

The Daily Walk



The **people** that walked
in darkness have
seen a great **light**

Isaiah 9:2

*Trinity Presbyterian Church
Berwyn, Pennsylvania*

January 5 - February 22, 2009

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
January 5 - 10, 2009

MONDAY, January 5: Mark 1:4-11

As the passage opens, John the Baptist appears in the wilderness, preaching and baptizing. He proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to the crowds that gather. John is very popular; many scholars believe he had a larger following than Jesus did. But John knew he was a messenger of God, an agent of good news. He was preparing the way for the coming of the Mighty One.

Then Jesus appears and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus emerges from the river, the Spirit of God descends upon him and names him as God's beloved child. Baptism for Jesus marked the beginning of his ministry and identifies him as God's own child.

TUESDAY, January 6: Epiphany

This is the day that God has made, a day of particular significance in our liturgical calendar, a day set aside to celebrate God's revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. During the first four centuries, Epiphany celebrations detailed the birth of Jesus through the visit of the Magi, as well as the event of his baptism some years later. Now it seems like Epiphany is often lost between the glittery arrival of Christmas and the penitent approach of Lent.

The busyness of our lives often helps define who we are. It's a way of life for many these days, but do we want to "multitask" our way through significant days of the liturgical year? This day — Epiphany — a day of recognizing God might be a good time to consider not only who we are, but whose we are. The answer to that question may well illumine the coming days of Lent. Thanks be to God for epiphany experiences.

WEDNESDAY, January 7: Mark 1:4-11

For Christians today, baptism is a time to reconsider who — and whose — we are. At his baptism, Jesus was named God's beloved child. We, too, are named at our baptism.

Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ and a symbol of inclusion in God's grace (Book of Order). God delights in us and invites us to be part of a community, the covenant family of the Church. Let us give thanks for the naming and the inviting.

THURSDAY, January 8: Genesis 1:1-5

The familiar creation story opens with the Spirit of God brooding over the waters. In the Hebrew world view, water represented chaos, an uncontrollable force. Into that chaotic darkness, our Creator God introduced light. God knew we would need the day and the night to give form to our days. The day to work and appreciate the night. The night to rest and reflect.

When darkness again covered the world with sin, God spoke of light through the prophets, preparing the way with the promise of a Deliverer, a Savior. Darkness shows us the need for the light, and that one true light is Jesus Christ. May we reflect the Light throughout our daily walk.

FRIDAY, January 9: Psalm 29

In this hymn of praise, we hear the voice of the Lord in the storm. His power is heard on the seas, in the lightning and thunder, and in the breaking of the tallest trees. These most powerful forces of nature are only a glimpse of God's glory. One only has to travel throughout our country to witness the creative power in places like Mt. St. Helen's, Crater Lake and the Grand Canyon.

Alongside the fear and the beauty of this power is a note of celebration. God's power is for us as He gives strength and peace. God, who has the power to change the landscape, uses power to transform lives. Our creator God continues to create. Thanks be to God.

SATURDAY, January 10: Acts 19:1-7

Acts is a continuation of Luke's story as new Christians act upon their new-found faith by sharing the good news. This is an account of Paul traveling through Ephesus on his journeys and meeting some Gentiles who have not heard the whole gospel story. They've heard of John and have been baptized according to his rituals, but they have never encountered the power of the Holy Spirit.

A lot of questions remain unanswered. How did the Ephesians learn of John the Baptizer? Why did they seek Paul's baptism? What did they say when they spoke in tongues? For the writer of Luke, these things do not matter—they are incidental. What matters is to know that baptism in Jesus' name leads to power, and action and a life change. Answers to these questions in the form of theology are secondary to the importance of relationships. Baptism in Jesus means the ministry begins.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
January 12 - 17, 2009

YOU called? Will we be ready to answer? Are we even sure that we will recognize God's call? The stories for our readings this week will help us to learn how to recognize God's presence in our lives. They will encourage us to look in unexpected places and to listen, to new messengers. May we respond by becoming carriers of God's message in new ways.

