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to stay. When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us warmly. The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law. But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the comple-

tion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 21:27-28, 30b-40a **Paul's Arrest**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. While they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Immediately he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; he inquired who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. When Paul came to the steps, the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!" Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" The tribune replied, "Do you know Greek? Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you,

let me speak to the people.” When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 21:40-22:10 **Paul's Arrest/Paul's Defense**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you." When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then he said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment. While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.'

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 22:17-29 **Paul's Defense before the Jerusalem Jews/
Paul Imprisoned**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

“After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Jesus saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.’ Then he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air, the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by flogging, to find out the reason for this outcry against him. But when they had tied him up with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who is uncondemned?” When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen.” The tribune came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” The tribune answered, “It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship.” Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.” Immediately those who were about to examine him drew

back from him; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: TENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 22:30-23:11 **Paul before the Sanhedrin**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Since he wanted to find out what Paul was being accused of by the Jews, the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and the entire council to meet. He brought Paul down and had him stand before them. While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, “Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God.” Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth. At this Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?” Those standing nearby said, “Do you dare to insult God’s high priest?” And Paul said, “I did not realize, brothers, that he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.’” When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead.” When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.) Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees’ group stood up and contended, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” When the dissension became violent, the tribune, fearing that they would tear Paul to pieces,

ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force, and bring him into the barracks. That night the Lord stood near him and said, “Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome.”

Praise be to God always!

**ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Ephesians 2:17-22 **Generosity of God's Plan**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near;
for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.
So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are citizens with the saints
and also members of the household of God,
built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.
In him the whole structure is joined together
and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;
in whom you also are built together spiritually
into a dwelling place for God.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 23:12-22 **Transfer to Caesarea**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

In the morning the Jews joined in a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul. Now then, you and the council must notify the tribune to bring him down to you, on the pretext that you want to make a more thorough examination of his case. And we are ready to do away with him before he arrives.” Now the son of Paul’s sister heard about the ambush; so he went and gained entrance to the barracks and told Paul. Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to report to him.” So he took him, brought him to the tribune, and said, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you.” The tribune took him by the hand, drew him aside privately, and asked, “What is it that you have to report to me?” He answered, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more thoroughly into his case. But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him. They have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they kill him. They are ready now and are waiting for your consent.” So the tribune dismissed the young man, ordering him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of this.”

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 23: 23-35 **Transfer to Caesarea**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, “Get ready to leave by nine o’clock tonight for Caesarea with two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride, and take him safely to Felix the governor.” He wrote a letter to this effect: “Claudius Lysias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, but when I had learned that he was a Roman citizen, I came with the guard and rescued him. Since I wanted to know the charge for which they accused him, I had him brought to their council. I found that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but was charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.” So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him during the night to Antipatris. The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. On reading the letter, he asked what province he belonged to, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” Then he ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod’s headquarters.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 24:1-2a,5-6b,9-13,17-21 **Trial before Felix**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, and they reported their case against Paul to the governor. When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him. “We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. The Jews also joined in the charge by asserting that all this was true.” When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: “I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me. Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance. But there were some Jews from Asia — they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me. Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council, unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, ‘It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’”

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 24:27-25:12 **Captivity in Caesarea/Appeal to Caesar**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison. Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem where the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews gave him a report against Paul. They appealed to him and requested, as a favor to them against Paul, to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, planning an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. "So," he said, "let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him." After he had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. Paul said in his defense, "I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor." But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, asked Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?" Paul said, "I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die,

I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor.” Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, “You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go.”

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 25:13-14a, 22-27 **Paul before King Agrippa**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. Since they were staying there several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man here who was left in prison by Felix." Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you will hear him." So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in. And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had done nothing deserving death; and when he appealed to his Imperial Majesty, I decided to send him. But I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write — for it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him."

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: ELEVENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 26:1-2, 6-10, 12-19 **King Agrippa Hears Paul**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself: “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews. And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue

you from your people and from the Gentiles — to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”

Praise be to God always!

**TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Ephesians 3:1-13 **Commission to Preach God's Plan**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles —
for surely you have already heard of
the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,
and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation,
as I wrote above in a few words,
a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding
of the mystery of Christ.

In former generations this mystery
was not made known to humankind,
as it has now been revealed
to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs,
members of the same body,
and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant
according to the gift of God's grace
that was given me by the working of his power.
Although I am the very least of all the saints,
this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles
the news of the boundless riches of Christ,

and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 27:1-4, 8a, 14-15, 18-21, 22-26 **Departure for Rome/
Storm and Shipwreck**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When it was decided that we were to sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, named Julius. Embarking on a ship of Adramyttium that was about to set sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for. Putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. Sailing past it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. But soon a violent wind, called the northeaster, rushed down from Crete. Since the ship was caught and could not be turned head-on into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven. We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard, and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship's tackle overboard. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For last night

there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we will have to run aground on some island."

