



Celebrate

Sunday, June 2, 2024
2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy makes clear that sabbath-keeping is meant for the welfare of all. God delivered the Israelites out of slavery, so they should observe this freedom with a day of rest. No one should work seven days a week; even slaves and foreigners should be able to rest. Yet human beings can turn even the most liberating religious practice into a life-destroying rule. Jesus does not reject sabbath-keeping but defends its original life-enhancing meaning. Our worship and our religious way of life are to lead to restoration: the hungry being fed and the sick being healed.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, throughout time you free the oppressed, heal the sick, and make whole all that you have made. Look with compassion on the world wounded by sin, and by your power restore us to wholeness of life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

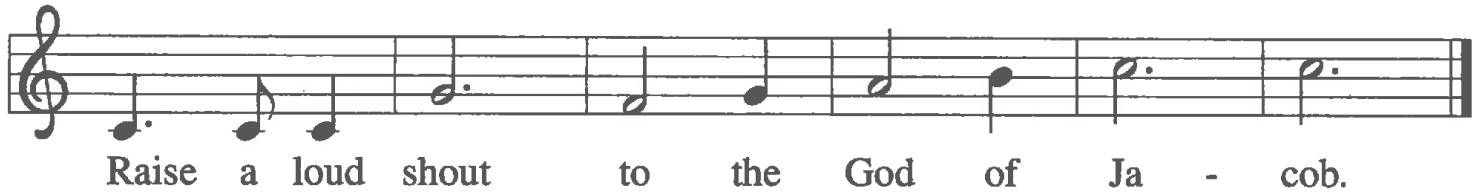
First Reading

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

This portion of the Ten Commandments instructs the Israelites to keep the sabbath. The Israelites are to rest, and they are to allow their slaves, their livestock, and the foreigners living among them to do the same. They were once slaves, and so they are to treat their own slaves justly.

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁴But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident

alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. ¹⁵Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.



Sing with joy to ¹ God our strength
and raise a loud shout to the ¹ God of Jacob.

²**Raise a song and ¹ sound the timbrel,
the merry harp, ¹ and the lyre. R**

³Blow the ram's horn at ¹ the new moon,
and at the full moon, the day ¹ of our feast;

⁴**for this is a stat- ¹ ute for Israel,
a law of the ¹ God of Jacob.**

⁵God laid it as a solemn charge upon Joseph,
going out over the ¹ land of Egypt,
where I heard a voice I ¹ did not know:

⁶**I eased your shoulder ¹ from the burden;
your hands were set free from the grave- ¹ digger's basket. R**

⁷You called on me in trouble, and I de- ¹ livered you;
I answered you from the secret place of thunder
and tested you at the wa- ¹ ters of Meribah.

⁸**Hear, O my people, and I will ad- ¹ monish you:
O Israel, if you would but lis- ¹ ten to me!**

⁹There shall be no strange ¹ god among you;
you shall not worship a ¹ foreign god.

¹⁰**I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the ¹ land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and ¹ I will fill it. R**

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

When we carry out God's ministry we do so not for our glory but for the sake of Jesus Christ whom we proclaim as Lord. The power for ministry comes from God, not us, so that we persevere no matter what, trusting in God's power and promises at work through us.

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸We are afflicted in every

way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Gospel

Mark 2:23—3:6

Jesus challenges the prevailing interpretation of what is lawful on the sabbath and tells his critics that the sabbath was made for humankind, not the other way around. Healing the man with the withered hand is work that cannot wait until the next day.

One sabbath [Jesus] was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" ²⁵And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? ²⁶He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." ²⁷Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; ²⁸so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

^{3:1}Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ²They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." ⁴Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

We come before the triune God to pray for our communities, ourselves, and our world.

A brief silence.

Guide your church to expressions of faith that bring rest and release. Teach your faithful people to be attentive to the spiritual, physical, and societal weariness of our neighbors, that we proclaim your grace through tangible acts of mercy and justice. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Keep us mindful of the rhythms of nature as the days lengthen and the seasons shift toward summer. Grant relief to areas facing flooding or drought and bring favorable weather for the flourishing of crops, gardens, and orchards. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Where there is affliction in our world, bring healing. Where world leaders are perplexed, bring clarity of vision. Give a spirit of discernment to political advisors, institutional researchers, economic analysts, and all vocations that inform the work of governments and policymakers (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of the Martyrs of Uganda, 1886; John XXIII, Bishop of Rome, 1963) Psalm 78:1-4, 52-72. **Tuesday** Acts 15:1-5, 22-35. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Boniface, Bishop of Mainz, missionary to Germany, martyr, 754) John 5:1-18. **Thursday** Psalm 130. **Friday** (commemoration of Seattle, chief of the Duwamish Confederacy, 1866) 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. **Saturday** Genesis 2:4b-14. **3rd Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Columba, 597; Aidan, 651; Bede, 735; renewers of the church) Genesis 3:8-15; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 4:13—5:1; Mark 3:20-35.

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2 of 14
Tracks 1 and 2

Provide wholeness and respite to all who are weary: those who struggle in any way and those who care for them (*especially*). Strengthen first responders and health care workers in their times of exhaustion or frustration. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Stir our hearts toward abundant generosity among neighbors who experience hunger and food insecurity. Bless feeding ministries and community food efforts, especially community gardens, farmers markets, food pantries and Little Free Pantries. Open both our hearts and our tables. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember the communion of saints whose lives made visible the saving life of Jesus Christ. Guide us by their example to embody the treasure of your love for the sake of our world, until we come to our final rest in you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, O God, and come quickly to our aid, through the power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ.
Amen.