

**PLEASE EXCUSE ME!
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

October 1st, Friday

MW Ps. 80 Eccl.3.26-4.10 Luke 14.12-24 or Amos 3
EW Ps. 81 Eccl.4.11-19 1 Cor.12.27-13end or Amos 6

‘But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ (Luke 14: 18)

While organizing an official dinner, you may have to invite more people than you expect so that you may have a reasonable group. In today’s world this is an expected norm. We have learnt that not everyone will honor their commitment to attend the dinner.

In today’s passage also a banquet was being organized. Invitations had been sent and were accepted. However, when the time to attend the banquet came, the guests had other plans. What kept the guests away? The first man had to go and see his field. The second one had to try out his oxen and the third one had got married.

Land in olden times signified power wielded by the landlords. The more land one had the more influential one was. The respect in the society was directly proportional to the acres of land owned. The landlords’ generated their wealth by letting out their land for farming to landless farmers. The oxen indicated wealth in animal form. More herds of cattle and sheep one had the more prosperous one was, though not quite in the league of the landlords.

Preoccupation with their increasing wealth and power kept the first two away. The third however, was kept away by his newly established relationship with his wife. For him spending time with his new bride was more important than anything else. Out of the three, he was the only one who did not apologise for his absence. He simply refused to come.

Our relationship with our elders means a lot, as we treat them today, it may happen with us tomorrow. As our relationship with God grows so it should grow with the elders in the family and church.

Our relationships and desires for power and wealth become higher priorities and our relationship with God is put on the backburner. We take it for

granted that his invitation for eternal life will stand forever. Quite soon this life will be over and we with it the opportunity to accept Jesus’ invitation will be lost forever. So let’s stop making excuses and act with alacrity.

Prayer: Dear God, I surrender my desires, dreams, hopes, aspirations and relationships to you so that you may renew me in your likeness. Without any excuses I have accept you as my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP AT THE COST OF EVERYTHING ELSE

October 2nd, Saturday

MW Ps. 82 Eccl.4.20-5.7 Luke 14.25-end or Amos 7

EW Ps. 84 Eccl.5.8-6.17 1 Cor.14.1-19 or 2 Kings 15.13-21

“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”. (Luke 14: 27)

Che Guevara is a well known revolutionary, who believed that Latin America's poverty was a result of monopolistic capitalism and imperialism. He fervently believed that the only remedy was world revolution. He risked everything for his beliefs, good or bad, and in the end he died for them. He paid the price!

In this passage, Jesus addresses the crowd as well his disciples. He is open about what following him entails. The grand image of a banquet, food and servants is dispelled in this section. Here Jesus gives the example of an emperor calculating his risks, where victory or defeat depends on accurate calculations.

The person who wants to be Jesus' disciple is asked to do a cost benefit analysis to understand the risks and the sacrifices. What Jesus asks for is first place in one's heart. That is what successful discipleship requires.

The major chunk of the sacrifice involves close relationships. As we read in yesterday's passage, our emotional attachments and worldly responsibilities towards our family take precedence. A family debt to be repaid, marriage of our children could distract us from our goal of being Jesus' disciple. This is not to say that these are not important but what is of utmost importance is our devotion to Jesus. The other part which needs to be sacrificed to the call of discipleship is our self; our desires, ambitions, needs, joys, pleasures and if required our life.

The point is that no other relationship is first for a disciple. Jesus is first. To follow Jesus means to follow Jesus, not anyone or anything else. This total loyalty is crucial, given the rejection and persecution that lies ahead. If his followers care more about family than about Jesus, when families are divided

under pressure of persecution, they will choose against Jesus. Similarly, if the disciple cares for his own life, s/he may choose to betray Jesus. Therefore, successful discipleship requires that God be first.

Prayer: Dear God, help me to make the right choice today so that I can put into action my desire of serving you and only you. Amen.

REMOVING THE BLINKERS!

October 3rd, Sunday

19 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: True compassion is based on justice.

M/EW	Psalm 82	L.S.	OT	Amos 8. 4-10
	OT	Amos 8.4-10	Psalm 82	
	NT	1 John 3.11-22	Epistle.	1 John 3.14-18
	and/or	Luke 16.19-31	Gosp.	Luke 16.19-31

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores. (Luke 16:19-20)

Today’s passage is a study in contrasts. Jesus through common examples draws a contrast between the values of this world and the next. He helps the listener to understand that the standards of this world and the next are diametrically opposite. This is because God’s ways are completely different than ours.

Without being judgmental or critical Jesus draws a picture of a rich man. He doesn’t have a name or a distinct identity. He could be just any one of his tribe. He is rich but whether these riches were earned through dishonesty or corruption we do not know. He lived a life of luxury with expensive clothes, sumptuous food and many servants. He dressed like a king and lived like a king. Whether he was a miser or a cruel person the story does not offer any clues. But it does say that he was totally wrapped up in his own world so much so that his own gate could have been a world away.

Outside his gates lay a helpless and sick man called Lazarus. The name ‘Lazarus’ means God is my help. He was very poor and often went without food. He was physically so weak that he had no strength to chase away the dogs who came and troubled him. All that he wanted was leftover wastes from the rich man’s table. For the rich man he might not have existed.

We also live in such a world where extreme wealth coexists alongside extreme poverty. More than 200 million people in India go hungry. Twelve Indian states have “alarming” levels of hunger while the situation is “extremely alarming” in the state of Madhya Pradesh, says this report. Madhya Pradesh’s nutrition problems, it says, are comparable to the African countries of Ethiopia and Chad.

We have been richly blessed. We are entrusted with the responsibility of caring for those who do not have enough. In Exodus 22, God lays down laws related to social obligations of the people, making them responsible for all defenseless people. God cares for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the aliens and he wants us to take care of them. If we fail in responsibility we would have to face eternal consequences.

Prayer: Dear Lord, open the eyes of my heart so that I may see others the way you see them. Make my life a reflection of you so that your light may reach those who need it. Amen.

FINDING THE LOST SHEEP

October 4th, Monday

Francis of Assisi (Monk, Ev.), 1226

MW Ps. 89.1-18 Eccl.6.18-end Luke 15.1-10 or Hosea 4.1-12
EW Ps. 89.19-52 Eccl.7.1-171 Cor.14.20-end or Hosea 7

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? (Luke 15: 4)

Manik had a big disagreement with his mother and in a big sulk he walked out of the home. Wandering about his village, he reached the rail yard, climbed in one of the train bogies to play. After sometime, he fell asleep. When he woke up, he discovered that the bogie had been connected to a train and that he was miles away from his home with no idea of how to get back. He was lost without any means to support himself and without any protection. He did not know that he was in real danger out on the streets. In India, everyday there are several run away children. Not many of them run away intentionally. For most of them it starts as an adventure or as a way of showing their displeasure but very soon plunges them into unforeseen dangers.

