

Readings for the Rite of Confirmation

**Suggested readings for use in liturgies for the
Sacrament of Confirmation to be celebrated by
the Archbishop of Adelaide or his appointed delegate.**



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First Reading Selections

Readings from the Old Testament (Outside the Easter Season)

1. Isaiah 11:1-4a CL: yrA #4 p42

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse,
a scion thrusts from his roots:
on him the spirit of the Lord rests,
A spirit of wisdom and insight,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
The fear of the Lord is his breath.
He does not judge by appearances,
he gives no verdict on hearsay,
but judges the wretched with integrity,
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: This reading refers to the gifts of the Spirit as described in the Confirmation ceremony. These gifts are freely given by God.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 104 (103) – Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

2. Isaiah 42:1-3 CL: yrABC #17 p78

The Lord says this:
'Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.
I have endowed him with my spirit
that he may bring true justice to the nations.
He does not cry out or shout aloud,
or make his voice heard in the streets.
he does not break the crushed reed,
nor quench the wavering flame.
Faithfully he brings true justice.'

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: Our names (family, baptismal and confirmation) define our relationship with each other and the world in which we live. It is by our name (personally) that we are known by each other and called by God.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 145 (144): I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

3. Isaiah 61:1-3a; 6a; 8b-9 CL: yrB #8 p53

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken'
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord,
a day of vengeance for our God,
to comfort all those who mourn and to give them
for ashes a garland;
for mourning robe the oil of gladness,
for despondency, praise.
but you, you will be named 'priests of the Lord',
they will call you 'ministers of our God.'
I reward them faithfully
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their race will be famous throughout the nations,
their descendants throughout the peoples.
All who see them will admit
that they are a race whom the Lord has blessed.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: The reading promises the Messiah; the signs of the presence of the Messiah will be these qualities. Jesus embodies all that the prophet proclaims. At the heart of our Christian faith, we are called to service. As Jesus has a special care for the poor, so too is the call of the disciple.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 22 (21): I will proclaim your name to my people.

4. Ezekiel 36:24-28 CL: #479 p830

The Lord says this: I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land. I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances. You will live in the land which I gave your ancestors. You shall be my people and I will be your God.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: The heart is important to our life, yet it is also associated with love and care. God promises a new heart (a new way of loving and caring) to those who follow God's ways.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 23 (22): The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

5. Joel 2:23, 26-30

Sons of Zion, be glad,
rejoice in the Lord your God.
You will eat to your heart's content, will eat your fill,
and praise the name of your God
who has treated you so wonderfully.
My people will not be disappointed any more.
and you will know that I am in the midst of Israel,
that I am the Lord your God, with none to equal me.
My people will not be disappointed any more.

After this
I will pour out my spirit on all humankind.
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men see visions.
Even on the slaves, men and women,
will I pour out my spirit in those days.
I will display portents in heaven and on earth.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: God's vision for humanity is one of hope, inclusivity and harmony. I am sure students could see these qualities in their communities.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 104 (103): Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Readings from the New Testament (In the Easter season or any time)

1. Acts 1:3-8

Jesus had shown himself alive to the apostles after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is,' he had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: Jesus prepares his disciples to look beyond their vision of God's reign, to embrace his vision, made present through the Spirit. What are the students' expectations of God?

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 104 (103): Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

2. Acts 2:1-6, 14, 22-23, 32-33 CL: #480 p831

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language.

then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice:

'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say. Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.'

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: This is the account of the Spirit coming down upon the apostles. The apostles responded by proclaiming Jesus in words and action.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 117 (116): You will be my witnesses to all the world.

3. Acts 8:1, 4, 14-17

Bitter persecution started against the church in Jerusalem, and everyone except the apostles fled to the country districts of Judaea and Samaria.

those who had escaped went from place to place preaching the Good News.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: The beginning of the Church was faced with both difficulties and successes. There is always rejoicing when someone hears the word of God and acts upon it.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 145 (144): I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

4. Acts 10:1, 33-34, 37-44

One of the centurions of the Italica cohort stationed in Caesarea was called Cornelius. He said to Peter, 'sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Here we all are, assembled in front of you to hear what message God has given you for us.' Then Peter addressed them: 'You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all those who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: People were inspired by the teachings of the apostles. Filled with the wonder of God, they were filled with the gift of the Spirit. What in the Gospels inspires us today?

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 96 (95): Proclaim God's marvellous deeds to all the nations.

