

ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH
THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD
READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2026
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

THE COLLECT:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

THE FIRST READING: GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7

God has formed the first human from the dust of the ground and has breathed life into him. God has placed him in his own domain, a land of delight, the Garden of

Eden. To eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is to attempt to gain total knowledge of creation, something God does not intend humans to do.

A Reading from the Word of God, written in the Book of Genesis Chapter 2, beginning at the fifteenth verse.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The Word of the Lord

The people: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 32

A psalm of thanksgiving for the forgiveness of sin.

1. Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, *
and whose sin is put away!
2. Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
*
and in whose spirit there is no guile!
3. While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, *
because of my groaning all day long.
4. For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; *
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.
5. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, *
and did not conceal my guilt.
6. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the
LORD." *
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.
7. Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to
you in time of trouble; *
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach
them.

8. You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; *
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
9. I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; *
I will guide you with my eye.
10. Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; *
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."
11. Great are the tribulations of the wicked; *
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.
12. Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; *
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son:*
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:*
and shall be forever. **Amen.**

THE SECOND READING - ROMANS 5:12-19

Paul has said that Christians, reconciled to God, will be saved, sharing in the risen life of Christ. Now he contrasts Christ and Adam. Adam was the first human;

with Christ there is a new humanity. Both inaugurated eras.

A Reading from the Word of God, written in the Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, beginning at the twelfth verse.

As sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned-- sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one

man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The Word of the Lord

The people: Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL - MATTHEW 4: 1-11

Every Israelite was expected to live by the great commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might". Jesus shows himself to be the ideal Israelite, as he refuses to use his power in self-gratifying ways.

Gospeler: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Gospeler: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to Christ Our Saviour.

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of

God.”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

This is the Gospel of Christ

The people: Praise to Christ our Lord.

(NRSV)

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