It was very easy for a sheep to wander away from the rest and not realise it. For many people it is easy to wander away spiritually from the God unknowingly. It is also possible for the flock to move ahead without realising that a sheep has been left behind. People like sex workers and *safai karmcharis* are part of God's flock but the other sheep are not aware that they have been left behind and are left exposed to manifold pitfalls.

God is like the good shepherd. He searches for them as every person is valuable to God. The shepherd searches until he finds his 'lost' sheep. In a similar way, God will search until he finds the 'lost' sinner. He is depending on us to take the pains to find His lost sheep and bring it back to the fold. Are we willing to stretch ourselves?

Prayer: Dear God, I live in a complacent world where I can only see the sheep which are present in the flock. Most of the times, I have no awareness of the ones which have been left behind. Help me to seek those and bring them back to the fold. Amen.

DUTY OR LOVE?

October 5th, Tuesday

MW Ps. 89.19-52 Eccl.7.18-end Luke 15.11-end
or Hosea 8
EW Ps. 90 Eccl. 8 1 Cor.15.1-11
or 2 King 15. 32-16.4

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. (Luke 15:11-12)

This parable has all the ingredients of an emotional Bollywood family drama with tragedy, grief, repentance, jealousy, insecurity and bitterness. It has a loving father, with property & wealth and two sons; younger one spendthrift and self seeking; the older one dutiful and conforming.

It is very easy to dislike the younger son who likes to go his own way and is selfish enough to ask for his share of the father's property which should have come to him only after his father's death. The younger son demands and gets his share of the pie. He goes away from the father and does what he wants without worrying about responsibility or morality. His inheritance for the future is spent in decadent living and he slowly but surely heads towards self-destruction. He lands in such difficulties that he is desperate enough to tend a herd of pigs for his living. The very thought of a Jew tending pigs which are considered ritually unclean was unthinkable. It is similar to a Brahmin cleaning drains and septic tanks. Thankfully he realises his folly and return to his father expecting reprimand and punishment. Beyond his widest imaginations he receives a warm welcome.

The elder brother, now the real heir of the property, after being his father's 'dutiful' son. His work was strict duty. He did not serve his father because he loved him. He could not understand how his father could welcome his younger brother who in his eyes had taken what was due to him. There was nothing more to be given to him, least of all love and welcome. He is not even willing to acknowledge him as his younger brother instead he calls him 'this son of yours' indirectly blaming his father for the brother's conduct.

The loving father pleaded with his eldest son. He emphasised that he loved both his sons. The older one should have enjoyed being at home with him and he still had his share of the property. He gently corrects the relationship between the two sons saying 'this brother of yours'.

Our heavenly father has the same attitude as the father in the parable. We have to decide whether to have the same attitude as the father or to be like the older brother. We can also learn from the younger brother's mistake and live in close relationship with God.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for helping to understand how great your love for your children is. Help us to love you back in spirit and not only in duty. Amen.

DOUBTING THOMAS

October 6th, Wednesday

Thomas, Apostle of India

Theme: Thanksgiving for the Apostle Thomas, whose doubt was turned to faith.

M/EW	Psalm 100	L.S.	OT	Job 42.1-6
	OT	Job 42.1-6	Psalm	40.1-5
	NT	1 Peter 1.3-9	Epistle	1 Peter 1.3-9 or
	and/or	John 20.24-29	Eph.	2.19-22
			Gosp.	John 20.24-29

..... stop doubting and believe. (John 20: 27b)

Thomas is a doubter! His name is closely associated with epithet: Doubting Thomas.

The Bible never describes Thomas this way. It describes his moment of doubt. But it is one moment, only one, and he moves quickly beyond it. His identity, despite our perception and description of him, is not rooted in that moment. There is much that is praiseworthy in him. When Jesus, hearing of his friend Lazarus's sickness in Bethany, tells the disciples that they are returning there, some of them protest: people want to kill you there, Jesus. But Thomas speaks up. "Let us also go," he says, "that we may die with him" (John 11:8,16).

Thomas's doubt is ours, too. Unless I see it with my own eyes, touch it with my own hands, I will not believe. This is the heart of the matter. This is what stands between Thomas's believing and his doubting: unless I know what he means. I can have all the evidence in the world, but unless I see it, touch it, have an experience of it, a shade of doubt exists. Nothing can substitute the power to convince that my own seeing and touching can deliver.

Doubt, when honest, should set us on a quest for that which is true, real, that for which we can give not only our intellectual assent but, even more, that to which we can entrust our very lives. Thomas's doubt led to this place. Jesus shows his wounds to Thomas, tells Thomas to see, to touch. He sees, but he doesn't touch. He knows when enough is enough. His seeing gives way, not just to belief, but to worship: "My Lord and my God."

Prayer: Dear God, I believe! I will henceforth walk by faith and not by sight. Amen.

LEARNING FROM UNLIKELY SOURCES!

October 7th, Thursday

MW	Ps. 93,95	Eccl.9.1-10.4 or Isaiah 2.5-end	Luke 16.1-12
EW	Ps. 94	Eccl.10.6-25 1 or 2 Kings 16.5-end	Cor.15.12-34

I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses. (Luke 16: 4)

Harshad Mehta is a well-known name; famous for all the wrong reasons. He is remembered as the mastermind of the first Indian financial scam amounting to fifty million rupees in early '90s. He was a broker who ignited everyone's imagination by his rags to riches story and flashy lifestyle. He swindled money from banks to manipulate the share market but finally he was caught in 1992 and imprisoned. In 1997 when he was released, he made a comeback. In spite of the fact that he had charges against him, he had friends in Bombay stock exchange who welcomed him. With his friends' connivance, he again masterminded another shares scam.

In today's story, the dishonest manager also followed the same method. He made sure that when he no longer had the position and power to influence others he had friends who will welcome him and support him. This smart move earned his master's praise.

With this example, God is teaching us to be as shrewd as the manager. He doesn't want us to be dishonest or to hoard wealth for ourselves but expects us to use our God given resources to further the Kingdom of God. For example using our time fruitfully to cultivate strategic relationships or using wisdom to respond to the needs of the people around us. So that when we are faced with adverse situations such as persecution we have friends who will help us.

So when we have proved ourselves worthy of trust in small matters, God will entrust us with the riches of heaven.

