

## Bible Challenge November 9-15

### INTRODUCTION

*November began with All Saints Day and will end in Advent, when we anticipate Christ's coming again. The readings this week tell of the final resurrection and the end time. In the turmoil of hope, fear, and disbelief that these predictions provoke in us, Hebrews sounds a note of confident trust. Christ makes a way for us where there is no way, and we walk it confidently, our hearts and bodies washed in baptismal water, trusting the one who has promised. The more we see the last day approaching, the more important it is to meet together to provoke one another to love.*

### FIRST READING: Daniel 12:1-3

*The book of Daniel is an example of apocalyptic literature, which is full of strange visions and symbolism. Arising during times of great persecution, apocalyptic literature is concerned with God's revelation about the end time and the coming kingdom of God, when God will vindicate the righteous who have been persecuted.*

**Adventure Challenge:** Daniel 12.

**Explorer Challenge:** *Option A:* Read Daniel 10 - 12 to gain a larger sense of the apocalyptic visions in Daniel.

*Option B:* Read an introduction to Daniel to learn how these verses from the last chapter of Daniel relate (or do not relate) to the famous story of Daniel and the lions' den.

### PSALM: Psalm 16.

**Adventure Challenge:** Explore some of the images in this psalm. For example, what do you think the speaker has in mind when he says the Lord is "my chosen portion and my cup"? Portion of what? Cup of what?

**Explorer Challenge:** The meaning Hebrew is uncertain in some phrase of this psalm. Compare two or three translations to see how different scholars have responded to this challenge.

### SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25

*Images of worship and sacrifice are used throughout Hebrews to highlight what Christ has uniquely accomplished through his death. Because we have received forgiveness through Christ's death, we live with sincere hearts by trusting in God's promises and encouraging love and good works from each other.*

**Adventure Challenge:** Hebrews 10.

**Explorer Challenge:** To gain a larger understanding of the comparison in Hebrews between earthly and heavenly sacrifices, re-read Chapter 9 (last week's reading) and then Chapter 10 (this week's reading).

### GOSPEL: Mark 13:1-8

*In the last week of his life, Jesus warned his disciples concerning trials that were to come upon them and upon the world. He exhorts the listener: Do not be alarmed.*

**Adventure Challenge:** Mark 13

**Explorer Challenge:** Read Mark 13; then re-read Daniel 12 (this first reading for this week). Both passages talk about "end times." What elements are similar in the two passages?

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty God, your sovereign purpose brings salvation to birth. Give us faith to be steadfast amid the tumults of this world, trusting that your kingdom comes and your will is done through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to stand before the Son of Man. (*Luke 23:36*)