MONDAY, January 12: I Samuel 3:1-20

Samuel was brought to the temple to become an apprentice to the priest Eli by his mother Hannah. She desperately wanted a child and after Samuel was finally born, she dedicated her son's life to the Lord. It was here while faithfully attending the lamps during the night that Samuel receives the call from God. He doesn't recognize the Lord and goes to Eli. Eli has lost favor with God because of his sons' sins, but he still is able to instruct the young Samuel on how to listen and respond when God calls.

TUESDAY, January 13: I Samuel 3:1-20

God's message to Samuel was not a gentle one. Eli and his entire family were condemned. God instructed the young boy with the message that the established authorities would be overthrown because they had been unfaithful. God wanted new leadership for his people. Samuel continued to grow in God's sight and soon became a national figure. He had experienced the call to be a prophet.

WEDNESDAY, January 14: Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18

"Our unspeakably wonderful God"! What an unspeakably wonderful thought! This psalm comes from someone who knows that God is a Savior God. The psalm was written shortly after the people of Israel were brought home from the Exile, and it touches some of the deepest levels of the human experience. God is all around us. He is within us. We celebrate his presence in our lives and in our world. To be created by God. To be known by God. To be loved unconditionally by God. Alleluia, Amen!

THURSDAY, January 15: I Corinthians 6: 12-20

In this chapter of Paul's letter, he tries to draw attention to the need for purity in the life of a Christian. Corinth was a large metropolitan city with the reputation for commercial prosperity and evil living. To live like a Corinthian meant to live with drunkenness and immorality. Many Greeks considered the physical body, the flesh and

blood, to be less important; so, the more important aspect of human life was the soul, the human spirit.

But, Paul argues that God created man as a whole. The body and soul were made for union with Christ in this world and an even closer union in the next. Paul urges. The people of Corinth to accept the power they will receive as a Christian to be master of their bodies, and not slaves to them. In closing, he reminds them that Christ gave his life to give us a redeemed soul and a pure body. A man's body is not his own to do as he likes; it belongs to Christ be used for the glory of Christ.

FRIDAY, January 16: John 1: 43-51

As Jesus travels north toward Galilee, he finds Philip. The simple invitation to "Follow me" convinces Philip that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah that had been promised by Moses and the prophets. Excitedly, Philip hurries to find his friend Nathaniel to tell the "good news".

Philip is met with doubt and contempt. "How could anything good come out of Nazareth?" Rivalry and jealousy were apparent between the small towns and villages in Galilee. Philip does not take time to argue. He simply invites Nathaniel to "come and see".

SATURDAY, January 17: John 1: 43-51

Jesus meets Nathaniel and almost immediately makes a statement that touches Nathaniel's heart. Nathaniel wonders aloud: "How do you know me?" We have read earlier this week passages that describe how we are "known" by God. Nathaniel realizes he is with the promised Son of God and is committed to follow this man forever who had silenced the long-awaited yearnings of his heart.

"O God, you are constantly present in our lives and in the world, like a lamp burning through the night. Reveal yourself to us and through us. Tune our hearts and minds to recognize your bright calling to us to live in ways that reflect your steadfast love. Amen."

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

January 19 - 24, 2009

A JOURNEY: This week we will consider how we respond to God's call for faithful living. What will we do — run away or follow? Our lives are a journey and our ultimate concern should be that of our final destination, (i.e.) to be in the arms of our loving Savior or face an eternity without Him. Christ calls us to follow him and has defined the path our lives should take. This path will not be an easy one, it will be easier to take a more comfortable path, but our life's journey is a short one and eternity is forever.

MONDAY, January 19: Jonah 3: 1 – 10

Many of us have long known the story of Jonah, the reluctant prophet. As the story goes, God calls upon him to proclaim a word of judgment against the city of Nineveh and he runs away instead. He boards a ship for the furthest port, but his plan is foiled by a storm. He gets tossed into the sea where a huge fish swallows him up. The fish spits him out on dry land and he's back to where he started. God calls on him again.