Prayer: Dear God, grant me your wisdom so that I may learn to be as gentle as a dove and as clever as serpent. Grant me your understanding so that I may learn from the people of the world to manage my resources better to further your kingdom. Amen.

RIDING ON TWO BOATS

October 8th, Friday

MW	Ps. 96	Eccl. 10.26-11.13 or Isaiah 7.1-17	Luke 16.13-end
EW	Ps. 97	Eccl.11.14-28 or 2 Kings 17.1-17	1 Cor.15.35-end

'The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.' (Luke 16: 14)

The name of Aldrich Ames may not be familiar to many of us. Ames was an American working for the Central Intelligence Agency. He was recruited to spy on Russians. Instead he became a spy for the Russians passing on America's secrets to Soviet Union. He did not hesitate from even betraying his friend knowingly fully well that his betrayal would lead to their death.

Ames worked for two masters, United States of America and Soviet Union. Yet he was faithful only to one. His actions sabotaged the activities of USA for many years by passing on highly classified information about foreign, defence and security policies. It resulted in loss of life of many CIA agents. Ultimately he was discovered and given a life sentence.

In today's passage, Jesus is also warning us about this danger. We cannot have divided loyalties. Nobody can have money as his master and worship God at the same time. The Pharisees believed that wealth was God's reward for their goodness. But Jesus contrasted love for God and love for money. This angered the Pharisees.

Again and again we find the theme of worshipping God in spirit as opposed to the letter. The Pharisees observed all the laws and put forward an act of righteous living. Yet, at the same time they interpreted the laws for their own personal gain. Therefore Jesus says what some people admired in the Pharisees disgusted God. He knew that their 'good' behaviour was a false show.

Prayer: Dear God, sometimes thoughts of selfish gain fill my heart and I act on them also. Lead my thoughts to you, your service and devotion that I may have victory over them. Amen.

SMALL BEGINNINGS, BIG RESULTS

October 9th, Saturday

MW	Ps. 98,99	Eccl.13.24-14.19 or Hosea 10	Luke 17.1-19
EW	Ps. 100,101	Eccl.14.20-15-end or Isaiah 5.18-end	1 Corinthians 16

He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. (Luke 17: 6)

Any farmer knows that s/he has to plant the seed at the right time in the right place. If the seed is planted at the wrong time then harsh winds, high temperatures, lack of rains could destroy the seed. The promise of life that seed holds in it will be gone forever.

In the parable of the sower, the seeds which fell on the rocky ground perished. The ones which fell on shallow could take strong roots. But the ones which fell on fertile ground grew strong. Here Jesus is talking about the tiny seed of faith which may be small but is alive and growing. Like a tiny seed, a small amount of genuine faith in God will take root and grow. Almost invisible at first, it will begin to spread, first under the ground and then visibly. Although each change will be gradual and imperceptible, soon this faith will have produced major results that will uproot and destroy competing loyalties. We don't need more faith; a tiny seed of faith is enough if it is alive and growing.

Jesus used this parable to show that the kingdom has small beginnings but will grow and produce great results. If the seed of the word of God is sown in a fertile ground, that is a willing heart and mind it will grow and produce fruits of the spirit. These fruits will attract many to God and the Kingdom of God will grow by leaps and bounds.

Prayer: Dear God, prepare the soil of my heart so that your word may grow and be fruitful in me. So that Your Kingdom takes hold in me and becomes a beacon for many. Amen.

THANKFUL HEART

October 10th, Sunday

20 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: Thankfulness for God's mercies.					
M/EW	Psalm 138	L.S.	OT	Deut.26.1-11	
	OT	Deut.26.1-11	Psalm	108.1-5	
	NT	Ephe.5.15-20	Epistle.	Ephe. 5.15-20	
	and/or	Luke 17.11-19	Gosp.	Luke 17.11-19	

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" (Luke 17: 17)

Leprosy was the yester years' HIV/AIDS like scourge. The person suffering from it was physically unwell, ritually unclean, emotionally broken and socially an outcast. But the disease was a great equalizer as well. A leper was a leper. It did not matter if they were a Samaritan or a Jew. Normally Jews did not associate with Samaritans but leprosy broke down this barrier. All lepers were considered outcast irrespective of their race.

In this group nine men were Jews and one was a Samaritan. Since they were unclean they were not allowed to mingle with the people, so they shouted to attract Jesus' attention. They asked Jesus to have pity on them. This means that they wanted him to heal them.

Jesus did not touch them or said anything to heal them. But he told them to go to the priests so that they could be examined and declared ritually clean. All ten obeyed in faith and as they were going to the priest they realised that they were well again.

Uptill now, there was no means of distinguishing any one of the lepers from the other. But one out of the ten had gratitude along with faith. This set him apart from the others. He came back and in a loud voice thanked Jesus. He was the only out of the ten to have complete healing; physical, mental and spiritual. His attitude of thanksgiving meant that he had received salvation along with the physical healing which the other nine did not.

Prayer: Dear God, increase my faith and renew in me a thankful spirit which rejoices in the salvation given by you. Amen.

KINGDOM WITHOUT ANY BOUNDARY

October 11th, Monday

MW	Ps. 104.1.-23	Eccl.16.1-23 or Isaiah 28.1-13	Luke 17:20-end
EW	Ps. 1004.24-end	Eccl.16.24-17.24 or 2 Kings 18.1-8, 13-16	2 Cor.1.1-11

'Nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'there it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17:21)

Jesus continues the discussion on the Kingdom of God which he had began by the parable of the mustard seed. With small humble beginnings the kingdom of God grew **inside** the follower bringing about a change in him/her over a period of time. It was not a tangible thing with crown, throne, ruler and subjects but it was a transformation of a person's nature and character after promising allegiance to God the Father.

The kingdom is an inner experience that changes a person's character. The Greek word for 'in' also means 'among'. The kingdom was present 'among' them. The Pharisees were looking for a kingdom. But the king, Jesus, was already among them.

Jesus warns his disciples about the time when he would not be there and they would be tempted to relive the times they had with him. They would desire to be with him again. They might be distracted by rumours about his coming. Yet Jesus emphasizes no one knows when he will come back. His return would be sudden and dramatic. No two people, however close they may be, will share the same destiny. One may be saved and the other condemned.

Therefore, we have to be ready at all times for Jesus. We are being called to live a prayerful life with faith in God the Father, revealed both in words and action through the fruits of the spirit.

Prayer: Dear God, let the kingdom experience transform me from inside out. So that I may be a worthy witness to YOU, my king! Amen.

PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

October 12th, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 105.1-22	Eccl.17.25-18.7 or Micah 2	Luke18.1-14
EW	Ps. 105.23-end	Eccl.18.8-29 or Micah 3	2Cor. 1.12-22

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18: 1)

Jesus teaches his disciples the importance of persevering in prayer through faith in God the Father. He also reveals the nature of God the Father in answering petitions in prayer. Jesus does this by drawing a contrast between the judge and God the Father.

In Jewish courts, the judges were appointed according to the town's population. It was common to have at least three judges but a single judge could listen to dispute and dispense judgment. The judges were usually corrupt and usually open to bribes. This judge in the story was not a god fearing or a prayerful man. Neither did he worry about the opinion of his fellowmen. So neither God nor man could move him.

The widow, on the other hand was in a disadvantageous position. In strongly patriarchal Jewish society, she had lost her protection and moreover she was confronted by an adversary who troubled her so much that she had to seek help from the court. Even though she did not have much money to bribe a judge, therefore, little hope of getting justice yet she decided to approach the court for justice.

Reading between the lines, we understand that the judge must have moved forward the dates of the hearing many times. Probably because the widow did not have any other way out she decided to persevere in petitioning the judge even though it would have been a very unpleasant experience. Finally the judge relents, not because he is convinced about the woman's cause or he is moved by her condition, because he becomes weary by the widow's constant pleas.

The woman symbolizes us who claim to follow Jesus. We have to be persistent in prayer without losing faith. The persistence is not to blackmail God in giving us an answer as per our liking but to have full faith and confidence in the one we are praying to.

God the father, the object of our faith, is very different from the unjust judge. God is just. Sometimes he seems to delay the answer to the prayers of his people. But he will see that they get right judgement. This may not happen when people want it to. God knows the right moment to answer their prayers. But how many of us will be found loyal to Jesus and will be engaged in praying when Jesus returns.

Prayer: Dear God, I tend to give up when going gets tough. When faced with difficult situations, I normally become pessimistic and doubtful. But God you are the just and merciful, help me to keep the faith in you. Amen.

TODAY'S CHILDREN, TOMORROW'S ADULTS

October 13th, Wednesday

MW	Ps. 106.1-23	Eccl.19.4-25 or Isaiah 10.5-23	Luke 18.15-30
EW	Ps. 106.24-end	Eccl.21.11-26 or 2 Kings 18.17-end	2 Cor.1.23-2.11

I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” (Luke 18: 17)

Today's children are tomorrow's adults. If we want that our next generation develops a personal relationship with Christ we have to invest in them today. The first seven years are critical for the child to develop spiritual attitudes and a personal relationship with Christ. As children we were taught not only to go to church every Sunday but to sit and pray inside the church before going to the Sunday school. Praying before meals was a well rooted tradition in our family. Jesus knew the importance of investing time in children.

The passage also provides an interesting contrast between; little children whom Jesus commends and a young ruler whom he rebukes. On one hand is the total dependence, sincerity, trust and openness shown by the children towards Jesus; on the other hand the young ruler is faced within an inner conflict when asked to do away with wealth and riches, his worldly crutches, and to depend on Jesus as his follower.

The young ruler had been brought up well by his parents as he not only knew the law but practiced it too. He believed that eternal life is something to be earned by deeds rather than received by grace. That is why he asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. So Jesus mentioned five commandments. These speak of a person's duty to other people. Jesus left out the commandments that spoke of duty to God. Jesus knew that the man's wealth separated him and God. He uses the hyperbolic metaphor of a camel trying to pass through the eye of the needle. Similarly a man laden with a 'load of riches' cannot enter the kingdom until he empties himself of all the worldly trappings.

Prayer: Dear Lord, give us a child's nature of absolute trust and complete dependence on you so that we may enter your kingdom after having emptied ourselves of our worldly burdens. Amen.

HEAR THE CALL AND CALL OUT

October 14th, Thursday

MW	Ps. 107.1-22	Eccl.22.7-26 or 2 Kings 19.1-19	Luke 18.31- end
EW	Ps. 107.23-end	Eccl.22.27-23.15 or 2 Kings 19.20–end	2 Cor.2.12-3.6

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Luke 18: 39)

In the gospel according to Mark, we find that the blind man was called Bartimaeus. He was poor and blind. As we know society does not leave many options open to person with visual impairment, he had no other option but to beg on a spot which was frequented by people. In the course of a normal day, he was sitting and begging while he heard a crowd pass by on their way to Jerusalem for Passover. They were talking about Jesus. He had heard remarkable things about Jesus. He knew that this man could heal him. So he shouted to get Jesus’ attention. The same crowd from whom he had come to know about Jesus told him to keep quiet. The man shouts even more loudly.

The Amplified New Testament notes that Luke uses two different words. *Eboeesen*, translated “shout” or “he cried,” means “to lift up one’s voice and cry aloud.” *Ekrazen*, the word used in verse 39, and translated “he cried so much the more” is a much stronger word. Thayer says it means “to cry out; to cry aloud, to vociferate particularly of inarticulate cries.” The first cry of the blind beggar was born of intense desire; the second by deepening despair. The first was produced by a longing for help; the second by the fear that he might be too late to get what he wanted”

Bartimaeus recognised his need and turned to the One who could deal with that need. Then, he gratefully and loyally followed that One who had met his need. Have we followed his example?

Prayer: Dear God, I acknowledge that you are the one who can meet all my needs. Restore my spiritual sight so that I may see you and follow you. Amen.

HIS JOURNEY IS ON

October 15th, Friday

Teresa of Avila, (Nun, Mystic), 1582

MW	Ps. 108.1-6, 109(om.v.6-20)	Eccl.23.16-end or Isaiah 22.1-14	Luke 19.1-10
EW	Ps. 110(om.v.6),111	Eccl.24.1-17 or 2 Kings 21.1-18	2 Cor.3.7-end

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. (Luke 19:1)

Jesus was a magician for the crowd, he performed miracles, did strange and unique things. Jesus did not always start His mornings with a plan to heal people and to cure their sicknesses, more important to Him was preaching the Gospel.

Here in Luke chapter 19, Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Luke clearly and brilliantly brings out Jesus’ plan for the city of Jericho. Jesus entered Jericho with a definite purpose, He already knew that He had to meet Zacchaeus and that he would make a deliberate attempt to see Him. Luke also mentions that Jesus was passing through Jericho, Jesus was concentrating not only on Zacchaeus but He had to go beyond Jericho to do His Father’s will. Zacchaeus had no clue that Jesus has planned his journey keeping him in mind, for Jesus Zacchaeus was important as he would attain salvation today.

