

and who shields me from the enemy's attacks. As long as I stay close to God in prayer and in Spirit, I gain the victory. My soul is comforted in knowing that God is a rock – immovable and unchangeable. I can always count on Him. He is worthy of praise.

2 Samuel 23:13-17b; 2 John 1-13; John 2:1-11

Birthdays: Ben Wilcox, Kevin Sanderson, Daniel Rice

Friday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m. A Way Out
8:00 p.m. Friday Night Young Peoples' AA

Today's Ministry: Daughters of the King

Saturday, December 30

Psalm 20 *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.* (v.7)

One day I received some bad news. I was dealing with a problem that was overwhelming to me. My first thought was to call a friend. But then I felt convicted by the Holy Spirit. It was as if God were asking me if my friend could do more about the situation than He could. He wanted me to go to Him first, not my friend. It was as if I were trusting in chariots and horses rather than in the name of the Lord our God. I realized then I needed to go to God first.

This verse continues to be a reminder to me to go to God first with everything. I often reach for the phone or want to talk to someone about my problems or concerns rather than God. Although it is human nature, God's desire is for us to look to Him first. Who are you trusting today?

1 Kings 17:17-24; Psalm 21; 3 John 1-15; John 4:46-54

Birthdays: Barbara Seaton, Barry Marsh, Amy Branden, Christopher Colon

Anniversaries: Mary and Erin Arnold, David and Judy Dye, Jose and Fran Farinos

Saturday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. AA Step Study for Women
12:00 p.m. NarcAnon "Clean at Noon"
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
6:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Kleen N Crazy"
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Not Alone"

Today's Ministry: Eucharistic Visitors

by Jean Hess

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"Growing *into* Jesus - Reaching *out* with love"

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St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve

Genesis 3:8-15 *But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"* (v.9 NIV)

Even after Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered the world, God still sought them out. Being God, God knew where the man and woman went and what they had done. Yet we read here that God calls out after them.

This gives me great comfort and confidence in God. It reassures me that God seeks me out and pursues me—no matter what. Knowing God seeks me helps me realize that God not only loves me but He likes me. God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. I imagine they had a good friendship and relationship with one another. So it is with you and me. God looks for and calls out after us to pursue a relationship and friendship with us. He longs to walk with us and talk with us and know us.

Let us give thanks that He is a God who knows all—our good and our sin—and chooses to call out for us to come to Him and know Him. Praise be to God for His unfailing and kind love towards us who believe.

Psalms 24, 29; Revelation 12:1-10; John 3:16-21

Birthdays: Susan Melians, Nathan White

Sunday's Calendar

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
4:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve
5:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve & Children's Pageant
6:45 p.m. Christmas Eve Under the Stars
8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist
11:00 p.m. Midnight Mass

Today's Ministry: Capital Campaign

Monday, December 25, Christmas Day

1 John 4:7-16 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* (v.10)

This is a day we can celebrate the gift of our salvation which came in the form of the baby Jesus Christ. He was sent as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. We simply need to reach out and accept that gracious offer God gives us in His Son.

This verse is a reminder that we do very little, other than accept God's invitation, to be saved. God loved us first. He had the plan in place a long time ago that He would send His Son at just the right time so that we could receive salvation. As we have seen in our recent readings, God is the initiator and calls out after us to come to Him. He is the one who pursues and does the work of getting us to come to Him.

Aren't you glad that God is the one who has done all the work to bring you to salvation? He loved first; now we can love Him back through the gift of His Son Jesus. Today on this Christmas Day, give thanks with a grateful heart for His amazing gift of salvation through Christ. He is worthy of praise!

Micah 4:1-5, 5:2-4; Psalms 2, 85; John 3:31-3

Birthdays: Noel Whipkey

Monday's Calendar

Office Closed
10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Eucharist

Today's Ministry: Children's Choir

Tuesday, December 26

Acts 6:1-7 *"Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and we will give our attention to prayer and ministry of the word."* (vv.3-4)

Two of my friends have the gift of hospitality. They enjoy cooking, providing food for people, and opening their homes to other people. My primary spiritual gifts are teaching and mercy. This works well as we hold a small group in one of their homes. My friends use their gift of hospitality to host the small group. I use my spiritual gift of teaching to bring the lesson.