5. Acts 19:1-6

Paul made his way overland as far as Ephesus, where he found a number of disciples. When he asked, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' they answered, 'No, we were never even told there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit.' 'Then how were you baptised?' he asked. 'With John's baptism,' they replied. 'John's baptism,' said Paul, 'was a baptism of repentance; but he insisted that the people should believe in the one who was to come after him – in other words, Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them.

The Word of the Lord.

Comment: When people of good will are told about Jesus, they are immediately attracted to him. This reading clearly demonstrates that the laying on of hands has been associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit from the earliest days of the Church.

Suggested Responsorial Psalm:

Ps. 117 (116): You will be my witnesses to all the world.

First or Second Reading from the New Testament

If any of the following readings are used as a First Reading, then one of the Responsorial Psalms needs to be chosen to follow it.

1. Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. And this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ dies for us while we were still sinners.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: Grace is God's loving embrace of all creation. St. Paul reminds us that we are graced with the Holy Spirit. How do we celebrate this in Confirmation?

2. Romans 8:14-17 CL: #480 p832

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a son of God. The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: "Abba" speaks of God's fatherly care for us; it speaks of the respect and honour we show to God. How does God care for us? How do we say thanks? The Spirit guides us in this.

3. Romans 8:26-27 CL: yrA #101 p339

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: The Spirit is always with us, drawing us closer to God and to God's people. (See Psalm 139 in previous section.)

4. 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 CL: #480 p832

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy, another the gift of recognising spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unity because of all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: Looking at a school newsletter, we can see the many gifts that make up our community. Each of these gifts that enlighten and encourage people is a gift from God through the Spirit.

5. Galatians 5:16-17, 22-25

If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires. Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: Focussing upon verses 22-25, the fruits of the Spirit are given to us. The Gifts are from God; the fruits are what happen to us when we embrace God's Spirit.

6. Ephesians 1:3,4, 13-19

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ.

Now you too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation, and have believed it;

and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise, the pledge of our inheritance, which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own, to make his glory praised.

That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you show towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you.

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: A beautiful prayer for the human, spiritual and pastoral needs of the person.

7. Ephesians 4:1-6 CL: yrB #105 p350

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

The word of the Lord.

Comment: The Spirit unites people of different faiths in their search for God. The Spirit works towards unity for God's people. What divides us? What unites us?

Gospel Reading Selections

1. Matthew 5:1-12 CL: yrA #65 p237

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle:
they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: The Beatitudes offer the promise of God to those who listen to the Word of God. They speak of a future glory of blessedness, especially for those who are suffering now.

2. Matthew 16:24-27

Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: This Gospel asks the question: what is most important to us? What will give us life; what will bring life to others through us?

3. Matthew 25:14-30 CL: #495 p851

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: 'A man on his way abroad summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third, one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, come and join in your master's happiness.' Next the man with the two talents came forward. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater, come and join in your master's happiness.' Last came forward the man who had the one talent. 'Sir,' he said, 'I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours: you have it back.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out in the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: This is a difficult Gospel. Talents are large amounts of money. It is about generosity and reward. When someone is not generous (i.e. selfish) or afraid of what they might lose, they find themselves outside the community of hope. What image of God did the one who buried the money have?

4. Mark 1:9-11

Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: The relationship between Baptism and Confirmation is evident here. Not only does the Beloved of God come to us, we become the Beloved of God.

5. Luke 4:16-22 CL: yrC #64 p234

Jesus came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: This links in with Isaiah's proclamation of the gifts of the Spirit of God. Jesus embodies all that the prophet spoke of.

6. Luke 8:4-15

With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, Jesus used this parable:

'A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell amongst thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into rich soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'The seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and do not reach maturity. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: Where does our food come from? We rely on farmers who rely on the quality of land and the gift of water. Jesus uses this image to talk about the importance of the Word of God in our lives.

7. Luke 10:21-24

Filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

Then turning to his disciples he spoke to them in private, 'Happy the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: There are different ways of knowing someone; different ways of seeing something. Jesus rejoices that God opens our eyes to see God's wonder and love.

8. John 7:37-39

Jesus cried out, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me!'

As scripture says: From his breast shall flow fountains of living water.

He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive; for there was no Spirit as yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: Water is needed for life and growth. In the 'dryness' of people's lives, God is there offering comfort and hope. The water of Baptism never 'run dry.'

9. John 14: 15-17 CL: #483 p835

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive

since it neither sees nor knows him;

but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: In Baptism and Confirmation, the Spirit leads us to what is life-giving and self-giving, that is, love.