God has already chalked out His travel plans and you and I are included in it. He has decided to meet us today, but where would we see Him? He has decided to meet you through His word, His people, His creation. Make yourself available today, for He has begun his journey only for you.

Prayer: Dear Lord, you are welcome to my life, I am waiting anxiously for your arrival, come and bless me with your divine presence, Amen.

ARE YOU TRADING?

October 16th, Saturday

Henry Martyn, (Ev.), 1812

MW	Ps. 112	Eccl.24.19-end or 2 Kings 22.1-13	Luke 19.11-27
EW	Ps. 113, 114	Eccl.25.1-11 or 2 Kings 22.14-23.3	2 Cor. 4.1-15

So he called.....till I come. (Luke 19;13)

The nobleman in this parable seems to be wise for which master would not know his servants well. He gave them an opportunity to show signs of their loyalty and faithfulness. He called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas.

He came back and inquired from each of them personally about the benefit earned. He did not ask from something that did not belong to them, rather he asked from them he had freely given, he had provided them the capital to invest. Thus by this exercise he came to know who was faithful to him and who did not deserve the talents from henceforth.

Each one of us has been given our share of talents and our Master is away, when He returns He will inquire of the talents and would see our account statement. Are we trading well with the talents we possess, or have we packed them and kept them on the bookshelf?

God will not inquire from what belongs to us, but from what he has distributed to us, talents, time, blessings. Let us begin today by trading and earning profits for our Lord, He is returning soon to inquire of His investments. May we earn so much that we are able to put a smile on His face and be rewarded.

Prayer: Dear God, grant me success when I invest your capital in the spiritual market, bless my hard work and use me for thy glory. Amen.

BEND IT FOR BLESSINGS

October 17th, Sunday

21 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: Perseverance in prayer.

M/EW	Psalm 61	L.S.	OT	Exodus 17.8-12
	OT	Exodus 17.8-12	Psalm	61.1-5,8
	NT	Ephe. 6.10-20	Epistle.	Ephe.6.10-20
and/or	Luke 18.1-8	Gosp.	Luke 18.1-8	

Notice of festival of Luke, Evangelist on 18 October

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? (Luke 18: 7)

Queen Esther fasted for three days before she approached king Ahasuerus. She knew she was risking her life for her people and was willing to give it her best shot. The Jews too fasted with the queen for her life was at risk, and if remained alive the Jewish community would also survive.

The widow in the parable was persistent and she finally got the judge's attention onto her and she was able to get justice. She knew the judge was unjust and she kept approaching him till her work was done.

Our God is very different, though He is a judge but he is not impatient or unjust. Sometimes he seems to delay the answer to the prayers of his people. But he will see that they get right judgement. This may not happen when people want it to. God knows the right moment to answer their prayers.

We should never cease to pray, for we know our God always listens to his children's voice and he waits to hear from us so that He may guide us each day.

Prayer: Dear God, please hear my prayers as I continue to walk in faith, grant me a grateful and a thankful heart. Amen.

LAMBS AND WOLVES

October 18th, Monday

Luke, Evangelist

Theme: Thanksgiving for Luke, a faithful companion of Paul and the writer of Gospel.

M/EW	Psalm	146	L.S.	OT	Isaiah 35.3-6, 10
	OT	Isaiah 42.1-9		Psalm	146.5-10
	NT	2 Tim. 4.6-18		Epistle	2 Tim. 4.6-11, 16-18
	and/or	Luke 10.1-9		Gosp.	Luke 10.1-9

Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. (Luke 10:3)

Why did Jesus refer to the others as wolves? Wolves are legendary because of their spine-tingling howl, which they use to communicate. A lone wolf howls to attract the attention of his pack, while communal howls may send territorial messages from one pack to another. They do attack domestic animals; Wolves live and hunt in packs of around six to ten animals. They are known to roam large distances, perhaps 12 miles (20 kilometers) in a single day. Wolves work in strict hierarchy, with a dominant male at the top and his mate not far behind. This animal is ferocious and plans his kill and shows no mercy at all.

Jesus warned the seventy in the same manner knowing that the ones who oppose Jesus' teachings would be like wolves, showing no mercy at all. Jesus informed them well in advance for He knew they needed to know the people's reaction and that not everybody would accept their teachings and would welcome them. Irrespective of their attitude, Jesus tells them to heal the unwell; they are to care for the sick and heal them and thus proclaim the Kingdom of God. Jesus' follower

Luke was a skilled writer. He wrote to show that the gospel is good news for all people. Luke knew the dangers of wealth and he sympathised with the poor. As Luke participated in the social life and gave his contribution, not worrying about the wolves that surrounded him, likewise the Christian community has been assigned the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel, there are individuals and groups who oppose the spread of God's word acting exactly like wolves, ready to attack and kill. Nevertheless we are told to proclaim the Gospel and do our best to serve our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Lord, you served humankind with all your love and care, I pray that you may use me as your messenger to those who act like wolves. Amen.

PRAYER HOUSE

October 19th, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 119.25-48	Eccl.27.16-28.7	Luke 19.28-end
		or 2 Kings 23.21-35	
EW	Ps. 119.49-72	Eccl.28.8-end	2 Cor.4.16-5.10
		or 2 Kings 23.36-24.7	

“It is written,” He said to them, “My house will be a house of prayer”; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.” (Luke 19: 46)

In one part of the Temple, merchants had erected stalls. Animals for the sacrifices had to be perfect. People could buy them in the city for a much cheaper price. But it was safer to buy them in the Temple. Here, the merchants said that the animals were perfect. People had to pay the annual Temple tax in special coins. There were stalls where people could exchange their money for the special coins. The men who changed money were charging far too much. All these stalls belonged to the family of the chief priest.

God had said that the Temple would be the place for prayer (Isaiah 56:7). Jesus was angry because it had become a noisy market. The sanctity of the temple was lost and it was impossible to pray there. The merchants and the men who changed money were cheating people. They were making huge profits for themselves.

Does the same scenario exist in our churches today, where politics is played to enter pastorate committee or any other committee of the church? Jesus explained well that the church is meant only for prayer but in today's post modern times, it has become a social club where prayers have no priority and all the other irrelevant matters are given top priority. Jesus flogged the business out of the temple, He could do the same to any church today that is engaged in a similar activity.

A house of prayer is meant only for prayers.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that you drive the irrelevant activities which have become an integral part of the church today, let your name be glorified. Amen.

HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD, IN HIS HANDS.

