

# Holy Eucharist

February 25, 2024

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig94MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3l2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

## The Second Sunday in Lent, 2B

### Prelude



All stand as they are able

### Entrance Hymn

*You are holy; I come in silence*

Chorus Book 150

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "You are ho - ly; I come in si - lence. You are wise, Lord; I come to hear. You are God; I come to o - bey You. You are love; I come to draw near." The guitar chords are indicated above the vocal line in each system.

System 1:  $G\flat/A\flat$ ,  $A\flat7$ ,  $G\flat/D\flat$ ,  $D\flat$ ,  $D\flat^4$ ,  $G\flat/A\flat$ ,  $A\flat7$

System 2:  $A\flat7$ ,  $A\flat^{13}$ ,  $E\flat^{7sus}$ ,  $E\flat m7$ ,  $G\flat/A\flat$ ,  $A\flat$ ,  $A\flat^4$ ,  $A\flat$ ,  $D\flat$

System 3:  $G\flat M7$ ,  $D\flat^4$ ,  $D\flat$ ,  $G\flat$ ,  $F$ ,  $E\flat^{7sus}$ ,  $E/A$ ,  $Gm^4$ ,  $E/A$

System 4:  $B\flat m$ ,  $G\flat^{14}$ ,  $G\flat$ ,  $D\flat^2/A\flat$ ,  $D\flat/A\flat$ ,  $D\flat/F$ ,  $E\flat m^7$ ,  $G\flat/A\flat$ ,  $A\flat7$ ,  $D\flat$ ,  $A\flat^7/E\flat$

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is D-flat major (two flats). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. Above the treble staff, there are chord symbols: D<sup>b</sup><sub>F</sub>, G<sup>b</sup>, G<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub><sup>#4</sup>, D<sup>b</sup><sub>A<sup>b</sup></sub>, D<sup>b</sup><sub>F</sub>, E<sup>b</sup><sub>m4</sub><sup>7</sup>, G<sup>b</sup><sub>A<sup>b</sup></sub>, A<sup>b</sup><sub>7</sub>, D<sup>b</sup><sub>sus</sub>, and D<sup>b</sup>. The lyrics are written below the treble staff: "You are love; I come to draw near." The music ends with a double bar line.

*Presider* Bless the Lord † who forgives all our sins.  
*People* God's mercy endures forever.

## Decalogue: the Ten Commandments

*Presider* Hear the commandments of God to God's people:  
 I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.  
 You shall have no other gods but me.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Honor your father and your mother.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not commit murder.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not commit adultery.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not steal.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not be a false witness.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

**Amen. Lord have mercy.**

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*Presider* Let us confess our sins to God.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Presider and People*

**Most merciful God,  
 we confess that we have sinned against you**

in thought, word, and deed,  
 by what we have done,  
 and by what we have left undone.  
 We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
 we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
 We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
 For the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ,  
 have mercy on us and forgive us;  
 that we may delight in your will,  
 and walk in your ways,  
 to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*A Priest stands and says*

Almighty God + have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

### Trisagion: Holy God

**S 102**

*sing through 3 times*

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y,

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

### Collect of the Day

*Presider* God be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Presider* Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold

fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*All sit.*

## **First Reading**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

<sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*Remain seated*

## **Psalm 22:22-30**

*to be prayed responsively, beginning with the men*

*Men* <sup>22</sup>Praise the LORD, you that fear him; \*  
stand in awe of the Holy One, O offspring of Israel;  
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.

*Women* <sup>23</sup>**For God does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither is God's face hidden from them; \***  
**but when they cry to the Holy One, they are heard.**

<sup>24</sup>My praise is of God in the great assembly; \*  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship the LORD.

<sup>25</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: \***  
**"May your heart live for ever!"**

<sup>26</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, \*  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before the Holy One.

<sup>27</sup>**For kingship belongs to the LORD, \***  
**who rules over the nations.**

<sup>28</sup>To God alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; \*  
all who go down to the dust fall before the Holy One.  
<sup>29</sup>**My soul shall live for the LORD;**  
**my descendants shall be God's servants; \***  
**they shall be known as the LORD's for ever.**  
<sup>30</sup>They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn \*  
the saving deeds that God has done.

## Second Reading

Romans 4:13-25

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

<sup>13</sup>The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness."

<sup>23</sup>Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*All stand as they are able.*

## Sequence Hymn

*Take up your cross, the Savior said*

**Hymnal 675**

1 Take up your cross, the Sa - vior said, if  
 2 Take up your cross, let not its weight fill  
 3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame, and  
 4 Take up your cross, then, in his strength, and

1 you would my dis - ci - ple be; take up your cross with  
 2 your weak spi - rit with a - larm; his strength shall bear your  
 3 let your fool - ish heart be still; the Lord for you ac -  
 4 calm - ly ev - ery dan - ger brave: it guides you to a -

1 will - ing heart, and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me.  
 2 spi - rit up, and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.  
 3 cept - ed death up - on a cross, on Cal - vary's hill.  
 4 bun - dant life and leads to vic - tory o'er the grave.