Perhaps we haven't thought as much about Jonah the most successful of the prophets. When God calls upon him the second time to proclaim a message to Nineveh, he does it, though still with some reluctance. He goes only part of the way into the city and keeps his message to one short sentence. But apparently this is enough: the people immediately believe him and put on sackcloth as a sign of repentance. God sees that they have turned from their evil ways and decides not to destroy them.

TUESDAY, January 20: Jonah 3: 1 – 10

All of these quick turnarounds -- Jonah turning around from God, the Ninevites turning around to God, and God turning around from justice to mercy -- give style to the substance of this story. The point of the story and its real substance is that God's mercy will override God's justice. In Judaism, the story of Jonah is read for Yom Kippur, a day to reflect on and repent of one's sins. It is shared not as a true story in terms of facts but as a story of profound truth. How does this story help us reflect on the ways we have turned from God, and how to turn to God in trust? How do we hear the essential truth of it in: God is merciful and loving and that our relationship with God depends on our willing reflection and repentance?

WEDNESDAY, January 21: Psalm 62: 5 – 12

The “turning point” of this psalm is in agreeing not to put one’s trust in anything or any body other than God. An interesting writing style is used in the psalm to convey the message “only in God.” Six lines of the psalm in Hebrew begin with the emphatic article *ak* which means “only.” Only in God is there peace, not in riches: “do not set your heart on them” The people can trust that while they will be paid according to their work — they will be accountable for their lives — God’s judgment will be within the context of God’s steadfast love.

THURSDAY, January 22: 1 Corinthians 7: 29 – 31

In his letters to the Corinthian church, the apostle Paul is helping the community work out the details of what it means to turn around from their former lives to face their new lives as Christians. What do they have to do differently in order to practice the faith as fully and faithfully as they can? For instance, what should they do about marriage? In this passage, Paul offers the community his opinion about whether or not people have to turn from marriage in order to live faithfully as Christians. His preference for the “marriage free” state and his allowance for those who need to be married because of sexual compulsion might suggest that he thinks the decision is about what will allow people to concentrate on the faith most fully.

FRIDAY, January 23: Mark 1: 14 – 20

Here is Mark’s understanding of the gospel in a nutshell: “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” For Simon, Andrew, James, and John, turning to follow this truth in Jesus meant turning from everything they had known — these fishers dropped their nets and left their families.

Jesus calls us to live by God’s priorities, to make our choices as if we were citizens of God’s realm, and to see each other as God sees us. What sorts of things must we turn from to follow his call? The root of the word “repent” means to turn around, to change direction. Sometimes turning around means to seek forgiveness from someone, but it can mean much more.

SATURDAY, January 24:

“Loving God, you know the ways in which we turn from you and fail to trust you. Help us heed your calls to turn around and follow you. Amen.”

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
January 26 - 31, 2009

MONDAY, January 26: Mark 1:21 - 28

Mark reveals that Jesus taught with such authority that even the demons recognized him as the Son of God. This passage reminds us of the recent Vampire movie which so many young people enjoy. I don't believe in vampires, of course, but the image of the cross—representing Christ's authority— warding off vampires is a comforting one. Vampires are evil, demons are evil, and we are surrounded by evil. We are confronted by evil daily—both in its earthly forms that we can see and in its supernatural forms that we cannot see. Each of us who has been baptized and has accepted Jesus' authority carries with us a sign that is as visible to the evil one as the cross is to the vampire. How can this knowledge of protection by Christ's authority inform our relationship to the evil around us? Are we less afraid? Or better yet—what are we afraid of? Indeed—if God is for us, who is against us? What power do they have? None!

TUESDAY, January 27: Deuteronomy 18:15 - 20

In his last days, Moses is careful to instruct his people to look for a true prophet. They are not to use any kind of magic—divination, casting lots, etc—to see the future. Rather, they are to rely on God's word through a prophet that he will raise up. How do we recognize such a prophet? By whether or not his prophecies come true, Moses tells us. God's truth is confirmed by history. Have we seen this to be true? In looking back over your life, can you see that God has truly worked his purposes out according to His Word?