October 20th, Wednesday

MW	Ps. 119.73-96	Eccl.29.1-20 or Ezekiel 3	Luke 20.1-18
EW	Ps. 119.97-120	Eccl.31.25-32.13 or 2 Kings 24.8-end	2 Cor.5.11-6.2

But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said, 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' (Luke 20: 14)

The servants who went to collect the harvest were like the prophets. God had sent them to remind Israel that he demanded the 'fruit' of good lives. The rulers of Israel had taken no notice and had made the prophets suffer. For example, they had insulted Amos (Amos 7:12). They beat Jeremiah and put him in prison (Jeremiah 37:15). They killed Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20-21). God showed great patience when he sent the prophets. He gave Israel every opportunity to do what was right.

In the end, God sent his son whom he loved greatly. These words for Jesus appear in the story of his baptism (Luke 3:22). They show that Jesus was more than a prophet, He was the Messiah. The tenants' murdered the son. This shows that Jesus knew what was going to happen to him.

Jesus foretold his end through the parable and this reveals to us that Jesus knows everything. Nothing is hidden from Him and He is the true Heir to the world. Let us approach Him for our daily essentials and desires. The owner of the vineyard expects us to respect and honour the heir of the vineyard-Jesus Christ.,

Prayer: Lord, you created everything, and I belong to you, grant that my life may boast only of you. Amen.

GOD KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

October 21st, Thursday

MW	Ps. 119.121-144	Eccl.33.29-34.12 or Ezekiel 8	Luke 20.19-40
EW	Ps. 119.145-160	Eccl.34.13-end or Ezekiel 9	2 Cor.6.1-13

He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." (Luke 20: 25)

Jews had to pay a personal tax every year to the Romans. It was not a great amount of money, but the Jews hated it. It showed that they were not a free nation. Some Jews thought that they should not pay tax to the Romans. They thought that it was against God's law. Judas of Galilee had led a group of men to protest against this tax (Acts 5:37).

The coin which Jesus asked for was a 'denarius'. It was equal to a man's wages for one day. The coin would show the head of Tiberius, the emperor at the time. The writing on one side gave his name.

Jesus said that they were using the emperor's coins. Therefore they should pay the emperor's taxes. They received benefits from the state. The Romans made good roads. They kept order and established a peaceful society. The Jews should be prepared to pay for what the state did for them. But they should give to God the love and service that was His right.

We ought to serve our Master whole heartedly and not test Him, he has never been cornered by any force of nature and never will be. If we follow in His footsteps we would also never be cornered by the dark forces.

Prayer: Lord, help me to focus on you and save me from the snare of the evil one, I believe your love surrounds me and prevents all danger. Amen.

GIVE, GIVE, GIVE!

October 22nd, Friday

MW	Ps. 119.161-176	Eccl. 35 or Ezek. 11.1-13	Luke 20.41-21.4
EW	Ps. 121,122	Eccl.37.7-26 or 2 Kings 25.1-12	2 Cor.6.14-7.1

“I tell you the truth,” he said, “This poor widow has put in more than all the others. (Luke 21: 3)

The widow's two coins were the smallest coins. They had little value. Yet, her gift was more generous than that of those who gave large amounts. They had given what they could easily afford. They still had plenty of money left. Jesus says that she gave out of her poverty. She was left with very little but she gave all out of that little.

The woman proclaimed her love with no limits, she loved God and she demonstrated her love for God by giving her all. This is what God requires of us, to be a cheerful giver. Paul states in 2 Cor 9:7 that God loves a cheerful giver, the widow was on the right track, for she gave out of little and she gave it all cheerfully.

Many churches have been demolished and church property destroyed by communal riots in the recent past. God's work will not stop at any cost but the system needs funds to function well. Churches have to be rebuilt, renovated and church property needs maintenance.

Are we willing to give out of our blessings for the noble cause, it doesn't matter how much we give but with what attitude we give. God will bless us if we sacrificially offer ourselves and give for the expansion of His kingdom.

Prayer: Dear God, you gave your all, help me to give you my all. Provide me strength to have faith in you and give generously. Amen.

FALSE PROPHETS

October 23rd, Saturday

MW	Ps. 123,124,125	Eccl.38.1-23 or Ezek. 12.1-16	Luke 21.5-19
EW	Ps. 126,127,128	Eccl.38.24-end or 2 Kings 25.18-end	2 Cor.7.2-end

He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. (Luke 21; 8)

The Society for Scientific Research of Para-Sciences in Rossdorf near Darmstadt, Germany, examined 90 predictions about the year 2004; none of them came true. One astrologer predicted in 2003 that US-President George W. Bush would be assassinated. Los Angeles was due to be destroyed by asteroids. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder should have handed in his resignation and would have been replaced by opposition leader Angela Merkel according to astrological forecasts. The false prophets have always been with us but never was there such a proliferation of prophecies pointing to the end of the 20th century as a time of great upheaval on the earth. There are the self appointed Christian prophets who claim to have a special revelation from God. The pagan new age themes such as the claim that mankind will somehow evolve to a Christ consciousness that accompanies many of the lying prophets is a true sign that we are living in the last days when men will not endure sound doctrine but will accept doctrines of demons and then claim they came from God. The false prophets in the church are unstable men and woman that are just blowing their own horn to tickle gullible ears.

We are living in times of great danger, we can be stung with the deadly syndrome of false prophets. The only way to escape is to be rooted in God's word and pray for God's ever guidance.

Prayer: Lord, I need protection from the false prophets, help me to be deeply rooted in your word. Amen.

EYES REFLECT LAMP

October 24th, Sunday

22 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: True humility is to know what we are in the sight of God.

M/EW	Psalm	34.1-10	L.S.	OT	Genesis 11. 1-9
	OT	2 Gen. 11.1-9		Psalm	138.1,3-8
	NT	1 Cor. 12.12-27		Romans	123.8 or
	and/or	Luke 18.9-14		1 Cor. 12.12-27	
				Gosp.	Luke 11.33-end

Notice of Reformation Sunday on 31 October

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.” (Luke 11: 34)

Eyes are organs that detect light, and send electrical impulses along the optic nerve to the visual and other areas of the brain so that we can detect light, colour, motion and objects. If our eyes are performing well, we can gauge depths, heights and other dimensions. A small part of the eye, the pupil controls the amount of light entering the eye. If eyes had not been one of the sense organs we would not have known light the way we do now.

