

All Saints Church

Good News Daily

Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries

September 14-20, 2025

Sunday, September 14

Psalm 24 *The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it.* (v.1a NRSV)

Years ago, we purchased a house deep in the woods surrounded by acres of undeveloped land, adjacent to a thousand acres of undeveloped state forests. We feel like we live in the wilderness.

I, probably like you, always wanted to own a piece of land so I could tramp around on my own property. As soon as I began to do this, I realized these are God's woods, and he calls the shots about what happens here. I am only a sojourner.

His breath makes the trees sway, floods the ponds and streams to over-flowing, and creates swamps where lily pads grow and frogs reside in peace and safety. He doesn't ask my advice or permission about anything that goes on in my acreage.

In the winter, he sends snow to cover the ground and weigh down the trees, causing some of my favorites to bend or fall down across my paths. Freezing rain covers sharp thorns in a dense area, allowing me access not available in the summer. Strong trees suddenly are uprooted for no apparent reason. In the spring, suddenly leaves appear, vines grow, and crickets chirp.

How foolish for me to think I own or control what happens here, just because my name is on the deed at the town hall and I pay the taxes. For that feeling of "ownership" all I get to do is walk around and observe God being God. But that is a joy of "ownership" I never expected to share.

1 Kings 19:8-21; Psalm 29; Acts 5:34-42; John 11:45-57

Birthdays: Chris Davies, Suzanne Reams, Katherine Cooper, Bennett Seiler

Monday, September 15

1 Corinthians 1:1-19 *For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* (v.18)

While others debate issues of theology, 250 individuals and churches all across the country are doing the real work of the church. They have purchased about 50,000 small, inexpensive olive wood crosses, hand made by Christian Palestinian workers in the Holy Land. Our Evangelism Committee imports them and sells the crosses exactly at cost to give the church a tool with which to witness Christ's love to others. It also takes the emphasis of our church off ourselves, and puts it onto our most important symbol, the cross.

The simplest of all witnessing tools, the cross hangs around the necks or slides into the pockets of prisoners, FBI agents on dangerous assignments, soldiers, hospital patients, children, grandchildren and even commuters on the Moscow subway.

The work of 250 people at the lowest level of our church has done more to spread the love of Christ for a hurting world than any "high profile" program I know of. This is "mustard seed" (Matthew 13:31-32) faith.

1 Kings 21:1-16; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Matthew 4:1-11

Birthdays: Henry Horowitz, Rob Koehn

Anniversaries: Bill & Anne Deuchler

Tuesday, September 16

Psalm 62 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.* (v.8)

A quick answer to a prayer of need brings ecstasy that is so fulfilling you have to share it immediately.

I was pulling my two-wheeled cart from the parking lot at the jail to the front gate to deliver 500 pounds of books to the prisoners. It was 95 degrees in the middle of summer. The cart fell over twice on the bumpy sidewalk. Prisoners cutting grass laughed at me but did not offer to help. A gift-wrapped children's Bible was balanced on top of the boxes.

Nearing the front gate, I worried about who might be on duty at the guard's station. A friendly face, a new guard, or a muscle-brained hostile guard? A friendly guard who knows me as a chaplain can wave me through. A new or hostile guard can spend 30 minutes searching me, making me open each box and each book, looking for drugs or weapons.

As I rounded the final corner, I asked the Lord for a friendly guard. I struggled in the doorway, walking backwards, pulling and balancing the 500 pounds on the cart. I turned to face the bullet-proof glass guard's station, and there she was! Officer Joyce, the most beloved of all the officers. She smiled and waved me through the giant steel interior doors.

I stopped long enough to share my prayer with her, my heart pounding with joy and exhaustion. The gift-wrapped Bible was for her 10-year-old daughter. I planned to leave it in the office for her. Any of 200 different officers could have been on duty that day. My trust in the Lord was rewarded beautifully that day.

1 Kings 21:17-29; Psalm 61; 1 Corinthians 1:20-31; Matthew 4:12-17

Anniversaries: John & Jane Hursh

Wednesday, September 17

Psalm 72 *Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.* (v.1)

Please follow me in a biblical experiment in American domestic and foreign policy. Read Psalm 72 and in every place David refers to the "king" or "he" substitute "America" or "Uncle Sam."

Now the psalm becomes a prayer for God's blessing on our nation in terms of the issues we face in our state and national governments. God now appears to be calling America to be the guarantor of justice for the helpless. Why else would he have allowed the great American political experiment in freedom to exist and continue throughout our history?

Defending the poor, setting the needy free, crushing oppressors, and saving people from violence are the same general topics that governments have struggled with for thousands of years. In America, however, we have more resources and more freedom to pursue these objectives than any other nation in the history of the world.

