

FEBRUARY 12, 2023
SIXTH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY

taking⁺ faith home

Jesus comes to bring reconciliation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 5:21-37	Teachings of Jesus
Monday	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	Choose life, not death
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Working together for God
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 5:11-21	The ministry of reconciliation
Thursday	Genesis 33:1-17	Jacob and Esau meet
Friday	Ephesians 4:25-32	Rules for the new life
Saturday	Psalm 119:1-8	The law of the Lord
Sunday	Matthew 17:1-19	Transfiguration of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, you have shown us the way to love and mercy; help us to share your love and power of reconciliation with all through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food, a gift of life that sustains us during the good times and the difficult times through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you with long life and happiness.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Forgive our Sins As We Forgive



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:

- What do you do when a personal relationship is not going well?
- How does your faith help you when you are struggling in a relationship?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Matthew 5:21-37.

When Jesus is teaching here, he can sound like he is undermining the law and substituting other rules to live by. However, what he is doing is not rejecting the law, but intensifying its intended outcome. The law is to preserve life for one's neighbor, one's community, and oneself. The commandments give a baseline of how to care for one another, but Jesus says, "You can do more." We are not to stop caring for our neighbor until reconciliation and understanding between one another happens. Life without fear, intimidation, or destruction is the goal for all relationships. Jesus is particularly hard on men. The patriarchal system of his day made it easy for men to abandon a woman and take another. To that Jesus says, "No!" Jesus seeks personal and public relationships that are life-giving, just as God's law is intended to be life-giving (Deuteronomy 30:16).

Discuss: Where in society or in your own relationships do you see a need for God's reconciling power?

Pray: Life-giving God, help us to treasure the gift of life and relationships so that we may seek ways not to harm people but to nurture one another through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve others in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you help restore a broken relationship?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Passing the peace is a Christian practice used in worship since the early church to experience the reconciling power of God in Christ. Historically, it is offered prior to Holy Communion in recognition of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:23-24). However, sharing God's peace is meant for more than just a worship service. The peace of God, forgiveness, and acceptance of one another is part of our daily lives. Greet others daily with the peace of the Lord. As a reminder, before meals this week light a candle and say: **The peace of the Lord be with you.**

