

Ordinary Time ~ February 2020

Looking Ahead

About the Month

For students, teachers and all concerned with education, February means "back to school." While summer holidays are over, summer continues. Days are hot and daylight hours long and still call us to beaches, rivers and pools. The weather is still warm enough for us to eat outside and to enjoy barbeques. In some parts of the country, trees are starting to look tired and are beginning to lose their leaves. This term lasts right through to the middle of Autumn.

At the beginning of this new school year, you may feel excited or perhaps a little bit anxious. You will be in a higher year. Are there new teachers? New students? New buildings or new things in the building? Do you have new things for school – uniforms, books? Who made sure you got those new things and made sure you were ready for the new school year? Those people deserve your thanks.

Going back to school is a time of hard work and preparation for your teachers. They might also be a little bit anxious and wonder what their new classes will be like. Teachers also deserve our thanks.

Someone else deserves our thanks. God has provided the wonderful months of summer and the holidays that summer brings. God has also protected us over this time. It is good to give God thanks and praise for all the love poured out on us and for all the good days to come.

During February, there is still a feeling of "New Year" in the air. The church's "New Year" began in Advent last year. The season of Christmas followed and closed on January 12.

Until Lent begins we are in the first part of Ordinary Time; the second part will begin after Pentecost. This does not mean that the season is "ordinary" but simply that each week will be counted in order, beginning with the first week of Ordinary Time. This year there are up to four school weeks of Ordinary Time before Lent.

Children's Daily Prayer Under the Southern Cross 2020 is one of our new books. It is a guide for your prayer for every day of the school year. Some prayers change each day. Some stay the same. This is the way the church prays.

Directions for using this book for prayer are on pages v-vii of the Introduction. When it is your turn to lead the prayer, you can read those instructions again. Attach ribbons to the book to mark your place – different colours for different liturgical seasons.

Readings

During the first week of February, our readings for Daily Prayer remind us that God has created us and loves us and is always present with us. The readings urge us to always turn to God in prayer, and they remind us to care for one another.

Each year in Ordinary Time we read in turn from one of three gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. This year we will be reading a lot from Matthew because in the church's three year cycle of readings, 2020 is Year A, the Year of Matthew. The gospel of Mark will be read in Year B and the gospel of Luke in Year C. This year our readings will give us Matthew's story of the life and work of Jesus.

Our readings for each Friday will normally look ahead to the following Sunday's gospel. This keeps us connected with the whole church who will hear the same gospel on the actual Sunday.

Learn the correct responses to the readings. After a gospel reading, the reader says, "The gospel of the Lord" and everyone responds, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." If the reading is not from one of the gospel writers, then the reader says, "The word of the Lord" and everyone responds, "Thanks be to God."

Feasts and Other Commemorations

An important feast, normally observed on February 2 but here on January 31, is the Presentation of the Lord. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple 40 days after he was born. Jesus was greeted there by the prophets Simeon and Anna. They knew that he was the Messiah, the light of the world.

New Zealanders observe Waitangi Day (*WHY-tongue-ee*) on February 6. Waitangi Day commemorates the treaty made with the Maori people in 1840.

February 11 is the World Day of the Sick. We remember and pray especially for all who are sick on this day.

February 14 is Valentine's Day, a day to celebrate love and friendship.

Preparation for February

Children's Daily Prayer Under the Southern Cross includes a Psalm to be prayed each day. The psalms will change each month or season. Psalms are very ancient songs from the Bible. Often they are psalms of praise but there are also psalms of thanksgiving or psalms when we can bring our worries to God.

The Psalm for February, Psalm 145, is on page 4. We praise God who is patient and loving and who cares for all of creation. Students will need their own copies for each day. Make special 2020 prayer folders in which to keep them. You can add to these as the year goes on.

The Closing for Daily Prayer includes prayer for special intentions. Intentions are things to pray about. Students celebrating birthdays can be remembered in the intentions. Then there are other happy or sad events that happen – the birth of a new brother or sister, the sickness or death of a family member of a student or teacher. It is good to remember these in the intentions.

Encourage children to simply name the person or group for whom they wish to pray rather than enter into long stories. Examples might be: "For Sam on his birthday," "For people who have died in the earthquake," "For N. who is sick."

Suggested Hymns

See the hymn chart on pages viii-ix. Throughout the year, sing a hymn to begin Daily Prayer. In February, Daily Prayer concludes with an "Alleluia." Sing this until Ash Wednesday.

For the feast of the Presentation, "Praise to you, O Christ" or "Christ be our light" would be good choices.

A Psalm for February

Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 13-14, 17-18



LEADER
Sing and shout praises to the Lord our God!
ALL
Sing praise to the Lord for as long as you live.

SIDE A
You are merciful, Lord!
You are kind and patient and always loving.
You are good to everyone,
and you take care of all your creation.

