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Perfect Love Casts Out Fear

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love...There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear..." I John 4:7-8, 18a

e are familiar with fear. It grips our heart, quickens our breathing, confuses our thinking. It can turn us inward, to protect that which is dear, to ward off that which is dangerous, or to shut out that which is different. Fear triggers automatic, reactive, and defensive behaviors, which can be essential and lifesaving when one is in immediate danger. However, living in a state of constant fear closes off our ability to think creatively, builds suspicion in our minds, and causes us to act irrationally. Fear can fill us with constant anxiety which paralyzes us; fear can also undermine our ability to trust and to act out of love towards others. Fear, if left unaddressed, can harm us.

Fear we know.

But what about perfect love? We are less familiar with perfect love, especially that perfect love that casts out fear, that enable us to love perfectly, that empowers us to act with courage and creativity. Scripture has a lot to say about perfect love:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." John 3:16-17 "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends." I Corinthians 13: 4-8a

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:12-13

This is just a sampling of the richness of the Bible in describing that perfect love that casts out fear. This Lent, we will explore the many ways God's perfect love casts out our fear to shape us as disciples of Jesus. We will gather via Zoom every Wednesday beginning February 24th at 7:00 p.m. for a service of song, prayer and Word that will focus our hearts, minds, and lives on the perfect love of God, so that we can live faithfully with courage.

I hope you will come to renew your spirit. Come to hear God's Word. Let the prayer and the music draw you closer to our God and Savior. Come, beloved, and abide in the tender mercies and abundant love of our God.

In Christ,

Pastor Mims

Lenten Services

We will observe Ash Wednesday on February 17th, though our service will look a bit different than in years past. A recorded Ash Wednesday service will be released via Life Together, Facebook, and YouTube, available for you to view at your convenience throughout the day. We will have the Imposition of Ashes accompanying a Drive-Through Communion on February 17th from 8:00-9:00 a.m., 12:00-1:00 p.m., and 5:00-6:00 p.m., following necessary safety protocols. You do not need to sign-up; we invite you to come at the time most convenient for you.

We also invite you to join us on the Wednesdays during Lent for a Zoom Evening Prayer Service at 7:00 p.m. Our theme is "Perfect Love Casts Out Fear," where we will immerse ourselves in the love of God through Scripture and Song. Like our mid-week Advent services, these times of worship offer encouragement, community, and spiritual renewal.

FLY – National Youth Gathering 2022

Virtual 1300-mile Challenge Set to Begin in Lent

When was the last time you mounted up with wings as eagles? (Is. 40:31).

onsider this your invitation to "fly" with the youth of First Lutheran as they prepare to travel the 1300-mile pilgrimage to Minneapolis for the 2022 National Youth Gathering. They are readying their hearts and their carry-ons for the triennial journey. Let us help them get ready by taking our own pilgrimage with them, and let's have fun along the way!

The Gathering—and the pilgrimage to get there—is a physical, spiritual, relationship, and service experience that will challenge youth to grow in these areas of their lives. We will grow, too. Beginning February 17, the first day of Lent, any church member (youth or otherwise) can participate in a 4-month

virtual, multi-faceted challenge. Some of us will actually complete the tasks; others of us will pledge prayer, financial, or emotional support; some of us may even do both. Together we can embrace our group of young travelers as we help cover their travel costs and fill their backpacks with love and prayer.

What is next? Watch weekly email updates for more information and the link to participate in and support the Pilgrimage to Minneapolis. Then, whether you are riding your bicycle to your favorite bakery; learning new insights about the Sermon on the Mount; finding out about the childhood home of your next-door neighbor or serving a meal to someone who has fond memories of Grandma's apple pie, you can count the experience as miles on your pilgrimage. So, come spread your wings. We will see you at takeoff on February 17!

"Troubling the Waters"

he forums held in November that focused on the sign in our courtyard ("Black Lives Matter") was helpful. It gave people an opportunity to express their reactions to the sign, both positive and negative, and we were pleased by the dominantly positive response. We return to those three words in this month's reflection in order to reach more of our members on this important topic, and to address the ambiguity posed by those words.