As we see in this passage, two spiritual gifts are needed for the continuation of the ministry and for the word to be spread. Neither spiritual gift is considered better than the other. Both are needed and necessary for the spreading of the gospel. Many Spirit-filled people are needed to do God's work. We see this in action in our small group.

What is your spiritual gift? Are you using it for the kingdom and God's glory? Ask God to help you use your gifts for the furtherance of His kingdom.

2 Chronicles 24:17-22; Psalms 28, 30; Matthew 23:34-39

Birthdays: Bob Alexander, Penn Parrish, Joseph Noyes, Justin McNabb

Tuesday's Calendar

Office Closed
7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous Meeting
7:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Just for Today"

Today's Ministry: Choir

Wednesday, December 27

John 13:20-35 *After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me."* (v.21)

Three things about Jesus strike me in this passage: his wisdom, emotions, and compassion. Jesus knows Judas was his betrayer. And yet Jesus still washed the feet of Judas—wisdom and compassion. We also see from verse 21 that Jesus was troubled in Spirit. We see that Jesus shows emotion. He was troubled like you and I can be. He was not emotionless, cold, or unfeeling.

I'm certain Jesus was troubled by more than a few things at this point in his ministry. He knew he was going to the cross. He knew he was leaving the disciples. He knew he was going to be betrayed. All these things were troubling. I also believe he was troubled by the fact that Judas was doomed for destruction. He knew Judas would hang himself (Matthew 27:5). I believe it troubled Jesus to know that Satan actually entered Judas (v.27).

It brings comfort to me to know that Jesus feels strongly about my spiritual state, just as He did about Judas. He is a God full of compassion and is the lover of my soul. What more could I ask of a loving God?

Proverbs 8:22-30; Psalms 97, 98; 1 John 5:1-12

Birthdays: Carol Griffin

Anniversaries: Jurgan Kok and Candace Reynolds, Barry and Carol Marsh, Victor and Fran Martinez

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
4:45 p.m. Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m. AA "Daily Reflections"
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Klean and Krazy"

Today's Ministry: Coffee Hour Ministry

Thursday, December 28

Revelation 21:1-7 *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* (v.4)

I just want to shout halleluiah when I read this passage! Thinking of a new heaven and a new earth is the culmination of what God has promised us. One day the old order of things will be gone. All the struggles, pain, and death will no longer be in effect. What a glorious thought and truth this is that we can hold onto.

We all have things that have caused us pain and grief. But here we are again reassured that God will change all that in the future. He assures us that He is making all things new and that He is trustworthy and true to make it all happen (v.5). God even puts it in writing!

How blessed we are as people of God to have this hope and promise. We can be hopeful and thankful that such a bright future awaits us. May our hearts shout out thanks and praise to the one who is worthy and able to bring this to fruition.

Isaiah 49:13-23; Psalms 2, 26; Matthew 18:1-14

Birthdays: Ginny Whipple, John Doody, Ted Guy

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
12:30 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous Meeting
1:30 p.m. Stewardship Meeting
5:30 p.m. ACA Men's Group
6:30 p.m. Life Group
7:00 p.m. AlAnon "Stepping Stones"

Today's Ministry: Counters

Friday, December 29

Psalms 18:1-20 *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.* (v.2)

Many times in my life I have endured personal crises. I have battled addiction, struggled with alcoholism and depression, and have ultimately won the victory. The only way I have gained victory is through the power of God in Jesus Christ. As the psalmist stated, the Lord has become and is my deliverer and rock. God has been a refuge to run to. God has been a fortress when I could no longer go on in my own strength.

Therefore, like the psalmist I give praise and glory to God. No longer is the enemy the one who wins out. It is God who has become my stronghold—not the enemy. God is the one in control