

Bible Challenge March 28 – April 3, 2016

INTRODUCTION: *At the suggestion of one of our readers, we are experimenting with a shift for the Bible Challenge. Instead of using the texts for the up-coming Sunday, we will be using the texts for the current Sunday - the ones printed each week in the bulletin. The obvious advantage is that readers will have ready access to the texts. Also, reviewing the past Sunday's reading may help readers reflect not only on the texts, but on the related hymns (also in the bulletin) and on the sermon that they heard. Let us know if you like this change, or if you have other suggestions to encourage Bible reading.*

FIRST READING: Acts 10:34-43

Peter's sermon, delivered at the home of Cornelius, a Roman army officer, sums up the essential message of Christianity. Everyone who believes in Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection fulfilled the words of the prophets, receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Adventure Challenge: Acts 10.

Explorer Challenge: Compare Peter's proclamation with Moses' declaration in Deuteronomy 10:12-22. (Note particularly Deut. 10: 19.)

PSALM: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Ps. 118:24)

Adventure Challenge: Psalm 118.

Explorer Challenge: *Option A.* Psalm 118 is a "Hallel" psalm; research what this means.

Option B. Using a commentary or other research tools, learn how this psalm is organized as a liturgy or processional psalm that seems to include performance instructions.

Option C. Look at Hebrews 13:6, Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:11, Acts 4:11, and Peter 2.7 to see how phrases from this Psalm 118 are used in the New Testament.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Paul describes the consequences of the resurrection, including the promise of new life in Christ to a world that has been in bondage to death. He celebrates the destruction of evil and the establishment of God's victorious rule over all.

Adventure Challenge: 1 Corinthians 15: 12–58.

Explorer Challenge: *Option A.* 1 Corinthians 15.

Option B. Compare Paul's gospel summary (1 Corinthians 15:3-11) with Peter's gospel summary in Acts 10:34-43 (our first reading).

GOSPEL: Luke 24:1-12

Evidently expecting to find Jesus' corpse, some of his women followers go to the tomb with embalming spices. After a perplexing encounter with the empty tomb and angelic visitors, the women become the first to proclaim the amazing news of resurrection.

Adventure Challenge: Luke 24.

Explorer Challenge: *Option A.* Research Jewish burial practices.

Option B. Compare this reading from Luke with parallel passages in Matthew 28: 1-8; Mark 16:1-5; John 20:1-10; and 1 Corinthians 15:3-9.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: *Alleluia.* Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the feast. *Alleluia.* (1 Cor. 5:7, 8)