According to Wikipedia, BLM can be traced to a post on Facebook in July 2013 by a Black labor organizer in Oakland named Alicia Garza. She called it "a love letter to black people," a lament prompted by the acquittal of George Zimmerman who had shot and killed the Black teenager, Trayvon Martin. She ended her post with the words, "...black people, I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." Those last three words were later amended by a friend of Garza to create a hashtag for the Internet: #Black Lives Matter. It now identifies a fluid civil rights organization which today consists of some 30 to 40 chapters spread throughout the world, each dedicated to empowering Black people within its community.

The slogan, "Black Lives Matter," went viral with the slaying of George Floyd, creating a *movement* well beyond the impact of the *organization*. It accentuates the ambiguity in how to understand what the words refer to. They are seen on the one hand as identifying an organization, but on the other hand as a wider movement on behalf of justice for Black citizens. It has attracted people of all colors, including Whites, who typically



know little to nothing about the organization but are genuinely concerned about justice for people of color. This would describe the response of our congregation and many others as well. It is a genuine movement that highlights the value and dignity of black people, not over or against white people or other races, but in response to the particular challenges they face in our society.

Another suggestion for your reading: Isabel Wilkerson, *CASTE:* The Origins of Our Discontents.

NEST Update February 17 – 23

"Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." Romans 12:13

s NEST began on December 2nd, it became clear that the number of overflow guests not housed in local hotels and in need of shelter far exceeded the 17 spaces FLC and other churches could accommodate. First Presbyterian Church on Colonial Avenue in Ghent volunteered to be the physical site accommodating 45 guests for the entire 2020-2021 season. PRAISE!! This means we will be hosting our week, food and volunteers, at First Presbyterian. Strict COVID-19 precautions are in place including mandatory mask wear and temperature checks for all guests and volunteers, professional cleaning, movement restrictions, preassigned sleeping spaces with plexiglass shields between mats, and limited interaction with the guests. Merrie Jo and Gail Plauka have worked several different shifts and the process has run smoothly and safely.

For our week to be successful we need YOU to volunteer for the following opportunities:

DINNER PREP 4 people, including 1 coordinator

Deliver to First Pres by 5:30 pm

 Plan menu, bake/heat pre-purchased food, and prepare individual guest food containers for nightly meal service.
 FLC is able to provide funds to purchase the food and we are here to help with menu suggestions, where to purchase, and any other help.

WELCOME/REGISTRATION 4 people

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

 Check-in guests, assign sleeping pods, help guests "shop" for clothes in the clothes' closet as guests remain in their pods.

OVERNIGHT MONITOR 4 people

9:00 pm to 1:30 am

• Help maintain a restful night. Check-in late arrivals as necessary. Assemble bag breakfasts.

OVERNIGHT MONITOR 2 people

1:30 am to 6:00 am

 Help maintain a restful night. Check-in late arrivals and manage early wake-ups as necessary.

BREAKFAST/CLEAN UP 4 people

5:00 am to 7:30 am

• Prep coffee, hand out breakfast/lunch bags, clean up in preparation for the sanitation crew.

To volunteer, please visit our Sign-Up Genius at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0d4dadab2aa5fd0-nest.

Again, cash donations are gratefully accepted to purchase food items and bus tickets. Please call Merrie Jo Milner (757-560-0781) or Gail Plauka (757-619-9667) with your questions or to register for a shift(s).

Thrivent Grants

If you use Thrivent financial services, you are eligible to apply for up to two \$250 grants per year. These grants can be used to support ongoing service activities at FLC or other community projects. (More information here: (https://www.thrivent.com/what-weoffer/generosity/thrivent-action-teams.html) Don't let this funding

opportunity go to waste! The Service Committee can match you with a service activity and help you prepare the short grant application. If you are a Thrivent member and would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please contact Elizabeth Janik.

Stewardship

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill-offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. For we are aliens and transients before you, as were all our ancestors; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own."

