

The First Reading

Joel 1:1-12, 17-20

The first reading is from Joel chapter 1.

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel **2** Hear this, O elders, give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your ancestors? **3** Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. **4** What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. **5** Wake up, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you wine-drinkers, over the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. **6** For a nation has invaded my land, powerful and innumerable; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. **7** It has laid waste my vines, and splintered my fig trees; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches have turned white. **8** Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth for the husband of her youth. **9** The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests mourn, the ministers of the LORD. **10** The fields are devastated, the ground mourns; for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails. **11** Be dismayed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, over the wheat and the barley; for the crops of the field are ruined. **12** The vine withers, the fig tree droops. Pomegranate, palm, and apple— all the trees of the field are dried up; surely, joy withers away among the people. **17** The seed shrivels under the clods, the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined because the grain has failed. **18** How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dazed. **19** To you, O LORD, I cry. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field. **20** Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 65:1-13

- ¹ Praise is due to you,
O God, in Zion;
and to you shall vows be performed,
² O you who answer prayer!
To you all flesh shall come.
³ When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,
you forgive our transgressions.
⁴ Happy are those whom you choose and bring near
to live in your courts.
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
your holy temple.
- ⁵ By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,
O God of our salvation;
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas.
⁶ By your strength you established the mountains;
you are girded with might.
⁷ You silence the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples.
⁸ Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.
- ⁹ You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.
¹⁰ You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
¹² The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Romans 8:18-27

The Second Reading is from Romans chapter 8.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Matthew 3:13-4:2

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 3rd-4th chapters. Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved,^[a] with whom I am well pleased."

⁴ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you O Christ.

Prayers of Intercession

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

Lord of the church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Lord of creation, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Lord of the nations, sound forth your justice in the ears of all leaders. Increase concern for those who are most vulnerable, especially as international leaders forge trade agreements and cooperate to end human rights abuses. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing. We especially for: Bradley, Josie, Bev, Nancy, John, Linda, Dave, Jim, Brad and Jodie, Cassie & Family, Delores, Graham, Bob, Ila, Norman, Darrell, Donna, Beckie, Joy, Pat, Jim, Kay and Glenn, Diane, Anna, Matthew

and Sgt. Lacey Elliott, who continues to serve our country

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Lord of the stranger, stir up holy restlessness in us to extend love to those at the margins. Release our desire for control and open us to learn from the perspectives of others. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

Amen.