***Introit (Psalm 30)***

P: Praise the Lord! Sing a new song to the Lord.

**C: All His people together praise Him.**

P: I will praise You, Lord, because You saved me.

**C: You didn’t let my enemies defeat me.**

P: Lord my God, I called to You for help,

**C: And You healed me.**

P: Lord, You brought my soul out of the grave.

**C: You saved me from hell and gave me life again.**

P: All God’s holy people sing praises to the Lord

**C: And thank His holy name.**

P: His anger is short, but His favor continues all your life.

**C: Crying continues through the night, but joy comes in the morning.**

**All: Glory give to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the same as it was in the beginning, is now, and will continue forever. Amen.**

***Prayer for God’s Word***

P: O God, You give Your faithful people the same mind and the same desires. Make us love Your commands and promises. Then no-matter how much this world changes, our hearts are always full of joy with You. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Jesus lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (copy) Amen.

The First Lesson is from Acts chapters 6 and 7.

During these days the number of Christians grew larger. Every day, the church gave food to widows. The Greek people complained that the widows speaking Hebrew got more food, and the widows speaking Greek got less food.

The twelve apostles called a meeting with all believers and said, “We should not serve food and give-up teaching God’s Word. Now brothers, look-around among you and choose seven men – good, honest men, full with the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this work to take care of the people. Then we will use our time to pray, and to preach and teach God’s Word.”

All the people agreed. They chose these men: STEPHEN, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit; PHILIP; PROCHORUS; NICANOR; TIMON; PARMENAS; and NICOLAS – he became a believer in ANTIOCH. These seven men stood in-front-of the twelve apostles. The apostles prayed for them and laid-hands-on-them in blessing.

God’s Word continued to spread, and the number of disciples in JERUSALEM increased much. Also many Jewish priests believed.

God filled STEPHEN with His grace and power. STEPHEN did wonderful works for the people. But some people from a Jewish church came and argued against STEPHEN. Also people from CYRENE and ALEXANDRIA, CILICIA and ASIA argued against STEPHEN.

STEPHEN answered, “My Jewish fathers and brothers, attend to me. You stubborn Jewish leaders! You refuse to listen to God! You are always against the Holy Spirit. Your fathers worked against God, and now you do the same. Your fathers punished every prophet. Long ago, those prophets said Jesus will come. But your fathers killed those prophets. And now you betrayed Jesus and you killed Him. God gave you His law through His angels, but you don’t obey this law!”

The Jewish leaders heard STEPHEN say those things, and they became angry. They ground-their-teeth at STEPHEN.

But the Holy Spirit filled STEPHEN and he looked to the sky, and he saw God’s glory and Jesus standing at the right. STEPHEN said, “Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Then all the Jewish leaders shouted with a loud voice. They covered-their-ears-with-their-hands, and ran together against STEPHEN. They took STEPHEN outside the city and began throwing rocks at him. The witnesses gave their coats to a young man named SAUL.

STEPHEN prayed and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” STEPHEN fell-down kneeling and shouted, “Lord, don’t judge them for this sin!” Then he died.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The Second Lesson is from First Peter chapter 2.

Babies want milk. The same, you should want God’s word. Then His word will make you grow in salvation, when you taste the Lord is good to you.

You are coming to Jesus, the living Rock. People rejected Jesus, but God chose Jesus same-as a precious Rock. Also, you are living stones, and God is building you to become a spiritual temple. He is making you holy priests bringing spiritual gifts that God accepts through Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, “Look, I am putting an important and precious stone in the city named ZION, and the person believing in Him will never be-disappointed.” He is precious to you believers.

This is what the Bible says about non-believers. “The builders rejected that stone, but that is now the corner stone.” And, “He is a stone they fall-over, a rock that makes them upset.” They fall over God’s word, and they don’t obey. That is God’s plan.

But God chose you. He made you ruling priests, a holy nation. God bought you for Himself, for you to tell about His wonderful works. He brought you out of darkness into His wonderful light. In the past you were not important, but now you are God’s people. In the past you received no mercy, but now you received God’s mercy.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The Gospel lesson is from John chapter 14.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus said, “Don’t feel troubled. Believe in God, and believe in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms. That is true, because I told you I am going to prepare a place for you. And happens I leave and prepare a place for you, I will come again and bring you with Me. Then you will always be with Me. You know the way to the place I am going.”

THOMAS said to Jesus, “Lord, we don’t-know the place you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now-on you know Him and finished saw Him.”

PHILIP said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father; that’s enough for us.”

Jesus answered, “PHILIP, I stayed with you a long time, and you don’t-know Me? If you see Me, you have seen the Father. Why do you ask Me to show you the Father? You don’t believe I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The things I tell you don’t come from Me. The Father lives in Me and He is working. Believe Me; I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me. Or believe Me because of the wonderful works I do.

I tell you the truth, if you believe in Me, you will do the same wonderful works I do, and you will do greater things, because I am going to the Father. Anything you ask in My name, I will do. Then the Father gets glory in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do that.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.