



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Oakland, Maryland 21550*

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*Sunday Worship Service is at 10:00 a.m.
Our Daily Ministers are The People of St. Mark's
Rev. Carrie Hoff, Pastor*

WELCOME

We extend a sincere welcome to all who join us for worship

September 27, 2026
18th Sunday After Pentecost
Order of Worship

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

“ Come, Christians Join to Sing ”

St. Mark's Handbell Choir

**** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

✙ All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Compassionate God,

we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ✙ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

**** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

**** PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

“ O God, My Faithful God ”

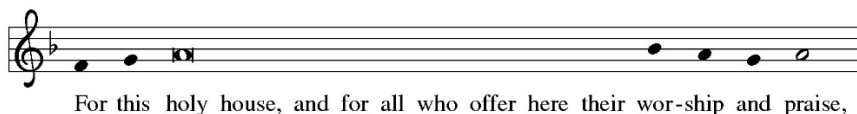
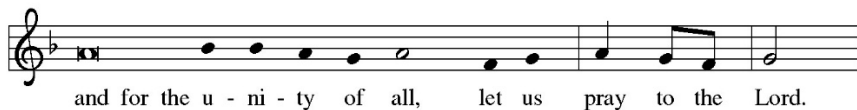
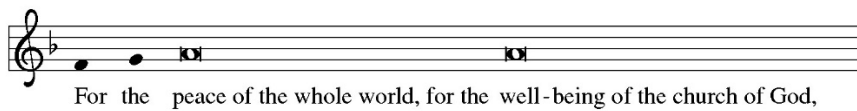
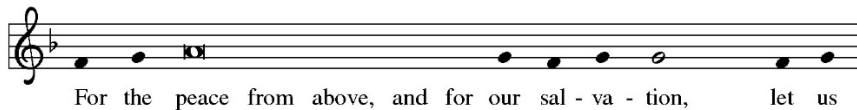
No. 806

**** GREETING**

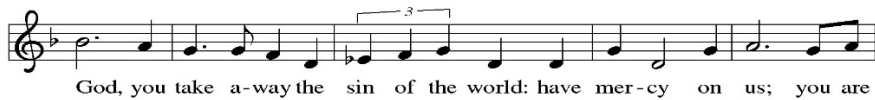
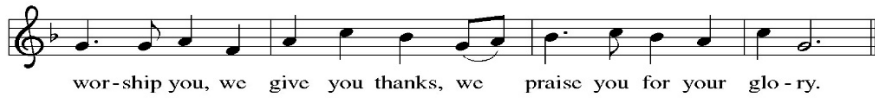
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

** KYRIE



** CANTICLE OF PRAISE



**** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³ As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵ Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9

We will read the Psalm responsively, starting with the refrain and repeat where indicated.

Refrain: Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)

¹ To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.

² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³ Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴ **Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths. R**

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸ **You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹ You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way. **R**

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



** GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glorify to you, O Lord.

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Carrie Hoff

**** HYMN OF THE DAY**

No. 818

“ O Master Let Me Walk with Thee ”

**** APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *(Please be seated)*

Reminded of God’s gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way. Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need (*especially*). Grant us your salvation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Change this congregation's heart when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

OFFERING

CHOIR ANTHEM

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

**** OFFERTORY HYMN**

No. 814

"Take, Oh, Take Me as I Am"

**** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

**** GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

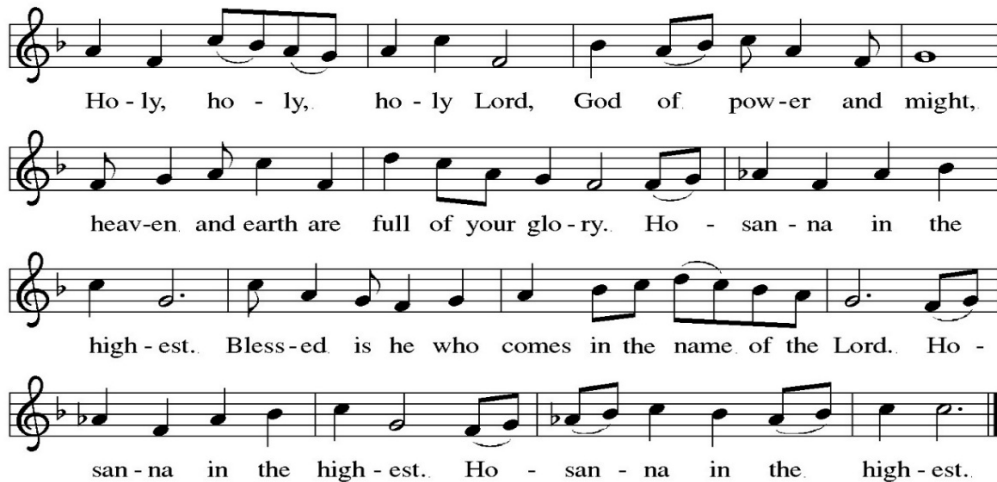
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**** PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**** HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**



**** THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

**** LORD'S PRAYER**

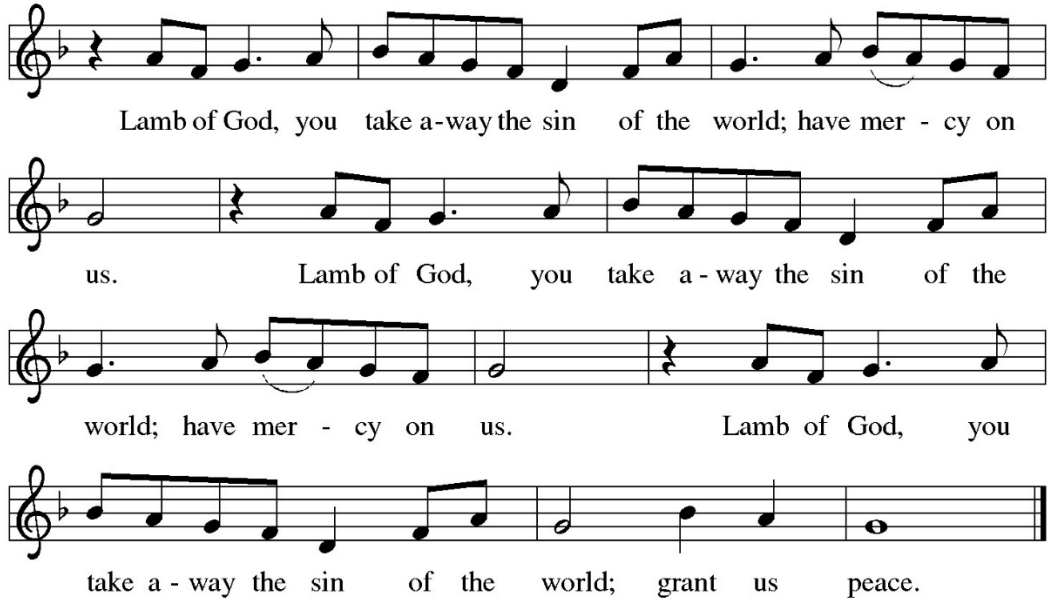
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

**** COMMUNION SONG**



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION

Distribution of Communion

All are welcome to receive the wine and bread at our Lord's table. Grape Juice is in pre-poured glasses and gluten-free wafers are available on the tables as you come forward.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

COMMUNION HYMNS

"You Satisfy the Hungry Heart"

No. 484

"Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word"

No. 517

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

**** POST COMMUNION CANTICLE**



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -



filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -



pared in the sight of ev-'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the



na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

**** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

**** BLESSING**

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,

✠ one God,

bles, heal, and hold you

today and always.

Amen.

**** RECESSIONAL HYMN**

No. 776

“What God Ordains Is Good”

**** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God. We WILL!

POSTLUDE

“Double Chorus”

Roger C. Wilson

St. Mark's Mission Statement

“United in Christ, Sharing his Good News,
we invite all people to grow in God’s love.”

Church Calendar September 27, 2026 – October 4, 2026

- Today** - Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.
with Holy Communion
- Healing Service after worship
- Tuesday** - Yoga at 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday** - HandBell Choir Practice at 7:00 p.m.
- Chancel Choir at 8:00 p.m.
- Next Sunday** - Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.
- Blessing of the Animals at 1:00 p.m.

Serving Today

Acolyte:	Riley Feathers
Lector:	Suzie Sincell
Organist:	Sean Beachy
Co-Directors of Music:	Sean & Debi Beachy
Recorder:	Stephanie Berger
Communion Clean-up:	Paul & Sarah LeDuc
Flower Delivery:	BJ Gallagher
Safe Keeper:	Sherry Beach
Ushers:	Terry Savage, Capt.
	Carol Savage, Paul LeDuc, Donna Swift

Pastor Carrie can be reached by email at pastorcarrie@stmarksoakland.com or
phone 443-974-1738 for any pastoral needs or concerns.



The Altar Flowers are given by Bill & Bonnie Fedde
in Thanksgiving for the musicians of St. Mark's.

