



Celebrate

First Sunday in Lent
March 9, 2025

These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

The annual harvest festival, called the Feast of Weeks, provides the setting for this reading. This festival celebrates the first fruits of the produce of the land offered back to God in thanks. In this text, worshipers announce God's gracious acts on behalf of Israel.

When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." ⁴When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵you shall make this response before the LORD your God:

"A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before

God will give the an - gels
charge o - ver you, to guard you in all your ways.

- You who dwell in the shelter of ¹ the Most High,
 who abide in the shadow of ¹ the Almighty—
²you will say to the LORD, “My refuge ¹ and my stronghold,
 my God in whom I ¹ put my trust.” **R**
- ⁹Because you have made the ¹ LORD your refuge,
 and the Most High your ¹ habitation,
¹⁰no evil ¹ will befall you,
 nor shall affliction come ¹ near your dwelling.
- ¹¹For God will give the angels charge ¹ over you,
 to guard you in ¹ all your ways.
- ¹²Upon their hands they will ¹ bear you up,
 lest you strike your foot a- ¹ gainst a stone. **R**
- ¹³You will tread upon the lion ¹ cub and viper;
 you will trample down the lion ¹ and the serpent.
- ¹⁴I will deliver those who ¹ cling to me;
 I will uphold them, because they ¹ know my name.
- ¹⁵They will call me, and I will ¹ answer them;
 I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and ¹ honor them.
- ¹⁶With long life will I ¹ satisfy them,
 and show them ¹ my salvation. **R**

First Reading, continued

the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall

celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Second Reading

Romans 10:8b-13

Paul reminds the Christians at Rome of the foundation of their creed, the confession of faith in the risen Christ as Lord.

“The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart”
(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the

mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Gospel

Luke 4:1-13

After being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is led in the wilderness. Through his responses to the temptations of the devil he defines what it means to be called “the Son of God.”

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸Jesus answered him, “It is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’”

⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written,

‘He will command his angels
concerning you,
to protect you,’

¹¹and

‘On their hands they will bear you
up,
so that you will not dash your
foot against a stone.’”

¹²Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Gracious God, speak your word anew among your church. Strengthen it to withstand the temptation to turn inward in fear or complacency. Embolden church institutions to turn from self-preservation toward the self-giving love of Jesus. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Mothering God, speak the word of life into wilderness places and fertile fields. Grant wisdom to your people, that we may quell the urge to strip lands of their resources and instead preserve first fruits for future generations. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Almighty God, speak a word of wisdom to people in positions of power: mayors, councils, and tribal leaders, legislators, judges and juries, presidents, and monarchs. Help them discern your voice and follow your guidance, resisting the temptations of the evil one. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Harriet Tubman, 1913; Sojourner Truth, 1883; renewers of society) Psalm 17. **Tuesday** Zechariah 3:1-10. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604) Job 1:1-22. **Thursday** Psalm 27. **Friday** Philippians 3:17-20. **Saturday** Psalm 118:26-29. **Second Sunday in Lent** Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17—4:1; Luke 13:31-35.

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Steadfast God, speak words of courage to your people in the wilderness. Protect migrants and refugees on perilous journeys, that they find safe refuge and a portion in the bounty you have given humanity to share. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Loving God, speak gently to all who are alone. Bless lay ministers, home communion teams, and others who attend to those who are overlooked, vulnerable, or lonely, that all find belonging in your love. We pray for all who are ill (*especially*). God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Living God, we give thanks for all the faithful who have crossed the threshold from death to life (*especially*). Guide us who are living to learn from their wisdom and follow their example. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.
Amen.