1 Chronicles 29: 14-16

ne of King David's greatest desires in his life was to build a Temple for God, a dwelling place among God's people for the Living Lord. That desire was to be realized through his son, Solomon. But David provided the architectural plan and the raw materials for the Temple, and the people of Israel also gave freely and willingly from what they possessed for the building of the Temple.

It was an occasion celebrated among the people of Israel, and King David "rejoiced greatly" at the generosity of his people. But then he offered up the prayer written above: "O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from you hand and is all your own." Though the people gave freely and joyfully, still David acknowledged that none of it really was theirs. It all really comes from God's hand in the first place, and we are simply giving back to God what he has given to us.

That is what stewardship is really about anyway. Managing, taking care of, stewarding things that belong to someone else.

Everything we possess is only ours to manage, take care of, steward, use wisely. Shelter, food, clothing, money, automobiles, our 'stuff' that we enjoy, and which make our lives easier.... they come to us through God's hands.

It is so tempting to hold on to it, tightly, like we can't live without it. It is so tempting to try and grab and grasp as much as we can in case there isn't enough to go around. So stewarding, managing, using wisely requires faith – trusting that God has provided in the past, and God will continue to provide. It can be tough to believe that is true when there's more month than money or when the unexpected happens and you wonder how you are going to get through yet another emergency.

God is not asking us to become destitute in our support of the ministry of the Church; he is asking us to use wisely what he has first given us. Maybe that means we re-evaluate our spending patterns; maybe that means giving first and trusting that the necessities will still be provided for. Maybe that means getting one's house in order, so that one day you will be able to give generously and joyfully. For others it may mean recognizing how richly one has been blessed, and stepping up in one's giving. I think the point of David's prayer is one, acknowledging that all we have is a gift from God and two, giving *joyfully and freely*.

Gracious God, all that we have comes from your hand. Help us to use wisely what you have given us to take care of our families and loved ones and to support the visible expressions of your work in the world. Teach us how to be generous and thankful, that we might give not out of guilt or coercion, but joyfully, freely, and graciously, for your sake. Amen.

Tuesday Dinner Ministry Challenge Grant

ur Tuesday Dinner Ministry is feeding families, those without a home, people struggling to make ends meet, and many others living with food insecurity. Through this ministry, First Lutheran is giving hope to our community and showing forth the love and care of Jesus.

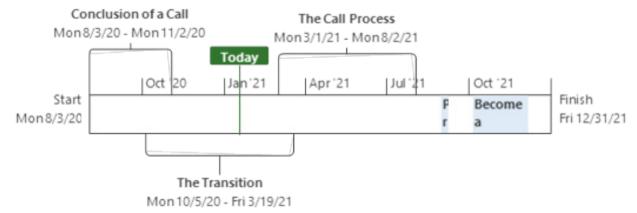
This ministry is not fully funded in our Ministry Investment Plan, but your financial gift can help this ministry continue its good work here in Ghent. We have secured a \$5,000.00 challenge grant from members of First Lutheran - which means that every dollar raised by the congregation during the month of February up to \$5,000.00 will be matched - which means that we will have a total of \$10,000.00 for the Tuesday Dinner Ministry and it will be fully funded for the year.

Will you consider supporting this ministry with your financial gift? Bring hope and love to our community through our Tuesday Dinner Ministry! Thank you for your generosity!

Looking Ahead: The Call Process (Phase 1 & 2)

he Call Process for a new Rostered Minister may seem unfamiliar and mysterious. The Call Process for the Virginia Synod is laid out in great detail (89 pages worth of detail) in the Virginia Synod Call Process Handbook. I would like to help

define the different steps in the process and give you a sense of direction on where we are heading. I have broken the phases of the process out in a timeline to provide a sense of direction on where we are going.



