

NOVEMBER 15, 2020
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking⁺ faith home

The importance of encouraging one another.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 25:14-30	Parable of the talents
Monday	Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18	Judgment of Judah
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Encourage one another
Wednesday	Judges 4:1-7	Deborah and Barak
Thursday	Psalms 123	A prayer for mercy
Friday	Philemon 1:4-7	Philemon's love and faith
Saturday	Psalms 90:1-12	God is eternal
Sunday	Matthew 25:31-46	The sheep and the goats

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, we thank you for the body of Christ that helps us when life is difficult and our faith is weak. Amen.

Mealtide Prayer:

Lord God, you who make the earth fruitful, we thank you for this meal that strengthens our bodies and encourages our souls. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Almighty God strengthen your soul through brothers and sisters in Christ.
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Will You Let Me Be
Your Servant*

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How do you support someone when they are discouraged or are feeling down?
- How has someone supported you when you were in need of encouragement?
- Why do you think Christians need support and encouragement from one another?

DEVOTIONS

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

Good times and hard times can happen—and change—rather quickly (v. 3). Daily life is fragile. Life experiences can change dramatically with a phone call. What is constant is the need to care for one another and build up the body of Christ. There are important connections between this text and the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. God has gifted us to use our vocation, our calling in life as a child of God, to do God's work in the world. If we do not do this, if we ignore or hide our calling, the ministry of the church suffers. Instead, we are to trust in a God who acts; we are not to fall prey to complacency and speak and live as though God is not present and active in our lives and history (Zephaniah 1:12). Paul reminds the people that they—and we—are to reach out to others—especially our brothers and sisters in the faith. We are to do so with encouragement to live each day in faith, love, and hope because of the God who acts and has given us “salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9). How are you encouraged by others to live your faith? How do you encourage others?

Pray: **God of grace, we thank you for the cloud of witnesses that walk alongside us to strengthen us in faith, love, and hope through Christ. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus' parable of the talents makes a strong case for every Christian to have a calling, to use one's gifts and passions to serve the church and the world. Make a list of how to use your gifts and talents to serve the church and world around you.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

A *talent* in Jesus' day was money. Jesus tells a story about three servants. One hid his money and never used it. In our day, we think of a talent as a natural ability to be good at something. If we are good at something, we should not hide our talent but use it to the best of our ability. Drawing, singing, and dancing are a few talents. Think of what talent(s) you have and in what ways you can tell others about Jesus by using that talent. Each day this week choose one talent to use and say this prayer: **Dear God, help me to use my talents, whether big or small, so that others know you. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org