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 27:27,33-37,39-44 **Storm and Shipwreck**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads.” After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves. (We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship.) In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 28:1-10 **Winter in Malta**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us around it. Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.” He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god. Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It so happened that the father of Publius lay sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and cured him by praying and putting his hands on him. After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They bestowed many honors on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 28:11-15 **Arrival in Rome**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 28:16-22 *Arrival in Rome/
Testimony to Jews in Rome*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. Three days later he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. When they had examined me, the Romans wanted to release me, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to the emperor — even though I had no charge to bring against my nation. For this reason therefore I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” They replied, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you. But we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: TWELFTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Acts 28:23-31 **Testimony to Jews in Rome**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, ‘Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them.’ Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Praise be to God always!

**THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Corinthians 3:1-11 **The Role of God's Ministers**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

I could not speak to you as spiritual people,
but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for you were not ready for solid food.

Even now you are still not ready,
for you are still of the flesh.

For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you,
are you not of the flesh,

and behaving according to human inclinations?

For when one says, "I belong to Paul,"

and another, "I belong to Apollos,"

are you not merely human?

What then is Apollos? What is Paul?

Servants through whom you came to believe,
as the Lord assigned to each.

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

So neither the one who plants
nor the one who waters is anything,
but only God who gives the growth.

The one who plants and the one who waters
have a common purpose,

and each will receive wages according to the labor of each.
For we are God's servants, working together;
you are God's field, God's building.
According to the grace of God given to me,
like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation,
and someone else is building on it.
Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.
For no one can lay any foundation
other than the one that has been laid;
that foundation is Jesus Christ.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 1:1-10 **The Word of Life/
God is Light**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 2:1-11 **Christ and His Commandments/
The New Commandment**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, "I abide in him," ought to walk just as he walked. Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness. Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 2:12-20 **Members of the Community/
Antichrists**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young people, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world — the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches — comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever. Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 2:21-29 **Life from God's Anointing/
Children of God**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and you know that no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he has promised us, eternal life. I write these things to you concerning those who would deceive you. As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of him.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 3:1-10 **Children of God/Avoiding Sin**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: THIRTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 3:11-22 **Confidence before God**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

This is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us — and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

Praise be to God always!

**FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Thessalonians 2:1-13 **Paul's Ministry Among Them**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

You yourselves know that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition.

For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.

As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children.

So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves,

because you have become very dear to us.
You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters;
we worked night and day,
so that we might not burden any of you
while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
You are witnesses, and God also,
how pure, upright, and blameless
our conduct was toward you believers.
As you know,
we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children,
urging and encouraging you
and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God,
who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.
We also constantly give thanks to God for this,
that when you received the word of God that you heard from us,
you accepted it not as a human word
but as what it really is, God's word,
which is also at work in you believers.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 3:23-4:6 **Confidence before God/
Testing the Spirits**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world. Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 4:7-21 **God's Love and Christian Life**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

Let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother

or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 5:1-12 **Faith is Victory over the World**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. There are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree. If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1John 5:13-21 **Faith is Victory over the World**

A Reading from the First Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him. If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, you will ask, and God will give life to such a one — to those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin that is mortal; I do not say that you should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not mortal. We know that those who are born of God do not sin, but the one who was born of God protects them, and the evil one does not touch them. We know that we are God's children, and that the whole world lies under the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

2John 1-13 **Second Letter**

A Reading from the Second Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.

Pause for the blessing, then read:

Beloved:

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love. I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning — you must walk in it. Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; for to welcome is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person. Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your elect sister send you their greetings.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: FOURTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

3John 1-15 **Third Letter**

A Reading from the Third Letter of John. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you; they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God; for they began their journey for the sake of Christ, accepting no support from non-believers. Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth. I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends, and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true. I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and

ink; instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face. Peace to you. The friends send you their greetings. Greet the friends there, each by name.

Praise be to God always!

**FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Thessalonians 1:1-10 **Paul's Ministry Among Them**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

We always give thanks to God for all of you
and mention you in our prayers,

constantly remembering before our God and Father
your work of faith and labour of love

and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God,
that he has chosen you,

because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only,
but also in power and in the Holy Spirit

and with full conviction;

just as you know what kind of persons

we proved to be among you for your sake.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,

for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy

inspired by the Holy Spirit,

so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia
and in Achaia.