Phase 1 – Conclusion of a Call (Aug – Nov 2020)

The 1st phase began with the retirement of Pastor Goeres in August, 2020. Pastor Goeres notified the Congregation Council of this intent to retire. John Wittmann, Council President at the time, worked with the Synod Call Coordinator to ensure First Lutheran followed the process for the Conclusion of a Call. Phase 1 concluded with a service of Thanksgiving for Pastor Goeres which included a worship service concluding his call with First Lutheran and the presentation of gifts from the congregation to both him and Neva. Because we are in the midst of a pandemic, Council made the decision to forgo an 'in person' celebration with Pastor Goeres and Neva until a later time when we can all get together safely and say our goodbye's in person; the date for that celebration is 'to be determined'.

Phase 2 – Transition (Oct 2020 - approximately Mar 2021)

We are currently in what I'm referring to as 'The Transition'. During 'The Transition', we have made an offer to Pastor Mims to serve as our Senior Interim Pastor and submitted an offer to another Pastor to serve as the Assistant Interim Pastor to help Pastor Mims manage the ministry responsibilities of our congregation. We also are beginning the Ministry Site Profile process. This is a crucial process in the overall Call Process.

"The Ministry Site Profile helps the call process in at least 4 ways:

First, it provides an opportunity for the congregation to assess its vision, its sense of mission, its goals, its current ministries, its current context for ministry and its relationship to the whole Church.

Second, it provides the congregation call committee members with basic information and a description of leadership needs which will guide their work.

Third, the profile will assist the bishop's representative in recommending candidate(s) to be considered by the call committee.

Fourth, it provides a picture of the congregation for the candidates as they consider serving the congregation."

(excerpted from the VA Synod Call Process Handbook)

We sent out Ministry Site Profile questionnaires to all active households in the congregation the week of Jan 11-15, 2021. All confirmed members in a household are qualified to respond individually to the questionnaire. You may download additional copies of the questionnaire from the church website at http://www.flcnorfolk.com. Please return all completed questionnaires to the church in the envelope provided in the mailing. In early February, we will begin holding small group meetings to discuss the questionnaire and prioritize the ministry capabilities of most importance to our congregation. This information will be shared with the Call Committee to guide their search for a new rostered minister.

Next Month – The Call Process (Phase 3 & 4)

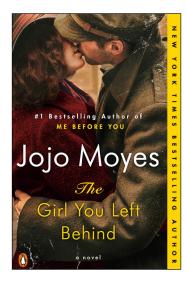
Please contact Karen Siegel or Pastor Mims if you have additional questions or concerns about the call process. We are both on the Fellowship Hour zoom calls on Thursday evenings at 7pm. Join us for fellowship and ask any questions.

February 2021

Office Hours: 9 AM—4 PM Monday-Thursday, 9 AM -1 PM Friday Men's Bible Study: 7 AM, Wednesdays, IHOP, 114 E. 21st, Norfolk, VA 23517 Women's Bible Study: 2 PM Tuesdays online, please contact Pastor Mims for more information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	9
	7 PM Congregation Council	2 PM Women's Bible Study	7 AM Men's Bible Study	7 PM Fellowship Time online	Pastor Mims' Day	
		o rivi Dinner Ministry 7 PM Martha Circle	12 FIM Lunch IMINISTY			
		Midwinter Pov	Midwinter Power in the Spirit	↑		
7	8	6	10	11	12	13
8:30 AM Children's Sunday School 10 AM Worship Online		2 PM Women's Bible Study	7 AM Men's Bible Study	7 PM Fellowship Time online		
11 AM Confirmation Class 12 PM FLY Lunch via Zoom 6:30 PM FLC Book Discussion Group		6 PM Dinner Ministry	12 PM Lunch Ministry	/ PM Pastor Call Committee		
14	15 President's Day	16	17 Ash Wednesday	18	19	20
8:30 AM Children's Sunday	Church Office	2 PM Women's Bible	7 AM Men's Bible	5:30 PM Laundry Love 6 PM Christians United		
10 AM Worship Online	Ciosea	6 PM Dinner Ministry	12 PM Lunch Ministry	7 PM Fellowship Time		
11 AM Confirmation Class 12 PM Drive-Thru Communion 2 PM UF School Standard School	Contact Deadline		See Note regarding Ash Wednesday	7 PM Pastor Call		
3 FM High School Sunday School				Committee	NEST	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:30 AM Children's Sunday		2 PM Women's Bible	7 AM Men's Bible	7 PM Fellowship Time		
10 AM Worship Online		Study 6 PM Dinner Ministry	Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	online 7 PM Pastor Call		
TBD Pastor **MSP Committee			V.00 FIM Midweek Worship via Zoom	Committee	•	
	NEST		•			
28 8:30 AM Children's Sunday School	W nO—vabsənbəyi Ask*	av—On Wednesday. Febi	ednesday. February 17th. we will offer Imposition of Ashes & Drive-Thru Communion at the following times:	nosition of Ashes & Drive		the following times:
10 AM Worship Online	-00:8	8:00—9:00 AM	•	-)
11 PM Drive-Thru Communion 3 PM High School Sunday School	-00:5 -00:5 -00:0 -00:5	12:00—1:00 PM 5:00—6:00 PM Ministers Site Brackle				
TBD Pastor **MSP Committee		Istry Sue Prome				