However, the king that David refers to ruled divinely, for life. Our leaders, however, have to stand for election and must win favor with the voters. In America, the electorate determines public policy, and each of our 250 million people has a different set of priorities and agenda, many based on selfish points of view.

To make Psalm 72 come true for America today, we would have to vote with the mind of God and love our neighbors at least as much as we love ourselves. Then we could truly sing "God Bless America."

1 Kings 22:1-28; 1 Corinthians 2:1-13; Matthew 4:18-25

Birthdays: Katie Bell, Ryan Conrad, Ruth Ann Heller, Nike Kern, Katie Rhine,

Cameron Wiese

Anniversaries: Patrick & MaryAnne Branner, Orman & Kay Kimbrough

Thursday, September 18

1 Corinthians 2:14—3:15 *Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.* (v.14)

Bob sat in his jail cell and showed me the 22-page document he just submitted to the court, claiming he was not present when the store was robbed. "But, I lied, I did the robbery," he immediately blurted out to me. I came down hard on him, urging him to recant his testimony, come clean, tell the truth, because that is what Jesus wants him to do.

Bob says he reads three separate daily Bible studies. He attends church regularly in the prison. I wonder what (if anything) he discerns that God is saying to him? He is the epitome of the unspiritual man. He listens but does not hear. He has no interest in discerning God's will for his life.

"You gotta know how to play the court system," he said. We prayed together about this, but he was un-moved to tell the truth. I told him if I were the judge, I would sentence him to the full maximum 45 years if I found out he lied to the court.

Bob is typical of many people, in and out of jail. He is always trying to "con" somebody, and ends up "conning" himself, wearing masks so the real (afraid) person is never exposed. Daily survival is Bob's motive. Bob can criticize others (the court, the judge, the lawyers, his co-defendants) but never himself. With those methods, he can never know the mind of Christ.

1 Kings 22:29-45; Psalms 70, 71; Matthew 5:1-10

Birthdays: Charlie Clayton, Nick Sands, John Wettach

Anniversaries: Blake & Sandy Hostetter

Friday, September 19

Matthew 5:11-16 *"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."* (v.11)

I considered slipping out of the courtroom. Only the defense lawyer knew who I was. I sat stone-faced, horrified. As a prison chaplain, I wrote an impassioned letter to the judge, recommending long term, structured rehab therapy for a 50-year-old man, accused of sex crimes against children. The prosecutor demanded a 40-year jail term. I never thought my letter would be read and torn apart line-for-line in open court by both the judge and the prosecutor.

I was frozen. For twenty minutes the judge and prosecutor tried to out-do each other by criticizing my letter. They mocked me, they mocked the church, they mocked several other letters from clergy and doctors. Finally, they mocked God and the defendant. I didn't know courts operated like this.

I stopped shaking and a peace came over me when I was called to speak. I complimented the prosecutor for using a Bible quote in her attack. I expressed total sympathy for the victims. I reminded the judge that a 40-year sentence for a 50-year-old man was a death sentence and urged him to call it that. I closed by quoting James 2:13— "mercy triumphs over judgment"—and telling the judge that notwithstanding this awful crime, I believe God wanted a voice for mercy heard in his court that day.

The judge said he liked my remarks better than my letter and sentenced the defendant to 40 years in jail. I left court shaking and feeling abused, but very proud that God had allowed me to speak for Him that day.

2 Kings 1:2-17; Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Birthdays: Bud Davis, John Evans, Nell Hartley, Carla Shuman

Anniversaries: Jon & Lindy Snyder

Saturday, September 20

1 Corinthians 4:1-7 *Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord come, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.* (v.5a)

I have struggled to discern God's will for me as I prepare this final message. I walked in the woods, examined myself, and debated the difference between judgement (which God does not allow me to do) and reason (with which God endows each of us).

A man I have known for 20 years was recently honored for long-term, valuable, unselfish service to a large non-profit corporation. He deserved the award by all standards.

However, based on close personal business experience with him, he is intellectually, morally, and spiritually bankrupt. I have been struggling about why this award has offended me so badly.

Do I think the award committee made a mistake? Based on their reasoning, no. Based on my judgment, yes. Is the prestigious award, itself, cheapened by presenting it to a man like this? It is for me. Am I offended that a man who hurt me and treated me so poorly is now being honored as an unselfish, humble servant of mankind? You bet I am.

My final conclusion, after a week of prayer and discernment, is that I am still judging him in my heart and want to punish him for hurting me. Yes, my internal ego is dented. The award only makes me want to expose the man he really is, but I can't and won't do that. In reality I want to play God with this man, something that is just not mine to do.

2 Kings 2:1-18; Psalms 75, 76; Matthew 5:17-20

Birthdays: Bryan Botic, Christian D'Alessandro, Sherry Hornsby, Nick Murphy

by E. Laird Mortimer, III

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