

AUGUST 27, 2023  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 16:13-20	Peter's confession of Christ
Monday	Isaiah 51:1-6	Blessings for God's people
Tuesday	Romans 12:1-8	Christ brings new life
Wednesday	1 Peter 1:13-25	A call to holy living
Thursday	Exodus 20:1-6	You shall have no other gods
Friday	Genesis 35:1-15	Jacob returns to Bethel
Saturday	Psalms 138	Praise God with all your heart
Sunday	Matthew 16:21-28	Take up your cross and follow

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."*

**Matthew 16:16-17 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, we thank you for being our sure foundation, our rock on which we stand secure through Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Amen.

#### Mealtime Prayer:

Almighty and Living God, we thank you for this food that gives us strength to shout out our praise to you for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

#### A Blessing to Give:

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ give you joy and gladness now and always.



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Built on a Rock*



### 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:

- A false god is anything that we put our trust in instead of putting our trust in Jesus Christ. What are some false gods that people turn to today?
- How is putting our trust in Jesus Christ different from following false gods?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 16:13-20.

Caesarea Philippi was a place for the ancient people to gather and worship many gods. Those gods were understood to have powers that controlled people's lives, often arbitrarily. Instead of such instability, the disciples were there to witness to Jesus' life that heals, forgives, and teaches us of the God of steadfast love and faithfulness (Psalm 138:2). Peter confesses what only God can reveal: Jesus is the Messiah (another word for Christ) and the Son of a living—therefore real—God! In Romans 12:2 the Apostle Paul tells us not to be conformed to the world that is filled with false gods (powers), destructive passions, and self-love instead of love for others. This non-conformity that Jesus brings is a challenge to our everyday thinking. No wonder Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone about him. It will take time for them—and us—to wrap heads and hearts around worshiping Jesus as Lord instead of worshiping a nation, ethnicity, bank account or any other false god.

*Discuss:* What is it in your life that gets in the way of confessing Jesus as the Messiah?

*Pray:* **Almighty God, your ways are not our ways; give us hearts and minds to grasp that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God for the sake of the world you love. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others instead of serving your own interests this week?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Peter confessed his faith by stating that Jesus is the Son of the living God. Because of this confession, Jesus called him the "rock" upon which he would build his church (Matthew 16:18). Place a rock in your living space or in a garden to remember the confession of Peter and the church throughout the centuries. Write or paint the words "Jesus is the Son of God" on the rock.



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)