Since ancient times the eye has been an icon for our consciousness and *seeing* the metaphor for intelligence. When Jesus calls the eye the lamp of the body he means that neither the hands, nor the feet, nor the stomach, serves to direct men in walking, but that the eye alone is sufficient to guide the rest of the members. The light which enters through the eye is the light of the truth of God which enlightens and transforms us.

A luminous body means one that is enlightened, so as to have all its actions properly regulated. A dark body is one which is led into numerous mistakes by a confused movement. We see, then, as I have already said, that these words reprove the indolence of men, who neglect to open their eyes for the guidance of their affections.

Prayer: Dear God, flood my whole being with your light so that I may be guided completely by your spirit towards a deeper relationship with you. Amen.

SIGNS!

October 25th, Monday

MW	Ps. 132	Eccl.39.1-11	Luke 21.20 end
		or Hosea 11	
EW	Ps. 135	Eccl.39.12-end	2 Cor.8.1-15
		or Amos 9.11-end	

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” (Luke 21; 25-26)

The Old Testament prophets often wrote of strange events in the sky. These would happen before God's judgement. The earth will become dark because the sun, moon and stars will not give their light (Amos 8:9; Joel 3:15). The sea will be greatly more stormy than usual. Something will shake the sky. The Greek word for 'shake' refers to an earthquake (when the earth shakes greatly). But this will happen in the sky.

Daniel wrote that 'one like a Son of Man will come in the clouds of heaven' (Daniel 7:13). Jesus said that he would return to the earth in this way. In the Bible, a cloud was often evidence that God was present (as in Exodus 13:21). When Jesus' comes 'in a cloud' this describes how he will return in glory.

With the increase in technology and incredible exploratory advancements in the last 100 years, astronomers & science have discovered all sorts of "signs" in the "sun, moon & stars". Unprecedented natural occurrences in the heavens are taking place like the Leonid Showers in 2002 & the Hale-Bopp comet in 1997. The signs are already beginning to show, Jesus is returning very soon, are we ready to go with Him. Hallelujah! Our redemption is drawing near.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for showing me the signs of end times, prepare me for the final destination. Amen.

UNBURDEN YOURSELF

October 26th, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 136(om.v.17-22)	Ecc1.40.1-17 or Micah 4	Luke 22.1-23
EW	Ps. 137(om.v.7-9),138	Ecc1.40.18-41.4 or Micah 5	2 Cor.8.16-9.5

**“Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.”
(Luke 22: 3)**

People ask why Judas allowed Satan to lead him to do such a wicked thing. Judas was one of the 12 apostles, whom Jesus trusted as friends. The following could be few possibilities:

1 Perhaps Judas wanted the money that he expected as a reward. Judas used to steal money from the apostles' bag. Judas was in charge of the money (John 12:6).

2 Perhaps he was jealous of the other apostles. If his name 'Iscariot' means 'man from *Kerioth*', he was the only one of the 12 who did not come from Galilee. Jesus had given special honour to Peter, James and John on several occasions. Perhaps he thought that Jesus had not given him the place of honour that he deserved.

Satan led Judas to betray Jesus and he repented later and committed suicide. Judas knew he would be forgiven if he approached Jesus with repentance, sadly, he did not take the right step.

We too have fallen short of the glory of God on numerous occasions and we are saved each time for we come to Christ with a repentant heart. His blood washes us from all sins and His mercies are new each morning.

Are you burdened with a heavy load, go to Christ now and he shall give you rest.

Prayer: Dear God, I confess that I have allowed Satan to work against you on numerous occasions. I apologize for my actions and want you to come into my heart right now. Amen.

PRAYER IS SPIRITUAL BREADTH

October 27th, Wednesday

Frumentius of Ethiopia, (Ev.), c. 380

MW	Ps. 139	Ecc1.41.14-42.8 or Isaiah 9.1-7	Luke 22.24-46
EW	Ps. 140(om.v.9-10),141	Ecc1.42.15-43.8 or Isaiah 11.1-9	2 Cor.9.6-end

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22: 42)

In today's passage Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives right before his arrest and trial. Prayer is our spiritual breath. Most men of God were men of prayers. Jesus teaches us how to overcome temptations and obey the will of God through his prayer on the Mount of Olives. Though Jesus is the Son of God, he was also fully human. In his humanness, he needed to pray. In his agony, he prayed until he submitted to the will of God. It was the time of the devil's temptation. Through prayer, Jesus triumphed over his suffering and the devil. He was ready to obey the will of God. But his disciples did not pray. So they depended on their human loyalty. As a result, they failed miserably, especially Peter.

In the moment of difficult decision hour, Jesus went to his Father to pray. Through prayer, Jesus received God's strength to do his work. Through prayer, Jesus received God's love in his heart. Through prayer, Jesus confirmed to the will of God.

The prayer in Gethsemane is exceptional in every way. Jesus prayed always in conformity with the will of God. To pray in conformity with God's will was the life of Christ. But in Gethsemane his praying was against the declared will of God. The heavy burden of the world's sin was upon Jesus. He prayed to change God's plan. Jesus was open and honest in prayer. He was seeking one time relief from the impending sufferings. However, he prayed not in revolt against the will of God but in submission to that will.

Prayer: Dear God, help me to submit my will to Your will so that I may seek my strength from you in the darkest of times. Amen.

PETER'S DENIAL

October 28th, Thursday

Simon and Jude (Apostles)

MW	Ps. 142,143(om.v.12)	Eccl.43.9-end or Esther 1.1-12	Luke 22.47-65
EW	Ps. 144	Eccl.44.1-15 or Esther 1.13-end	2 Cor. 10

The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.”(62) And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22: 61)

In the *Old Testament, the ‘cup’ describes God’s action, sometimes when he was angry. In the *New Testament, it refers to pain, as in Mark 10:38 and John 18:11. Jesus did not mean only *physical pain. However, he knew that *crucifixion would be very painful. Jesus would have to leave the work of his *kingdom to men who were still not ready. He was struggling with *spiritual powers of darkness as he prayed to obey his Father.

They took Jesus to Annas first. Then they took him to the house of Caiaphas (John 18:13). Someone had lit a fire because it was cold that night. The light from the fire shone on Peter’s face. A servant looked hard at Peter. She thought that she recognised him. She said that he had been with Jesus. But Peter denied that he knew Jesus. The man made a more serious remark. He said that Peter was one of Jesus’ followers. Peter denied Jesus for the second time. People who came from Galilee had a different accent from everyone else. Someone insisted that Peter was a disciple of Jesus because he too came from Galilee. Mark 14:71 adds that Peter denied it and cursed. Then Peter heard the cry of the cock. Jesus looked at Peter. Jesus probably felt very sad, but also he had pity. Peter remembered his warning. Peter cried because he had been weak. Also he had failed his Lord.

