

FEBRUARY 4, 2024  
FIFTH SUNDAY  
AFTER EPIPHANY



*Jesus' followers are sent to serve.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 1:29-39	Jesus heals many people
Monday	Isaiah 40:21-31	The Lord gives strength
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	For the sake of the gospel
Wednesday	1 Timothy 1:12-17	Gratitude for mercy
Thursday	Joshua 22:1-6	The eastern tribes return
Friday	Acts 20:25-35	Paul speaks to the elders
Saturday	Psalms 147:1-11, 20c	Praise the Lord
Sunday	Mark 9:2-9	Transfiguration of Jesus

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*He [Jesus] came and took her [Simon Peter's mother-in-law] by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.*

**Mark 1:31 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty and living God, we give you thanks and praise for raising us up to a new life to worship you and serve others with joy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Lord, you feed the animals and even the young ravens. We thank you for nurturing us with your presence in Jesus and for this meal today. Amen. (Psalm 147)

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May God bless you with the joy of service.



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*The Spirit Sends Us  
Forth to Serve*



### 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:

- Describe someone you know who likes to serve others.
- A disciple's life is one of service. How is this important to the good news of Jesus?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Mark 1:29-39.

Jesus heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law from an illness, a condition possibly approaching death. There is a clear association with the resurrection in this reading. This woman, whose name is not given, is touched by Jesus, lifted up, and begins to serve. This is a description of discipleship of all the unnamed followers of Jesus throughout history: touched and healed by Jesus, given new life, and sent out to serve. There is no hesitation about her calling; as a disciple, she serves. Other references to serve are found in Mark 1:13 when the angels of God served Jesus in the wilderness, and again in Mark 10:45, Jesus as the Son of Man came to serve. Service is the life of a follower of Jesus. It is not a burden. It is the great joy of life. Those who think the "good life" is to be served by others miss the point of the "gospel life" of Jesus. The joy of living is the ability to use whatever gifts one may have to bless others with service.

*Discuss:* In what ways have you experienced joy when serving others?

*Pray:* **Living God, help us to see and believe that the life worth living is a life of service that brings peace, joy, and your saving grace through Jesus Christ, our great healer. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you bring Jesus' healing touch to someone in need?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Isaiah 40:21-31 expresses great joy at the saving presence of God in the lives of the exiles, those who have felt abandoned and imprisoned by others. Write a list of names of those you know who are experiencing difficult times.

*Pray:* **Lord God, help (read list of names) feel your presence and know that those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. In Jesus' name, amen.** (Isaiah 40:31)



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