WEDNESDAY, January 28: Mark and Deuteronomy, continued

Taking the Mark and Deuteronomy passages together, we see that Jesus speaks the *truth* with *authority*. In other words, we can bank on his promises to us because they *will* be fulfilled. What has Jesus instructed us to do? Lose your life in order to save it. Be generous. Be compassionate. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Have you ever regretted acting in a Christ-like manner? Have you ever regretted taking the high road? Has there ever been *anything* that Christ taught that has not been proven to be true and effective? Why, then, do we hesitate to follow Christ's commands?

THURSDAY, January 29: Psalm 111

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding,” the psalmist tells us. Again, we are encouraged to rely exclusively and consistently on God’s authority as revealed through his Word—both the Scripture and the Incarnate Word. God’s authority is based on TRUTH and because of that we are secure.

Psalm 111 also reminds us that we can look beyond God’s truth in our own lives to the whole of creation to see the effects of God’s promises and provision. We can reflect on the ultimate victory of God whenever the state of the world concerns and depresses us.

FRIDAY, January 30: 1 Corinthians 8: 1 - 13

Even when we know what is right to do, based upon God’s authority and God’s word, we still ought to be sensitive to those who struggle with understanding. Those with experience of having God’s promises come true, still have an obligation to be gentle and humble with their knowledge, while remaining unafraid with integrity. How can we share our faith with others in gentle and humbling ways? Perhaps telling a story is a good place to start. Think about your life so far and choose a time when God has worked faithfully with you. Is it a good story? Is it interesting? This week, look for an opportunity to share your story!

SATURDAY, January 31: 1 Corinthians 8: 1 - 13

“Each member of a community who grows in love and wisdom helps the growth of the whole community. Each person who refuses to grow, or is afraid to go forward, inhibits the community’s growth. All the members of a community are responsible for their own growth and that of the community as a whole.

“Human growth is to do with integrating our capacity for action with our heart. Too often, action springs from a fear of relationships, of our own vulnerability, or of love; it comes from a fear of dependence, of sexuality, and of our own deep and hidden self. Action is too often a flight or a desire to prove something.

“When we are at peace, when we have accepted our own deep wounds and weakness, when we are in touch with our own heart and capacity for tenderness, then actions flow from our true selves, and become a source of growth.”

Do you think Paul would agree with these thoughts of Jean Vanier? Do you agree? What recent action of yours reflects your true self?

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
February 2 – 7, 2009

When have you felt worn out recently? How did you restore yourself? The Scripture readings for this week encourage us to reach out to God through prayer and reflection, and find renewal and encouragement. Restored by faith, we can then reach out to others in new and vital ways.

MONDAY, February 2: Isaiah 40: 21 – 31

When today's passage from the Book of Isaiah was collected as Scripture, around the second half of the sixth century BC, the God's chosen people were living in exile following their defeat by the Babylonian military. During the first half of that century, the temple and Jerusalem had been destroyed. It is easy to imagine the people's discouragement and weariness. Picture displaced persons around the world today, refugees and others who must live outside of their homelands due to war and conquest.

This passage calls God's people to remember our source of strength, the one God who has created the universe and rules the world and everything within it. This is the God who will restore the people and will liberate them, just as the slaves were brought out of Egypt in the time of Moses.

TUESDAY, February 3: Psalm 147

This psalm draws directly from Isaiah 40 and other passages that sound themes of the compassionate God of creation bringing restoration and renewal. God is to be praised, the psalmist says, because God gathers the outcasts, heals the broken-hearted, and lifts up the downtrodden. God, merciful and steadfast in love, is the hope of the people.