The cock will not crow till Peter does not deny Jesus, it was evident that Peter will deny Jesus, it was destined to happen, but he is the same Peter who vowed to serve Christ post resurrection and in the book of Acts we read about his inaugural speech. He loved Christ and confirmed it through his life.

We might have denied Him but His love brings us back to reconcile with Him. He has promised us that He will never leave us, it is true in our lives and each day we witness His grace and His love.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me never to deny you and to always love you with all my heart, body, mind and soul. Amen.

THE CROSS

October 29th, Friday

MW	Ps. 145	Eccl.44.16-45 or Esther 2.1-14	Luke 22.66-23.25
EW	Ps. 146	Eccl.45.6-22 or Esther 2.15-end	2 Cor.11.1-15

But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” (Luke 23: 21)

Barabbas was a Jewish terrorist. This means that he used terror to fight the leaders. His name means ‘son of a father’. Pilate freed him and ordered the death of the Son of God the Father. Pilate wanted to free Jesus. Luke does not record details of Pilate’s questions to Jesus. Nor does he record that the Jews warned Pilate. If he freed Jesus, then he was not being loyal to Caesar (John 19:12). Pilate had already been in trouble. He had taken the Roman army flags into Jerusalem. He had also upset the Jews. He had used the Temple money to improve the water supply. He was afraid that they would complain about him to the Emperor again. Perhaps he would lose his job.

Pilate could not do much but have to give into the people’s demands. Jesus was crucified without any fault, no allegation was proved right and he was judged to be a criminal. He bore the pain, suffering, and gave His life so that we may live.

The church bears Christ’s mark of suffering and today it stands as a witness of a barbaric act that took place in history. Witnessing crucified Christ is our privilege that demands our soul, our life, our all.

Prayer: Lord, help me to witness your love and sacrifice to people around. Amen.

WILLFUL DECISION

October 30th, Saturday

MW	Ps. 147	Ecc1.45.23-46.12 or Esther 3	Luke 23.26-49
EW	Ps. 148	Ecc1.46.13-47.11 or Esther 4	2 Cor. 11.16-end

Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46)

Jesus after doing all work He had to do, after performing all the responsibilities, of a son, brother, teacher, and saviour finally set on journey to heaven. Jesus was on the cross for almost six hours and completed the master plan of salvation.

Jesus did not die, but He willingly gave up His spirit into His Father's hands. His spirit belonged to Him and He possessed the authority all alone. When the time came, He said in a loud voice testifying that He was going to the Father. Jesus prayed in words from Psalm 31:5 and added the word 'Father'. The Jews used this prayer at night before they went to sleep. Jesus was confident that God, his Father would care for him. His last words showed that.

We worship a God who is not controlled, dominated or steered by any natural force. All nature and the heavenly bodies bow to Him in gratitude for the great work of salvation done for the humankind.

As Christ expects of us, let us live a life of gratitude and proclaim that He alone controls everything and He is coming again to take us to heaven, a place prepared for us.

Prayer: Dear God, I willfully decide to follow your statutes that provide life in abundance. Amen.

RE-FORMATION

October 31st, Sunday

23 Sunday after Pentecost
Reformation Sunday

Theme: This Sunday will be observed as Reformation Sunday in which we thank God and remember with gratitude the Reformers and Reformation, with the special reading below:

Theme: God works in unexpected ways to fulfill his purpose.

M/EW	Psalm	81:1-14	L.S.	OT	Jonah	3.10-4.11
	OT	2 Kings	23.10-25	Psalm	81.8-14	
	NT	Romans	11.1-6	Epistle.	Romans	11.1-6
	and/or	Luke	11.33 end	Gosp.	Luke	11.33

Notice of festival of All Saints on 1 November and All Souls on 2 November

Note: Special prayer should be made for the "Communion of Churches in India" (CCI). See the CNI Book of Worship Pg. 91 Sec. 5

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:9)

A German monk by the name of Martin Luther was particularly bothered by the selling of indulgences. An indulgence, a religious pardon that released a sinner from performing specific penalties, could be bought from a church official for various fees. Martin Luther was especially troubled because some church officials gave people the impression that they could buy their way into heaven. To express his growing concern of church corruption, Martin Luther wrote his famous 95 Theses, which called for a full reform of the Christian Church. In it, he stressed the following points:

- People could only win salvation by faith in God's forgiveness. The Church taught that faith, along with good works was needed for salvation.

- The Pope is a false authority. The bible was the one true authority

- All people with faith in Christ were equal. People did not need priest and bishops to interpret the bible for them. They could read it themselves and make up their own minds.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg, in Saxony, Germany. Luther invited other scholars to debate him on the matter church policies.

Reformation is much needed today in our churches where corrupt people and practices have landed into position of authority. Church is the body of Christ and only Christ's true messengers ought to serve with authority.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the strength to reform areas according to your will, use me to glorify your name. Amen.

GOD IS GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, IN WHOM WE SEE THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

November 1st, Monday

All Saints

Theme: God is glorified in his saints, in whom we see the riches of his grace.

M/EW	Psalm 150	L.S.	OT Jeremiah 31.31-34
	OT Jeremiah 31.31-34		Psalm 150
	NT Rev. 7.2-4, 9-17		Epistle Rev. 7.2-4, 9-17 or
and/or	Matthew 5.1-12		7.2-4, 9-12
			Gosp. Matthew 5.1-12

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10) (NRSV)

The persecution faced by the early church also led to its spread and then to its expansion. This phenomenon was a costly affair. There were those who continued to endure suffering and others who accepted to embrace death for the sake of Christ Jesus. These were those people of God, who stood as living legends of faith, obedience and service. The Christians continued to remember them with reverence. The dates on which these ‘saints’ entered the Heavenly realm, were set apart as Holy days. Later, the count of these saints over numbered the days in a year. Further, the church realized that there would be saints, who remained anonymous. Therefore, All Saints day was created to remember with thankfulness all saints in the Christian history.

Saints remind us of few important aspects of Christian life. First, as saints were able to endeavor victoriously all the tribulations, we should not give up our faith in difficulties. Secondly, saints were committed to be obedient to the Divine will. Similarly, we should priorities to fulfill God's will over our own desires. Thirdly, God is glorified in the saints through their life and witness. Thus, we too should seek to bring glory to God and abstain from tendencies of self glorification.

Prayer: As the church today rejoices, all her saints to join on high, so from earth let all our voices rise in solemn harmony. Amen.