

JUNE 25, 2023
FOURTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Freed from fear, we live in newness of life.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 10:24-39	The call and cost of discipleship
Monday	Jeremiah 20:7-13	Jeremiah denounces his persecutors
Tuesday	Romans 6:1b-11	Dying and rising with Christ
Wednesday	Ephesians 4:17-24	The old life and the new
Thursday	Isaiah 12:1-6	Thanksgiving and praise
Friday	Romans 8:9-17	Life in the Spirit
Saturday	Psalms 69:7-18	God can be trusted
Sunday	Matthew 10:40-42	Receiving and serving others

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. **Romans 6:4 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, we thank you for the power and gift of baptism and our new life in Christ that frees us from fear so that we can be Christ's faithful followers in the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Loving God, with this gift of food give us strength to overcome our fears and to serve others through the power of Christ's love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of steadfast love, bless you with mercy all the days of your life. (Psalm 69:16)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Take My Life,
That I May Be*



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:

- How do you describe your own life's goals, values and beliefs?
- If someone were to ask you about your faith and what you believe, how would you respond?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Romans 6:1b-11.

Just before this reading, Paul writes: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20b). Paul responds to this statement in Romans 6:1b with an understandable question, "Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" Then he answers, "By no means!" (v. 2a). Paul is emphatic that seeking a life of sin is out of the question. He describes this conviction by using the language of baptism. We are joined with Christ through baptism. In baptism, we die with Christ and are raised with Christ "so we too might walk in newness of life" (v. 4b). We are joined to Christ's life. His story of death and resurrection is now our story. We die to a way of living and thinking that finds pleasure in sin and separation from God. The power of sin over our lives dies with Christ through baptism. Our lives are then freed from the power of sin and death to live a new life filled with love and grace for our neighbor and world.

Discuss: What questions do you have about baptism?

Pray: **God of abundant love, we thank you for the gift of baptism that binds us to Christ and gives us new life filled with hope, joy, and love for all. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you be freed from fear to joyfully serve those in need?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

"Do not fear" is a recurring theme in Matthew 10:24-39. Think or talk about things that you are afraid of. Naming and talking about your fears can be helpful. Draw a cross on a sheet of paper. Write the fears you named around the cross. Take a moment to look at your list of fears and say them out loud.

Pray: **Dear God, may our life in Christ draw us nearer to you and free us from our fears. Amen.**



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