WEDNESDAY, February 4: Mark 1: 29 – 39

The opening stories in Mark's gospel add up to a frenzy of activity. Mark records Jesus' baptism, his calling of disciples, his teaching in the synagogue, and the casting out of unclean spirits. Even when Jesus tries to retire to the home of Simon and Andrew with James and John, he is called upon to heal Simon's mother – in - law. "Immediately" is a favorite word in Mark's gospel that reflects the pace of the story telling. Crowds begin to press in around the house, demanding more words and deeds of power from Jesus.

Finally, in the midst of all of this and in the heart of our story for today, there is a pause in the action. Early in the morning on the day after arriving at Simon and Andrew's house, Jesus takes himself out to a deserted place to pray. It isn't much of a time apart.

The disciples follow him and right away they get Jesus back on the road to preach and cast out demons throughout Galilee. Somehow, in that brief time apart, Jesus finds new strength and energy to continue his journey of love and service.

THURSDAY, February 5: Mark 1: 29 – 39

Jesus is able to offer his energy and strength to Simon's mother-in-law in the brief encounter with her. He reached out to this woman who was weak with fever, raised her up, and restored her to serve. Could the restoration we seek in times of weariness be waiting for us in even the briefest pause to invite God to raise us up?

What might we be restored to do? When Jesus is restored, he moves out again to preach and heal. When Simon's mother-in-law is restored, she is able to offer her guests hospitality. Both Jesus and the woman extend the welcoming presence of God to those around them. May God restore us to welcome others in his name.

FRIDAY, February 6: Mark 1: 29 – 39

The Greek word that describes the mother-in-law's actions is "*diaconeo*." That is the root for our word "deacon." This is the same word Mark uses in verse 13 for how the angels attend to Jesus in the wilderness. Those who are deacons are like angels and Jesus himself -- providing what is necessary to sustain life.

How is our own life informed by this practice of hospitality to one another? Our lives are so often frenzied with activity. How do we seek the strength not only to keep going and doing all that needs to be done, but also to deepen the sense of purpose for our lives? In time apart with God, reflecting on our lives, our gifts and abilities, and the cries for help around us, we tap into an ultimate source of restoration. We are raised up to share God's hospitality and life in new ways.

SATURDAY, February 7: 1 Corinthians 9: 16 - 23

Paul asks rhetorical questions that make the case for his claims, including the right to be supported by the community. He sets himself as an example of service that is responsive to the needs of others in order that all may have the opportunity to receive the good news. Consider how Paul needs the community to welcome and support him that he might be renewed and strengthened.

Through each of these passages, we learn about hospitality and healing as transformation. The prophet's assurance; "I will raise you up on eagles' wings," is for all God's people.

O God, our strength, raise us up on wings like eagles. When we are weary, restore us to your purpose and fill us with your hospitality and hope. Amen.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
February 9 – 14, 2009

MONDAY, February 9: 2 Kings 5: 1 – 14

In this story, there is a building of "power structures." The unnamed captive Israelite woman speaks to Naaman's wife. Naaman's wife speaks to Naaman. Naaman speaks to the Aramean king. And now the Aramean king writes to the Israelite king asking that Naaman be healed. It would appear that the Israelite king is at the "apex" of the power structure. Each conversation has led to this final conversation with him. And yet the king himself declares, "Am I God to give death or life?" The one with the power not only confesses that he is powerless, but equally shocking, appears unaware of what everyone else in the story knows: there is a prophet, a man of God, in his land who can heal leprosy. Elisha hears of the king's anguish and orders Naaman to him.

TUESDAY, February 10: 2 Kings 5: 1 – 14

Naaman appears at Elisha's house, and instead of coming out to greet the "great warrior," Elisha sends out a messenger with instructions. Naaman is angered by Elisha's apparently flippant response. It seems that Naaman wants a grand theatrical event, complete with shouts to God and a little "hocus pocus." After all, he is the "great warrior." He wants the attention demanded of such a great man. Yet the one with power is not Naaman; it is Elisha. It was the faith of a servant girl that started this. Now, it is the faith of Naaman's servants that ensures its completion. They chastise Naaman for his pride and remind him that had the requirement been a difficult task, he surely would have done it. Naaman consents and does "according to the word of the man of God." Naaman concedes that he does not have the power to end his leprosy. Naaman demonstrates his faith. His cleansing comes not as a result of his power, but of his willingness to believe.