Connect with Others



FLC Book Discussion Group

The Girl You Left Behind by JoJo Moyes is the Book Discussion Group pick for March 7th.

A story of two women united in their fight for what they love most. Paris, 1916, Sophie Lefevre must keep her family safe while her husband fights at the front. When their town falls to the Germans, Sophie

is forced to serve them every evening at her hotel. From the moment the new Kommandant sets eyes on Sophie's portrait, a dangerous obsession is born, one that will lead Sophie to make a dark and terrible decision. Almost a century later, Sophie's portrait hangs in the home of Liv Halston, a wedding gift from her young husband before his sudden death. After a chance encounter reveals the portrait's true worth, a battle begins over its troubled history.

Grab this book and join us at 6:30 PM on March 7th to discuss choices made for love. Contact Betty Jean Meyer for the Zoom link for the meeting.

Reminder: The book for February 7th book is *Caste: The Origins of our Discontent* by Elizabeth Wilkerson

Thank You Note

Dear Rev. Mims,

I'm sure I speak for all of us at Harbor's Edge who were in attendance at the Christmas Eve service broadcast from First Lutheran Church tonight in saying how very much we appreciate the truly lovely worship experience your church made possible for our community. The solemn beauty, both visually and musically, created an esthetic experience which took me to a deeper level of appreciation of this sacred night. The lessons, prayers and message were highly impactful in this moving worship experience.

Our great friend and pastor at Harbor's Edge, the Rev. Jean Bozeman, has had such wonderful support from the church in her efforts to bring the message of Christian community to our residents, and for

her and the church's mission here we are all very grateful.

Please convey our sincere appreciation to the musicians and other members of your staff who made our Christmas Eve feel like we are still engaged with our traditions. This was so helpful, especially in these times when isolation is such an everyday risk.

Again, many, many thanks for sharing the inspiration of this blessed season with us.

Sincerely,

Ed Lilly

	February Birthdays											
1 Feb	John Porter	6 Feb	Jeff Ross	12 Feb	Tina Dulong	20 Feb	Chris Fenley	27 Feb	Tony DiBiaso			
1 Feb	David Weisenbeck	7 Feb	Waverly Douglas	12 Feb	Sydney Holbach	20 Feb	Ed Grogan	27 Feb	Bobby Masters			
2 Feb	Noah Fisher	7 Feb	Marley Fenley	14 Feb	Elena Ilardi	20 Feb	David Loope	27 Feb	Holly Milner			
2 Feb	Evelyn Robinson	7 Feb	Donna Kennard	15 Feb	Gabe Dulong	20 Feb	Chase Williams	27 Feb	Kylie Williams			
4 Feb	Tim Hund	7 Feb	Sean Rowan	16 Feb	Blake Boykin	21 Feb	Lauren Kuehl	28 Feb	Nathan Mitchell			
4 Feb	Julie Silsdorf	8 Feb	Christian Haugen	16 Feb	Marcus Janik	23 Feb	Kathy Schaus	28 Feb	Ivy Peterson			
5 Feb	Joe Leafe	8 Feb	Ardie Ilardi	16 Feb	Debbie Mansfield	24 Feb	Mark Utecht	28 Feb	Mike Stachour			
5 Feb	Michael Robinson	11 Feb	Caroline Echea	16 Feb	Yolanda Shea	25 Feb	Randi Dandrea					
6 Feb	Stephen Azar	11 Feb	Wyatt Logan	18 Feb	Julie Moberly	25 Feb	Kathy Prendergast					

