

## All Saints Church Good News Daily

*Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries*

**December 15-21, 2024**

### Sunday, December 15

John 3:22-30 *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* (v.30 NRSV)

John the Baptist spends considerable time in today’s reading emphasizing who Jesus is in relation to who he is. What a challenge that must have been when people were hungry for spiritual food, and John had led many into a life changing experience of redemption. His cry, “He must increase, but I must decrease” must have alarmed some who knew not this Lamb of God. After all, they knew John and his ministry.

“We must become more like Jesus” is a phrase I hear many times in church. How does that happen? Certainly, we first need to know him and invite him into our lives. But how do we become more like him?

If we ask him to help us decrease our basic human nature, he will fill us with his godly nature. It isn’t easy to let go of what comes natural to our personalities, lifestyles, and culture. Jesus waits for us to ask for a revelation of him in our lives. Once we sacrifice our desires and temptations to him, he can increase his holy nature into us.

Today let’s say, “Lord, help me decrease so that You can increase in my life!”

Isaiah 13:6-13; Psalm 63; Hebrews 12:18-29

**Birthdays:** Peggy Barbour, Johnny Cash, Myrna Endean, Mary Lou Linton, Laura Mead, Heather Seiler

### Monday, December 16

Luke 22:39-53 *But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.* (v.51)

Imagine what it would take for you to miss a night’s sleep, be worried about being killed, find out a companion had set you up, and then have the compassion and sense of right doing to heal your enemy’s ear. Just the extraordinary range of emotions in that short period of time would threaten to wipe out any measure of concern for an enemy on my part!

Jesus was not ordinary like me. He showed tenderheartedness in the face of danger. He radiated the Father’s love for His child, the slave, even if he didn’t know the Father. Jesus did what he needed to do despite his feelings.

There are many situations when people have done extraordinary things for Christ. Such as two parents forgiving their child’s killer and ministering to him in prison. Or people willing to die in order to evangelize primitive tribes in the rainforest of Brazil. These are startling witnesses of devotion for God made possible through His great love. Jesus began it all simply healing the ear of a slave.

Isaiah 8:16—9:1; Psalms 41, 52; 2 Peter 1:1-11

**Birthdays:** Peter Allport, Steve Heller, William Hipp, Kanarith Koum

**Anniversaries:** John & Aly Evans

### Tuesday, December 17

Luke 22:54-69 *Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house.* (v.54)

Yesterday we focused on Jesus healing the slave’s ear. Considering what that group of soldiers and citizens saw, it amazes me that Jesus was hauled away at all. I know the soldiers were under orders to capture Jesus, but I wonder if any of them told about the healing miracle to the high priest. Would it have made a

difference anyway? I doubt it would have changed history, but it would have added to the fact that they knowingly turned their hearts away from the truth.

But then again, I must face the sad reality that I have done the same thing. Jesus has remarkably changed my life. He’s miraculously healed me in several ways, given me wisdom beyond my years to handle difficult circumstances, and blessed me with the riches of a loving family. He’s given me eternal life and the opportunity for a growing relationship with him. Yet, I too often choose to turn from the truth. It’s as though I physically close my eyes to him and go my separate way.

Dear Father, please forgive me.

Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 45; 2 Peter 1:12-21

**Birthdays:** Robin Fawsett, Andrew Hale, Jack Rogers, Diane Thurbon

**Anniversaries:** John & Nike Kern, John & Amy Wettach

### Wednesday, December 18

Psalm 119:49-72 *When I think of your ways, I turn my feet to your decrees.* (v.59)

King David reiterates in today’s reading how much he values God, His nature and precepts; but also how kindly God has dealt with him.

Verse 59 is unusually worded, and it piqued my curiosity. David writes that when he considers the nature and workings of our heavenly Father, he turns his feet to His decrees.

At first reading, I assumed it was a picture of David walking or running toward God and His principles, but the phrase “turn my feet” instead of run or walk was used. Could this be an attempt to show that David purposed to go God’s way by physically aiming his body in a certain direction? After all, our bodies do completely follow where our feet take us. I have yet to experience another part of my body defying my feet!

This verse demonstrates to me that with our whole being we must purpose to follow God. It’s as if we might need to point our feet in the direction God has chosen and go!

Isaiah 9:8-17; 2 Peter 2:1-10a; Mark 1:1-8

**Birthdays:** Caroline Clark, Mae Evans

### Thursday, December 19

Psalm 50 *Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me.* (v.23a)

Six days until Christmas and the pressure mounts to get all the gifts we need for others. Have you thought about what you might receive? What do you think you’ll get from your child? A card? Handmade gift? Gift certificate?

What if your child’s gift was a written or verbal message out of their depth of feelings for you. What if they praised you for the wonderful parent you are and blessed you for all you’d done for them? Would you rather have this gift of love or a material gift?

Psalm 50 assures us that any material things we have, God does not want. They are His anyway. More than money, filling positions at church or serving on committees, God wants our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Our heavenly Father wants to hear from His children more than anything else.

This Christmas season can be the start of a new relationship with Abba Father by daily giving Him the gift He asks for—words of love from us.

Isaiah 9:18—10:4; 2 Peter 2:10b-16; Matthew 3:1-12

**Anniversaries:** Gary & Chris Davies

### Friday, December 20

2 Peter 2:17-22 *For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment that was passed on to them.* (v.21)

In the second chapter of Peter have you been struck by the warning to those who would live an unrighteous life and would entice others to do so?

Today’s verse diverges to also warn those who indulge in sin, then come to know God and be transformed, only then to return to that sin again. The comparison to a dog returning to its vomit or a pig to the mud hits hard!

I believe many of us who try hard to follow Christ sometimes slip up and return to an old lifestyle. Addictions are a strong temptation, and we all have some that we work hard with God to overcome. When we’ve experienced God’s redemption and love, returning to that addiction feels worse than when we never knew Him because we’ve experienced the freedom of His cleansing.

Today, dear Father, guard our hearts and minds. Lead us in the way of everlasting life.

Isaiah 10:5-19; Psalms 40, 54; Matthew 11:2-15

**Birthdays:** Caroline Ahl, Kathleen Freyer, David Hughes

### Saturday, December 21

Jude 17-25 *But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit.* (v.20)

At the time this was written, there were those who led people astray from God. This is also true today. Jude sets up specific things we can do to guard ourselves against this.

He tells us to build up our holy faith. I believe he used the word holy to imply this faith building process would come directly from God through reading His word. If we derive our faith only from reading religious material or from teachings, we may not always have true faith building material.

Also, he says to pray in the Holy Spirit. Since it is that part of the Trinity who lives in and guides the hearts of Christians, we are told to use this power when we pray. That may mean to some to speak in a prayer language or to others to ask the Holy Spirit to guide their words.

Dear Father, thank you for the Bible and for the Holy Spirit to guide our words when we pray.

Isaiah 10:20-27; Psalm 55; Luke 3:1-9

**Birthdays:** Walt Conlan, Rosie Davis, Laura Hale, Bailey Hamner

*by Nancy Ferguson*

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