WEDNESDAY, February 11: Psalm 30

We have all met people sad and in pain. At times, it may be our own experience too. It is part of human existence. Whether it will be felt as a divine punishment is another matter. Some suffering we do bring on ourselves because God's world does not make exceptions to the consequences of our actions. If and when reprieve comes, there may also be a changed attitude toward everything, especially toward God.

Is death the consequence of sin? the natural end of life necessary to make room for the next generation? It seems our bodies were meant to serve us for a limited life span. The next life will be different, and Jesus' resurrection is the key event which changes us from lamenters to praisers. Surely not all sufferers escape death as the

Psalms did. Should or will they praise God anyway? In an age where medicine plays such a great role in healing, do we still see God's involvement in the process?

THURSDAY, February 12: Mark 1: 40 – 45

The leper presses the issues of the good news: "If you are willing, you have the power to make me clean" The leper's question is not about cleansing and power in general, but about the power to make "me" clean. The issue of the good news is whether it has the power to effect change in my life and yours. The leper recognizes that if there is to be healing, it will be dependent on a God who "wills" that it be so. The "if" in his question leaves that matter up in the air. His words remind us that hearing the arrival of this Jesus as good news depends on finding in him the epiphany of a God who actually "wills" that this healing be so. But his words also recognize that such actuality takes more than "will." This issue of power is central. It is here in the leper's request. It is there again in verse 45, where strangely and surprisingly we hear that the successful spread of the word about Jesus means he no longer "has the power" to go around "openly." Instead, He must stay in secret in the wilderness.

FRIDAY, February 13: Mark 1: 40 – 45

These matters of power will move this story to the cross. But for now, Jesus' immediate answer is clear. Jesus is moved with compassion. He reaches out, touches the leper, and says, "I am willing." If there is any question of the requisite power to cleanse, it is avoided and leapt over. The "I will" becomes immediate reality in Jesus' command: "Be made clean" (Mark 1:41-42). In Jesus, "I will" is the power of the good news to change lives and the message of Epiphany; that in Jesus this will and power of God is clearly revealed. Boundaries are crossed; issues of power are addressed; unclean becomes clean; the sick become whole. The story of this Jesus will get out!

SATURDAY, February 14: 1 Corinthians 9: 24 – 27

Paul's encouragement to strive, train, learn, grow, and exercise, is a call to everyone who runs in the Way. All are to run this race, and all of us are encouraged to run and box with heart. Paul talks about the victory wreath that is the prize for which we run our race. The wreath itself is not one's own resurrection or prize of eternal life. The proclamation of the gospel, be it public or private, in front of an audience or one-to-one, can be difficult. As Paul says elsewhere it may seem like foolishness and folly to many who hear it, and this will, from time to time, reflect back on we who proclaim it. But this is our imperishable wreath, the life and salvation of those for whom and with whom we run this race.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE**February 16 – 21, 2009****MONDAY, February 16: 2 Kings 2: 1 – 12**

The thrust of this story is not about what happened to Elijah but what happens to the prophetic voice of God carried on by figures like Elijah. The story suggests that the prophetic office does not end with the death or even ascension of one particular figure, but it is available for all who choose to carry on that tradition. In some sense, every community of faith stands opposite Jericho with a mantle before it. Occasionally, in rare moments, those who have glimpsed upward and seen the whirlwind of God are compelled to bend down and pick up that mantle, believing that now is the moment for them to strike the waters. The voice of the prophet is rare indeed these days, not because all of the prophets have ascended into the heavens, but because few choose to see the whirlwind, and fewer still choose to live as though it has changed us.

TUESDAY, February 17: Psalm 50

How do you respond to the words, "The boss would like to set up a meeting with you?" Depending upon both your relationship with the boss and your recent performance at work, you may be one who is encouraged by this imminent meeting. "Finally, a raise!" Or you may get that proverbial pit in the stomach which screams, "Oh oh!"