Connect with Word and Body

Prayer Concerns for February

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Give joyful thanksgiving

- ...For the birth of Kiley Griswald (great granddaughter of Judy and David Basco)
- ...For courageous and calm leadership in times of confusion, turmoil, and violence
- ...For vaccination of our health-care workers, elderly, and others against the COVID pandemic

Help us

- ...Serve as wise stewards of the planet, working for the well-being of all that you have made.
- ...Support all those with COVID-19, their caregivers, and those in the medical field
- ...Give strength, hope, and courage to the poor, the sick, the hungry, the homeless, the oppressed & the imprisioned

Pray for

- ...Peace and comfort to Jeannie Philipson on the death of her husband John
- ...Peace and comfort for the family and friends of Henrietta Evenson
- ...Peace and comfort for the family of Larry Atkinson
- ...Healing for Anna Sandell, friend of Jessica Scott, for recovery after a snowmobile accident
- ...Healing for Racheal & Ev who have contracted COVID
- ...Peace and comfort for the family of Bud Holloway
- ...Peace and comfort for the family of William Harvie
- ...Peace and comfort for the family of Bruce Melchor
- ...Dabney, daughter-in-law to the nephew of Susan Stones for a safe pregnancy
- ...All children who have been separated from their parents that they be safe & protected until reunited with their family.
- ...Justice for the victims of racial oppression & violence
- ...All who have COVID and for careful management of the pandemic and vaccination process
- ...Those who are dying, that they are secure in knowing that God loves them & will welcome them into everlasting life.
- ...People fleeing dire humanitarian situations for a better life.
- ...The sick, that they are comforted and the despairing, that they receive hope.
- ...Those struggling with addiction and mental health issues.
- ...Those mourning the death of loved ones.
- ...For all who cry out to God in any need.

Margaret Ackley, Alvene Buckley, Ryan-Michael Blake, Pastor Jean Bozeman, Don Buckley, Karen Clifford, Bonnie Elverum, Margaret Fleet, Roger Fuller, Steve Griffin, Joelle Griffith (mother of Paula Barwick), Valerie & Jim Harvey, Bonnie Hilton, Marion Ingersoll, Joann Klotz, Alice McCoy, Kelley Minschke, Lorna Moss, Bill Newlon, Betty Phillips, Grace Ridenhour, Fay Rogner, Deb Thompson, John Wittmann, Jane Van Wolkenten, Betty Lou, Bonnie Hilton (mother of Linda Perron), Cindy, Colin John, Dave, Gert, Greg, Jimmy, Joe, Julie, June, Katrina, Kevin, Margaret, Mark, Neil, Ralph, Rema, Rob, Rosanna Blair

Those dealing with cancer

Jo Brouwer, James Collier, Iris Corbin, Dave Guelcher (father of Beth Zaletski), Jenn, David Kelly, Vickie Mack, Mark, Phil, Ralph, Rob, Sandy, Andie Seagraves, Gerald Stover, Dallas Williams, Jess WineKing

Military and their families:

All military personnel around the world.

Fox family and all those reunited following deployment, Austin Davidson, Kyle Hefner, Dan Kelly, Bobby Masters, Nick Masters, Ted Peterson, Brian Becker, Alex Diaz, and shipmates in the Horn of Africa for a year-long deployment. (Dec. 2019), Amy Hardbower, Nicolette Huntley, Tim Kelly, Ian Logan, Kelly Mackenzie, John Marfield, Nikki Parkman

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Readings for **February**

February 7th

Isaiah 40:21-31 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

February 14th

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

February 21st

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

February 28th

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38

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