10. John 14:23-26 CL: #483 p835

Jesus said to his disciples:
If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him
and make our home with him.
Those who do not love me do not keep my words.
And my word is not my own:
it is the word of the one who sent me.
I have said these things to you while still with you;
but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all I have said to you.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: We hear a lot of things, yet they do not matter to us. Words that matter are not forgotten – words of kindness, peace and love. These are the words that Jesus says.

11. John 15:18-21, 26-27 CL: #188 p599

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If the world hates you,
remember that it hated me before you.
if you belonged to the world,
the world would love you as its own;
but because you do not belong to the world,
because my choice withdrew you from this world,
therefore the world hates you.
remember the words I said to you:
A servant is not greater than his master.
If they persecuted me,
they will persecute you too;
if they kept my word,
they will keep yours as well.
But it will be on my account that they will do all this,
because they do not know the one who sent me.
When the Advocate comes,
whom I shall send to you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father,
he will be my witness.
And you too will be witnesses,
because you have been with me from the outset.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Comment: 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O Lord' (St. Augustine).
Jesus' words offer peace to those who hear them. This is a good Gospel,
especially verse 27, for a lectio divina meditation.*

12. John 16:5-7, 12-13

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Now I am going to the one who sent me.

not one of you has asked, "Where are you going?"

Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this.

Still, I must tell you the truth:

it is for your own good that I am going

because unless I go,

the Advocate will not come to you,

but if I do go,

I will send him to you.

I still have many things to say to you

but they would be too much for you now.

But when the Spirit of truth comes

he will lead you to the complete truth.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Comment: Through the Spirit we continue to grow in our knowledge of God's wonderful creation, and of our own giftedness from God.

Readings for Preparing for Confirmation

The following readings would also be suitable to use when preparing children to celebrate Confirmation.

Old Testament Readings

1. Isaiah 61:1-2 CL: yrB #8 p53

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: The reading promises the Messiah; signs of the presence of the Messiah will be these qualities. Jesus embodies all that the prophet proclaims. At the heart of our Christian faith, we are called to service. As Jesus had a special care for the poor, so too is the call of the disciple.

2. Isaiah 42:1-3

But now thus says the LORD, who created you, who formed you: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: Our names (family, baptismal and confirmation) define our relationship with each other and the world in which we live. It is by our name (personally) that we are known by each other and called by God.

3. Jeremiah 29 11-14

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: Students have one eye on the present and one on the future. What future do they seek for themselves and their friends? What might be the challenges to that future becoming a reality? Our God is a God of hope, who desires that we will be filled with goodness. To know God through prayer helps us be people of hope.

4 Ezekiel 34: 15-16

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, I shall watch over the fat and the healthy. I will feed them with justice.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: The Good Shepherd is a favourite image of God. Here God shows the compassionate care of the Good Shepherd.

5. Micah 6:8

What is good has been explained to you.
This is what the Lord asks of you:
Only this, to act justly,
To love tenderly,
And to walk humbly with your God.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: A well known Biblical phrase simply stating that which will bring joy and peace to our hearts and the world.

New Testament Readings

1. Philippians 4:8-9 CL: #199 p625

Beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things and the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: This reading can act as an Examen. Baptism and Confirmation call on us to seek these things.

2. Acts 2:42-43

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. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: The early Church gives us a model for being Church today

3. Acts 3:1-10 CL: #186 p593

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.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: When we bring the gift of healing and peace into another's life, we awaken both in them and ourselves the wonders of God; the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4. Romans 12:9-15 CL: #302 p729

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, and serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: This reading gives us a practical guide to Christian living.

5. Ephesians 3:14-21 CL: yrB #165 p529

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of God's glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being planted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Comment: Here we find a beautiful prayer for the human, spiritual and pastoral needs of the person.

Gospel Readings

1. Luke 24:13-35 CL: yrA #40 p161

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord

Comment: This is a story that speaks of Christian Initiation – gathering in the Lord's name; breaking open of the Word; breaking and sharing in the Bread; sent on mission

2. Luke 11 1- 4

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Comment: Using the words that Jesus himself gave us, we remember that God comes before everything else, and how we must live to be true followers of Jesus

3. Mark 1:29-31

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Comment: Jesus' headling leads to the new life of resurrection (he lifted her up) and service (diakonia) to the Word of God.

4. Luke 8:22-25

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they put out, and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was calm. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

The Gospel of the Lord

Comment: The Holy Spirit hovered over the waters of creation bringing forth life. In the Gospel, Jesus calms the wind and the waves; they surrender to him. Maybe a 'creation story'!

5. John 13:1-15

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Comment: Jesus witnessing to what the mission of his disciples will be –service out of love.