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia,
but in every place your faith in God has become known,
so that we have no need to speak about it.
For the people of those regions report about us
what kind of welcome we had among you,
and how you turned to God from idols,
to serve a living and true God,
and to wait for his Son from heaven,
whom he raised from the dead—
Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 1:1-8 **Perseverance in Trial**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 1:9-18 **Perseverance in Trial**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up, and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away. Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. Do not be deceived, my beloved. Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 1:19-27 **Doers of the Word**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

You must understand this: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act — they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 2:1-13 **Sin of Partiality**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 2:14-26 **Faith and Works**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

What good is it if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: FIFTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 3:1-12 **Power of the Tongue**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Not many of you should become teachers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue — a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Praise be to God always!

**SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Romans 8:18-27 **Destiny of Glory**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time
are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.
For the creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the children of God;
for the creation was subjected to futility,
not of its own will
but by the will of the one who subjected it,
in hope that the creation itself will be set free
from its bondage to decay
and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
We know that the whole creation
has been groaning in labour pains until now;
and not only the creation,
but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly while we wait for adoption,
the redemption of our bodies.
For in hope we were saved.

Now hope that is seen is not hope.
For who hopes for what is seen?
But if we hope for what we do not see,

we wait for it with patience.
Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.
And God, who searches the heart,
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints
according to the will of God.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 3:13-18 **True Wisdom**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 4:1-10 **Causes of Division**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the Scripture says, “God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 4:11-17 **Causes of Division /
Warning against Presumption**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Do not speak evil against one another. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbour? Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 5:1-6 **Warning to the Rich**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 5:7-12 **Patience and Oaths**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Be patient, therefore until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: SIXTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

James 5:13-20 **Anointing of the Sick**

A reading from the Letter of James. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Praise be to God always!

**SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

Romans 13:8-14 **Love Fulfills the Law**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Owe no one anything, except to love one another;
for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.
The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery;
You shall not murder; You shall not steal;
You shall not covet”;
and any other commandment,
are summed up in this word,
“Love your neighbour as yourself.”
Love does no wrong to a neighbour;
therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.
Besides this, you know what time it is,
how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.
For salvation is nearer to us now
than when we became believers;
the night is far gone,
the day is near.

Let us then lay aside the works of darkness
and put on the armour of light;
let us live honourably as in the day,
not in revelling and drunkenness,

not in debauchery and licentiousness,
not in quarrelling and jealousy.

Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the flesh,
to gratify its desires.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1Timothy 1:1-7, 12-17 **Warning against False Doctrine /
Gratitude for God's Mercy**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith. But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. Some people have deviated from these and turned to meaningless talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions. I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal

life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 1:18-2:7 **Responsibility of Timothy /
Prayer and Conduct**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme. First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all — this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1Timothy 2:8-15 **Prayer and Conduct**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

I desire that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through child bearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 3:1-13 **Qualifications of Various Ministers**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way — for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1Timothy 3:14-4:5 **The Mystery of Our Religion /
False Asceticism**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory. Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: SEVENTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 4:6-16 **Counsel to Timothy**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Praise be to God always!

**EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST:
SUNDAY**

1Peter 1:22-25 **Mutual Love**

A Reading from the First Letter of Peter. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Now that you have purified your souls
by your obedience to the truth
so that you have genuine mutual love,
love one another deeply from the heart.
You have been born anew,
not of perishable but of imperishable seed,
through the living and enduring word of God.
For “All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.”
That word is the good news that was announced to you.

Praise be to God always!

MONDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1Timothy 5:1-10 **Rules for Widows**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters — with absolute purity. Honour widows who are really widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God's sight. The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give these commands as well, so that they may be above reproach. And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way.

Praise be to God always!

TUESDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 5:17-25 **Rules for Presbyters**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching; for the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The labourer deserves to be paid.” Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I warn you to keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing on the basis of partiality. Do not ordain anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. The sins of some people are conspicuous and precede them to judgment, while the sins of others follow them there. So also good works are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.

Praise be to God always!

WEDNESDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 6:1-10 **Rules for Slaves**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Brothers and Sisters:

Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honour, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties. Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

Praise be to God always!

THURSDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

1 Timothy 6:11-21 **Exhortations to Timothy/
Right Use of Wealth**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

As for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time — he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith. Grace be with you.

Praise be to God always!

FRIDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Titus 3:1-9, 14-15 **The Dangers of the Last Days/
Paul's Example and Teaching**

A reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus. Father, give your blessing.
Pause for the blessing, then read:

Brothers and Sisters:

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

Praise be to God always!

SATURDAY: EIGHTEENTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

Philemon 1-25 **Address and Greeting/Thanksgiving/
Plea for Onesimus**

A reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon. Father, give your blessing. **Pause for the blessing, then read:**

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother

—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. One thing more — prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Praise be to God always!