**Holy Gospel**

Mark 8:31-38

*Gospeller* The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.<sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”



*Gospeller* The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## Sermon

Rob Hampton

*All then stand as they are able.*

## Nicene Creed

*Presider* Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*All remain standing, or kneel, as they are able.*

## Prayers of the People

*Presider* Brothers and sisters, children of God, we are in awe of you and your promises. Help us set our minds on you.

*Intercessor* Your church is reaching for you. Help us to extend our reach to all whom you love. **Have mercy upon us. Set our minds on you.**

*Silence is kept.*

Your world is aching for healing. Make us good stewards of your creation, Lord. Grant our president and our leaders in the courts and Congress compassion and wisdom. May they govern for the good of the many. **Have mercy upon us. Set our minds on you.**

*Silence is kept.*

We are abundantly blessed, and praise you for your goodness and care of us. We are grateful today for [\_\_\_\_\_and] all you so graciously give us. **Have mercy upon us. Set our minds on you.**

*Silence is kept.*

Your people are being born, are ill, are both anxious and joyous. They are hungry and cold and don't know where to turn. They bend under the weight of their lives, and rejoice in your life-giving love. Help us to hold to our warm and well-fed bodies a cold and lonely world. Enable us to bring [\_\_\_\_\_ and all of] them your healing and fullness of life. **Have mercy upon us. Set our minds on you.**

We commend to you the souls of those who have died and ask you to comfort those whose hearts ache with grief [remembering especially\_\_\_\_\_].

*Presider* O God, who has commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. **Amen.**

*All then stand as they are able.*

## **Peace**

*Presider* The peace of Christ be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*The Ministers and the People may offer God's peace to one another in the name of the Lord.*

*The People then are seated.*

## **Announcements**



# Holy Communion

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.

*Psalm 50:14*

*Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the Presider.*

*The people stand while the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar*

## Offertory Hymn

## Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

*The people remain standing as they are able*

## Great Thanksgiving

<i>Presider</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	<b>And also with you.</b>
<i>Presider</i>	Lift up your hearts.
<i>People</i>	<b>We lift them to the Lord.</b>
<i>Presider</i>	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<i>People</i>	<b>It is right to give our thanks and praise.</b>

*The Presider proceeds*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Presider continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*The Presider continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them **+** by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him.

Sanctify us **+** also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

*The Presider then continues*

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

*A period of silence is kept.*

*The Presider says*

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
**Therefore, let us keep the feast.**

*All are welcome to receive Holy Communion.*

*Remaining seated, the following is sung after the table has been cleared.*

## **Communion Hymn**

*Take my life and let it be*

**Hymnal 707**

I Take my life, and let it be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;

take my mo - ments and my days, let them flow in cease - less praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the im-pulse of thy love;

take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy roy - al throne.

*The Presider then says*  
Let us pray.

*Presider and People*

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,  
you have graciously accepted us as living members  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and you have fed us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.  
Send us now into the world in peace,  
and grant us strength and courage  
to love and serve you  
with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Dismissal and Blessing**

*Presider* Lord, when we pity ourselves and think we make great sacrifices for others:  
*People* **Remind us of your life-giving sacrifice on the Cross.**

Lord, when our patience wears thin, and we are ready to give up:

**Speak to us through the example of your endurance on the Cross.**

Lord, when we get angry and wish to retaliate against our enemies:

**Bring to our remembrance your words to your enemies from the Cross.**

Lord, when we feel rejected or persecuted for doing what is right and good:

**Sustain us by the knowledge of how you were reviled and rejected on the Cross.**

Lord, when we suffer pain of body or anguish of mind in this life:

**Keep us near the Cross.**

Lord, when we are afraid to stand for that which is true and honorable:

**Strengthen us with the courage with which you went to the Cross.**

Lord, when we feel alone in the world, forsaken and forgotten:

**Comfort us with your love made known on the Cross.**

Lord, when we come to the time of our own death:

**Uphold us with the assurance that life did not end for you on the Cross.** Lord,  
when we are tempted by despair or fear of what lies ahead:

**Fill us with the hope of resurrection and new life which are the fruits of your  
Cross. AMEN.**

*A priest then blesses the people, saying*

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all + evermore. **Amen.** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

## **Concluding Hymn**

*The Summons*

**WLP 757**

Unison

1 Will you come and fol - low me if I but  
2 Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but  
3 Will you let the blind - ed see if I but  
4 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but

call your name? Will you go where you don't  
call your name? Will you care for cruel and  
call your name? Will you set the pris - oners  
call my name. Let me turn and fol - low

know and nev - er be the same? Will you  
kind and nev - er be the same? Will you  
free and nev - er be the same? Will you  
you and nev - er be the same. In your

let my love be shown, will you let my  
risk the hos - tile stare should your life at -  
kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as  
com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and

name be known, will you let my life be  
tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer  
this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I  
foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