Prayer Requests



Illness: Emelee DeWitt, Helen Ferrell, Valerie Minor, Viola, Josh Wilhelm, Tom Bittering, Dorothee Bittering, Peter, Robert Hodges, Ava, Connie Leary, Emily, Marie, Joyce Chaney, Debbie, Bill & Diana Bachtel, Norma, Joe, Kimmie, Abe, Angie, Fred Meyer, Tom Bingham, Senta Heinrich, Mary, Eric, Jeff Gilbert, Marylynn, Michael, Sally, George, David, Roger, Clint, C.J. Bennett, Micah Teter, John Arnold, Ray, Laura and her unborn child, Katie LeDuc, Diane LeDuc, Jean, Bil McGahn, Sara, Debra Lohman, Annie Wiles, Danny, Ada Viattero, Debra DeWitt, Sonny Vincent, Kate Schenk, Louie Kitzmiller II, Griffith, Dave, Judy, C.J., Nicholas, Jack, Ken Bachtel, Tim DeWitt, Patti Shanes, Nancy Keating, Tobi, Vicki, MaryAnn, Mimi, Richard, Sylvia, Marshall, John E., Beck, Carolyn Deems

Special Needs: Chase, Jeremy Lewis, Christine Chaney, Autumn and Jordan, Bravo, Shania, Joey Welch & his family, Mr. Kittle, Eli M., Athena, Kella & Baby, Garrett, Amy Bacha, Jimmy Meyers, Gary Thorn, Thomas Swastintruber, Alice Davidson, Baby Fiona, Shirley Lewis, Dustin Flynn, Jake, George Tichinel

Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 27

Healing Service after Worship

Sunday, October 4

Blessing of the Animals at 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 10

Autumn Glory Booth & Face Painting 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Want other ways to give to St. Mark's?

We have several options available to fit your needs!

ACH Giving: You can choose how much you would like to give, and we can set up monthly or twice-monthly automatic giving. This is a convenient way to make your regular offering.

Cash or Check: You are always welcome to give by cash or check in the offering plate. If you need offering envelopes, just let us know!

PayPal: We have now added another convenient way to give through PayPal. Simply scan the **QR code below** to get started.



We are here to serve you as you serve our community through Christ. If you have any questions about any of the offering options available, please don't hesitate to have a conversation with

Ellda.

Welcome to St. Mark's Lutheran Church

We are so glad you are worshiping with us this morning. Here are a few things to help you feel comfortable in our space and more fully participate in worship. If you have questions at any time, our ushers will be happy to help.

Restrooms

- A first-floor restroom is available. Facing the pulpit, use the door to the left, enter the church office, and the restroom is located on the right.
- Restrooms and water fountains are also available downstairs. From the back of the sanctuary (narthex), take the steps downstairs, turn right into Fellowship Hall, restrooms are on the right and the water fountain is on the left.

Accessibility & Comfort

- Our bulletins contain the order of worship so you can easily follow along. You are invited to participate in the liturgy in areas indicated in bold and hymns can be found in the red hymnal.
- If standing during worship is uncomfortable, please feel free to remain seated.
- Hearing assistance devices and large-print bulletins are available—please ask an usher.

Visitors

- If you are visiting, we invite you to sign the guest registry located on the stand near the front doors or fill out a visitor envelope found in the pew rack in front of you and place it in the offering plate.
- If you or someone you know is in need of an extra prayer, please fill out a card in the pew back in front of you, and an usher will be by during the prelude to collect it.

Children

- Children's worship bags are available in the narthex. You are welcome to pick one up for your child(ren).

Electronics

- Please silence or turn off cell phones and electronic devices so that all may focus on worship.

Holy Communion

- If Holy Communion is celebrated today, please know that all are welcome at the Lord's table. Those who prefer not to receive communion are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice is available on the side tables and wine will be poured from the chalice. Gluten-free wafers are also available.

Thank you for worshiping with us today—we are glad you are here.



September 27, 2026, 18th Sunday after Pentecost Matthew 21:23-32

Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions.



Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

All-knowing God, you desire purity of heart and integrity of word. Empower us by your Spirit to say what we mean and act according to your ways, in Jesus' name. Amen.



Read: Read the key verse from Sunday's reading.

"Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you." (Matthew 21:31b)



Reflect: Reflect on the scripture summary.

The chief priests and elders want to know: by whose authority does Jesus speak? Perhaps Jesus' authority rests on his belonging to God.



Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household.

- What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?
- Why do you think Jesus told the chief priests and elders that the tax collectors and prostitutes would enter the kingdom of God ahead of them?
- Who are the elders in your community? In what ways are they helpful to the community? In what ways do they hinder?
- For the littles: Who is the oldest person you know? Are they wiser than you?



Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God turn your world upside down. Amen.



Do: By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Consider those places in your life where you have authority. Journal about how you use your authority to speak God's truth and love, even if it is indirectly. Share what you wrote with a trusted friend.



Go Deeper: Read and reflect on the readings for each day of the week.

Monday, Psalm 42; Exodus 18:1-12; Philippians 1:3-14

Tuesday, Psalm 42; Exodus 18:13-27; Philippians 1:15-21

Wednesday, Psalm 42; Exodus 19:9b-25; Matthew 9:2-8

Thursday, Psalm 19; Exodus 23:1-9; Colossians 2:16-23

Friday, Psalm 19; Exodus 23:14-19; Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a

Saturday, Psalm 19; Exodus 23:10-13; John 7:40-52