SIDE B
Our Lord, you keep your word
and do everything you say.
When someone stumbles or falls,
you give a helping hand.

SIDE A
Our Lord, everything you do
is kind and thoughtful.

SIDE B
And you are near to everyone
whose prayers come from the heart.

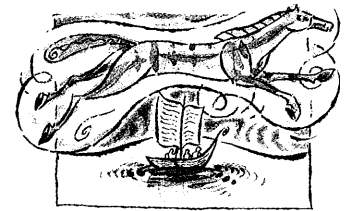
LEADER
Sing and shout praises to the Lord our God!

ALL
Sing praise to the Lord for as long as you live.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be
world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

[Turn back to Daily Prayer for today.]

Tuesday Daily Prayer



[Reminder: The Psalm for February is on page 4. Make a copy for each member of the class.]

Introduction

As we begin a new school year, we think about how we want to be friends – friends with each other and friends with God. In today's reading from his first letter, John reminds us that God wants us to love each other as much as he loves us. This is not always easy. At school we are often in class with others who are not yet our friends. Perhaps we can make John's teaching our motto as we begin our new school year!

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

Hymn

A Psalm for February

[Turn to page 4.]

Reading

1 John 4:7-8, 16, 19-21

Listen to the words of the first letter of John:

My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life. We are now God's children and we know him. God is love, and anyone who doesn't love others has never known him.

God is love. If we keep on loving others, we will stay one in our hearts with God and he will say one with us.

We love because God loves us first. But if we say we love God and don't love each other, we are liars. We cannot see God. So how can we love God, if we don't love the people we can see?

The commandment that God has given us is: "Love God and love each other!"

The word of the Lord.

Reflection

How do you feel about being in a new class? Are you ready to be loving to everyone? Are there any new students in the class who might be feeling lonely? How can I love them?

Closing

Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.

Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Let us bring our hopes and needs to God, as we pray: God, our companion, hear our prayer.

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father ...

Loving God, you give us this new school year and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray
and work and learn together.
May this year bring peace and harmony
throughout the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Sing "alleluia".]

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.



Wednesday Daily Prayer

Introduction

As we begin a new school year, we think about how to pray well together. When we pray, we pay attention to God who is here with us. We listen to God's word, and share with God our thoughts, hopes and fears. We begin by trying to become still and ready, so that what we say comes from the heart.

The reading today tells how Elijah (*ee-LYE-jub*) made himself ready. He listened for the voice of God, and it came, not in loud thunder but in silence.

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

Hymn

A Psalm for February

[Turn to page 4.]

Reading

1 Kings 19:11-13

Listen to the words of the first book of Kings:

While Elijah (*ee-LYE-jub*) was on Mount Sinai (*SYE-nye*), the LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain. I want you to see me when I pass by."

All at once, a strong wind shook the mountain and shattered the rocks. But the LORD was not in the wind. Next, there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. Then there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. Finally, there was a gentle breeze, and when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his coat. He went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The LORD asked, "Elijah, why are you here?"

The word of the Lord.

January 29, 2020

Reflection

As we stand at the beginning of the year, God asks: "Why are you here?" How can we listen to God this year? How are we going to help make this year good for others?

Closing

Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.

Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Let us bring our hopes and needs to God, as we pray: **God, our companion, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

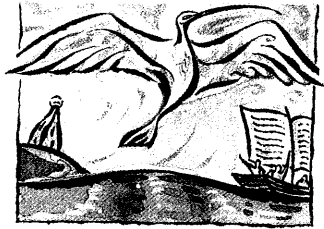
Our Father ...

Loving God, you give us this new school year and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray
and work and learn together.
May this year bring peace and harmony
throughout the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

[Sing "alleluia".]

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

[6]



Thursday Daily Prayer

Introduction

The school year is still young. We do not know what lies ahead, so we can be very hopeful and a little anxious at the same time. This is exactly how the Christians of Thessalonica (*Thess-ub-LON-i-ka*) felt two thousand years ago. Paul's words of encouragement to them can still inspire us today.

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

Hymn

A Psalm for February

[Turn to page 4.]

Reading *1 Thessalonians 5:10-11, 16-18, 23-24*

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

Christ died for us, so that we could live with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. That is why you must encourage and help one other, just as you are already doing.

Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do.

I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Reflection

Paul's message is very upbeat. Does it encourage you? Are you positive and hopeful about this new year at school? How can you support and help others who may not be as confident?

Closing

Blessed be God, Creator of days and seasons.

Let us all say: Blessed be God for ever!
Blessed be God for ever!

Let us bring our hopes and needs to God, as we pray: **God, our companion, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father ...

Loving God, you give us this new school year and new friends with whom to share it.
Bless all who pray
and work and learn together.
May this year bring peace and harmony
throughout the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

[Sing "alleluia".]

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

[7]

January 30, 2020