The announcement that God is approaching as judge yields contrasting responses as well. Not unlike the way we talk about law and gospel in preaching (that is, the very same word can be heard as law to some and gospel to others), the effect of this announcement depends upon the stance of the recipient of such news. For some, the announcement that the mighty one, God the Lord, will appear is a longed-for event. Yet, for others, it is the impetus for trembling. Yes, it is clear that judgment takes center stage in the beginning of this Psalm, but is this welcomed or undesirable judgment? Of course, that depends upon what we know about who is doing the judging and, secondly, who is being judged.

WEDNESDAY, February 18: Mark 9: 2 – 9

Mark's transfiguration story stands as a transition between the Sundays of Epiphany, with the progressive revelation of the power and presence of the good news of God's kingdom in this Jesus, and the season of Lent, with its progressive focus on the journey of Jesus to suffering and the cross. This is where this story will take us. The question in this story is whether these same disciples, who have apparently abandoned everything to follow Jesus, and now wonder as to where, how and whether this following

is all that it seemed to promise. In the same way, the question for us today is whether we who have heard Jesus' call and followed him through these series of "epiphanies" will be just as eager to follow him where he leads us on this way to the cross.

THURSDAY, February 19: Mark 9: 2 – 9

Mark's transfiguration story pulls back the curtain a bit and allows a glimpse of where this story is going, and in so doing invites us to experience both the climax and crisis of hearing that good news. More than any of the gospels, Mark's story makes clear that if there is to be any transformation of us hearers into disciples and followers, new life will be connected to the suffering and death of Jesus the Messiah that now unfolds in his subsequent story.

At some points in the walk of discipleship, we will have to be content with only glimpses of what is to come. Our understanding of the reality and nature of the promise of Jesus' death and resurrection is always at risk in our lives. To be invited to see this transfigured Jesus is to be invited into a story in which discipleship means to live with ambiguity; living by faith while trusting the one who promises. For disciples, the promise of the kingdom is not a matter of control or security, but of the persuasive power of the promise of God that in Jesus we meet and follow one who goes to suffering and death and resurrection and then calls all of us who wait for his return to live in watchful confidence that the kingdom has already come among us in power.

FRIDAY, February 20: 2 Corinthians 4: 1 – 6

What about those who do not believe? Are they without the Spirit? Are they left to muddle through on their own, spiritless, punchless or faithless? Or worse, do they suffer the fate of Saul, being afflicted by an evil spirit? Paul seems to suggest just this. Paul addresses the question of whether the gospel is "veiled." Paul's conclusion is that if the gospel is veiled—hidden, obscured, unknown—it is only veiled to those who have been blinded by the "god of this world." This "god of this world" is in conflict with the God of Heaven. Is the gospel not the power of God for salvation? Is the gospel not the life-line for those who are perishing? Does the gospel not protect us?

SATURDAY, February 21: 2 Corinthians 4: 1 – 6

Everything that is at stake in this passage, veils and "gods" of this world and the problem of those who do not believe, everything points to our big calling to proclaim the glory of Christ, to speak light into darkness, to share the knowledge of God that we have experienced in Jesus Christ. This is our calling. Let your light shine!

Opportunities for Spiritual Growth at Trinity



**“WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE
... OR ARE SUPPOSED TO”**
9:00 A.M. Sunday mornings in the Parlor
JANUARY 4 through FEBRUARY 8, 2009

led by
The Rev. Dr. Richard R. Streeter
Honorably Retired, Pastor Emeritus of Paoli Presbyterian Church

TUESDAY MORNING GROUP

**The Great Emergence:
How Christianity is Changing & Why**

9:30 A.M. in the Church Parlor



THURSDAY MORNING MEN'S STUDY

7:00 A.M. in the Church Library

Continuing our study of Genesis

PRAYING THE PSALMS

with Catherine

every other Friday at 11:00 AM in the Sacristy:
meets next on January 23