

JANUARY 21, 2024  
THIRD SUNDAY  
AFTER EPIPHANY



*Repentance turns us to the power of God's mercy.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 1:14-20	Jesus calls the first disciples
Monday	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Jonah goes to Nineveh
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Live without anxiety
Wednesday	Isaiah 55:6-13	God's ways are not our ways
Thursday	Psalms 51:1-12	A prayer for forgiveness
Friday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Paul's visions
Saturday	Psalms 62:5-12	God is powerful and kind
Sunday	Mark 1:21-28	Jesus teaches in the synagogue

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.* Psalm 62:8 (NRSV)

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of steadfast love and mercy, help us to be open to the depth and breadth of your power of love that reaches others through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, just as you feed us with the life-giving power of this food, feed us with your love to care for others in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the steadfast love of God give you peace.



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*O God of Mercy,  
God of Light*



### 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:

- Do you find it hard to love certain people? Explain.
- What do you think about God showing love and mercy to people who upset you?

### DEVOTIONS



*Read:* Jonah 3:1-5, 10 and 4:1-4.

It is easy to get caught up in debates about whether or not Jonah was swallowed by a whale. We can miss the point—and the real miracle—of the whole book. Jonah ran away from God because God directed Jonah to preach repentance to the city of Nineveh. The great miracle in the book of Jonah is that Nineveh repented! The city was known as a corrupt, violent, and ungodly place. Jonah's harsh warning that the city would be overthrown in forty days brought the people—including the king—to repentance. Jonah was displeased about this outcome. He knew the steadfast love and mercy of God and did not want it to be given to Nineveh. Jonah didn't want God to love the people that Jonah didn't love at all. The message in the book of Jonah for us is to stop despising the people God loves. God's steadfast love is great. Even though we feel some do not deserve God's love and mercy, they may receive it anyway. Our call to repentance is the same kind of turning away from a world as we want it and be open to the power of God's kingdom to make all things new.

*Discuss:* When have you been surprised to see the power of God's love in the lives of those you felt were undeserving?

*Pray:* **God of abundant grace, help us to trust that your ways are not our ways and that your ways are filled with a love and mercy for all through your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, what can you do to extend God's love to someone you dislike?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



We read about Jesus calling the first disciples in Mark 1:16-20. They were fishermen. The fish is an important Christian symbol. Each letter in the Greek spelling of the word "fish" (*IXTHUS*) begins a Greek word that stands for "Jesus Christ Son of God Savior." During the early church, it was dangerous to be a Christian in some parts of the Roman Empire. Believers developed a code to reveal their faith to others who were Christian. One person would draw on the ground the upper half of a fish symbol. If the other person was a Christian, they would recognize this and add a second curve line to complete the drawing of a fish. Draw a simple fish design. Place it in a visible place in your home as a reminder of your faith in Jesus.



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)