**The Sending Forth**

*Minister* And now, my sisters and brothers in Christ, I bid you go out as did St Barnabas, the Encourager. Go out with joy and in peace, to love and serve our Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

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**This week in prayer**

**Please remember these persons and congregations in your prayers this week:**

**Our Bishops** Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises (TEC); Elizabeth, Donald and Craig (ELCA)  
**and for** all priests, deacons, Ministry Teams, and those in formation

**Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

February 25 The Anglican Church of Tanzania

**Diocese of Michigan Cycle of Prayer:**

February 25 St Andrew’s, Ann Arbor; St Timothy’s, Nizao, DR

**St Barnabas Cycle of Prayer:** Jim M, Mardi, Drake

**and our continuing prayers for:** Jim M, Mardi, Pat, Robert, Selenah

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Faith in Action provides leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Drive at the church is March 17**. Please contribute as generously as you can.

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**Upcoming Commemorations**

February 25 Emily Malbone Morgan, Lay Leader & Contemplative, 1937; and, John Roberts, Priest, 1949

- 26 Photini, the Samaritan woman at the well, c.67
- 27 George Herbert, Priest & Poet, 1633
- 28 Anna Julia Haywood Cooper, Educator, 1964
- 29 Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, 962
- March 01 David of Wales, Bishop, c. 544
- 02 Chad of Lichfield, Bishop, 672

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**Lent 2B February 25, 2024**

***Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16***

The one thing Abram has wanted since receiving the promise from God that he would be the father of many nations is an heir, but things are starting to look bleak on that front. At first, without children of his own, Abram thinks his slave Eliezer, who oversaw his household, might end up being the heir. But God tells him that his heir will be his biological son. Abram and Sarai then decide to help God along with that plan, and they have Sarai’s slave, Hagar, conceive and bear a son with Abram.

But Hagar takes her son and runs away because of Sarai’s resentment. And that brings us to our text today. In the wake of these stumbling and failed ways – Abram has tried to finesse the promise so that it makes sense given his and Sarai’s ages – God shows up and demonstrates God’s faithfulness by renewing the promise and then inviting Abram and Sarai anew to trust in God’s ability to provide.

- Have you brought something to God in prayer that you really wanted? How did God respond to you?
- How do you live your faithfulness to God? How are you sustained in that faithfulness?

***Psalms 22:22-30***

The verses from Psalm 22 appointed for today come after the psalmist has spent the first 21 verses crying out to God in despair and pleading for deliverance. The psalmist can do this because they recall that the Holy One has always been faithful, delivering their ancestors when, in trust, they also cried out in despair. It is by recalling God’s faithfulness in the past that we can now join our voices with the great multitude through all time who cry out in praise of God’s saving deeds – those who fear God; those who worship God; those who seek God; all the families of the nations; all those who sleep in the earth; and all our descendants yet to be born.

- Can you recall moments in your personal history where God may have been at work responding to your need?
- What does praising God look like as you walk through your day-to-day activities?

***Romans 4:13-25***

Our text from Romans offers us something of a Christological exegesis of today’s reading from Genesis. God’s promise to Abraham was an invitation into a loving relationship based on faith. God offered Abraham a vision of his place in history and promised to provide the means to achieve it – an heir. Abraham’s attempts to make that promise come true before he and Sarah

were too old to have children, however, represent our need to wrangle matters of faith into logical systems of progression (i.e., laws).

Such a wrangling may seem to secure the promise, but if Abraham had succeeded it would have precluded the action of grace that guarantees the fulfillment of the promise to all his descendants regardless of one’s ability to abide by the law. Abraham has (and therefore we have) been saved from that fate by God’s faithfulness that inspired the same in him. Faith is a divine gift that comes despite external evidence to the contrary. We Christians renew that gift of faith today not by anything we do nor by following any laws that might make us worthy, but by professing our belief in God who raised Jesus from the dead.

- Have you ever found it hard to stay true to your faith? What helps strengthen your faith?
- How have you experienced God’s grace and blessing in your life?

**Mark 8:31-38**

A fundamental aspect of the Christian life is that in small and sometimes big ways it will always include rejection and suffering. The preaching of a gospel of love that seeks to restore all people to unity with God and each other will (must?) bring you into conflict with the powers that be who maintain control by sowing division. On a personal level, opening yourself up to love another more deeply requires that you let go of any idea of a stable and secure existence in favor of the unpredictability and profound joy of an authentic, vulnerable human relationship. When we follow Jesus, in small or large ways we will suffer, though never for the sake of suffering but always in service of God’s healing and reconciling love.

- If it is your practice to fast during Lent, how does your fast this year open you up to love more profoundly?
- Are there perspectives you hold that give you a sense of security or stability that you might reconsider?
- In the context of great challenges today like climate change or prolonged and deadly military conflicts, how might “taking up your cross” look now?

*This Bible study was written by Ben Simon Dinglasan, Jr.*

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**Our Mission:**

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.





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