The Word of God

Narrative Lectionary
First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2026

Prayer of the Day

Faithful God, you proved your faithfulness to your people when they cried out to you in distress. Be present in our distress, and show us how to be faithful to you in the midst of suffering. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-7; 2:1-4; 3:3b-6; 17-19

This is the message that the prophet Habakkuk received in a vision. How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence is everywhere!" I cry, but you do not come to save. Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight. The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted. The Lord replied, "Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it. I am raising up the Babylonians, a cruel and violent people. They will march across the world and conquer other lands. They are notorious for their cruelty and do whatever they like. I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guard post. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how he will answer my complaint. Then the Lord said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.

This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. “Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise. His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden. Pestilence marches before him; plague follows close behind. When he stops, the earth shakes. When he looks, the nations tremble. He shatters the everlasting mountains and levels the eternal hills. He is the Eternal One! Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

Gospel: Matthew 26:36-39

Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, “Sit here while I go over there to pray.” He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

Lessons for next week: Esther 4:1-17; Matthew 5:13-16