

**FEBRUARY 25, 2024  
SECOND SUNDAY  
IN LENT**



*From despair to praise, God is with us.*

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

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

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Mark 8:31-38</b>	<b>Jesus predicts his death</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16</b>	<b>Sign of the covenant</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Romans 4:13-25</b>	<b>God's promise</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 5:16-21</b>	<b>Bringing people to God</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Psalm 63</b>	<b>Comfort in God's power</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Ezekiel 36:21-28</b>	<b>God will make God's people clean</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalm 22:23-31</b>	<b>Suffering and praise</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 2:13-22</b>	<b>Jesus cleanses the temple</b>

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK**

*From you [God] comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. Psalm 22:25-26a (NRSV)*

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for the Week:**

Eternal God, we thank you for bringing us into your kingdom that is like no other, a power and rule filled with love and hope through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we give you thanks for this food, a gift of love that gives us strength to praise you for your faithfulness to us through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May your life in Christ give you hope.



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**HYMN OF THE WEEK** 

*Come, All You People*

# taking faith home

**WEEKLY MILESTONES** 

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

**CARING CONVERSATIONS** 

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

- Think or tell about a time you or someone you know felt rejected or in despair.
- Do you believe that God can help us overcome pain? Explain.

**DEVOTIONS** 

*Read:* Psalm 22:23-31 and Mark 8:31-38.

Psalm 22 begins, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"* (v. 1). The psalmist, in verses 23-31, then utters praise with a new understanding of his/her life and identity in the presence of God. Jesus calls us to give up any self-identity that is not grounded in God through Jesus when he says, *"let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me"* (Mark 8:34b). Psalm 22 expresses a similar point. We, ourselves, are not defined by our hurts, suffering, or disappointments, but by God. There is a move from despair to praise after recognizing that God has not left the psalmist (or us) in pain. What defines us is the God who delivers us and frees us through Christ. In Psalm 22, God's power and glory reaches the ends of the earth, even the dead and those unborn (vv. 29-31). Like the psalmist in Psalm 22, Peter in Mark 8:33 experiences rejection, but we know that one day he will join in the praise expressed at the end of this psalm. A life of praise to God and God's ways will change Peter just as it changed the psalmist and just as it changes us.

*Discuss:* How does God's power lead us from rejection to praise?

*Pray:* **Life-changing God, help us to see your glory at work in the world and to trust that in Jesus Christ your kingdom has come to put an end to all evil and suffering. Amen.**

**SERVICE** 

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you help someone who is going through a difficult time?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS** 

The cross is an ancient symbol of the Christian faith. It reminds us Jesus died that we may live with God forever and is a reminder of a way of life for Jesus' followers. Light two candles of the seven votive candles shaped like a cross being used for Lent. Sit in silence for a moment while looking at the cross.

*Then pray:* **Dear God, thank you for never giving up on us as we seek to lovingly give of ourselves for the needs of others and for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.**



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