

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY
EXPANDED DAILY READINGS

PROPOSED BY THE
CONSULTATION ON COMMON TEXTS

AUGSBURG FORTRESS
MINNEAPOLIS

**Revised Common Lectionary Expanded Daily Readings
Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts**

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PREFACE

Consultation on Common Texts

The Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) originated in the mid-1960s as a forum for consultation on worship renewal among many of the major Christian churches in the United States and Canada. Over the years in which the *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* and the present *Expanded Daily Readings* were developed, the members of the CCT included the following churches or church agencies: American Baptist Fellowship for Liturgical Renewal, The Anglican Church of Canada, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church in North America, Church of the Brethren, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Free Methodist Church in Canada, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (an agency of twenty-six Roman Catholic national or international conferences of bishops), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Mennonite Church, North American Lutheran Church, Polish National Catholic Church of America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reformed Church in America, Roman Catholic Church in the United States, Roman Catholic Church in Canada, The Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, The United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, and The United Methodist Church.

Projects and publications sponsored by the Consultation have included the following:

Revised Common Lectionary. In order to achieve even greater unity in worship, the CCT proposed a Common Lectionary as a harmonization of denominational variants in the lectionary for the Sundays and major feast days of the Christian year, based on the three-year lectionary system of the Roman Lectionary. The Common Lectionary was then revised by the CCT, together with representatives of the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC). This work appeared under the title *The Revised Common Lectionary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992). The work was republished with corrections, annotations related to the lectionary's sources and development, and additional appendixes, under the title *The Revised Common Lectionary: Twentieth Anniversary Annotated Edition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). The table of readings from this 2012 edition appears also in the present volume.

Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings. The CCT undertook this project in the early 2000s to build upon the work of the Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and for many of the special liturgical days that churches hold in common. *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* is a collection of readings proposed for the rest of the days of the week. Designed for daily use, it recognizes that, for worshipping communities and individuals, Sunday worship is central to the Christian life. This collection uses the Sunday readings of the Revised Common Lectionary as its basis, and it then provides readings for the weekdays around the Sundays that are related to the Sunday readings, both to prepare for Sunday and to reflect upon it. *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* was published by Augsburg Fortress in 2005.

Prayers We Have in Common. This project sought to provide a contemporary and ecumenical English version of prayers for the English-speaking churches around the world. Begun by the CCT, this became part of the work of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). The texts were then revised by the ELLC, ICET's successor, and published by Abingdon Press under the title *Praying Together* (1988). The CCT continues to work with the ELLC at the international level.

Earlier projects of the CCT have included *A Christian Celebration of Marriage* (1985, revised 1995), *A Celebration of Baptism* (1988), *Ecumenical Services of Prayer* (1983), and *A Liturgical Psalter for the Christian Year*, prepared by Massey H. Shepherd Jr. with the assistance of the CCT (1976).

INTRODUCTION

Weekday lectionaries

Revised Common Lectionary Expanded Daily Readings is the third in a series of related efforts to produce a system of daily scripture reading that relates to the Sunday and festival readings of the Revised Common Lectionary (1992).

The first proposal was made by Gail Ramshaw in *Between Sundays: Daily Bible Readings Based on the Revised Common Lectionary* (1997). It offered six readings for the week, one for each day other than Sunday: three Old Testament (Hebrew scriptures) selections (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday), one gospel selection (Wednesday), one non-gospel New Testament selection (Friday), and one psalm selection (Saturday).

The Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) took note of this work and established a working group (in which Ramshaw participated) to prepare a second proposal: *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* (2005). This project generally retained the Old Testament, gospel, and non-gospel New Testament selections of *Between Sundays*, though not always in the identical order. It also added additional readings: three new Old Testament selections (for a total of six), three new non-gospel New Testament selections (for a total of four), and one new gospel selection (for a total of two). It replaced the single Saturday psalm with the instruction that the Sunday psalm be used daily from the preceding Thursday through Saturday, with an additional psalm appointed for Monday through Wednesday. The result was a set of eighteen selections for the six days from Monday to Saturday: a daily Old Testament reading, psalm, and New Testament reading (which was from the gospels on Wednesday and Saturday and from other portions of the New Testament on the remaining four days). *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* changed the way in which daily lectionary citations were typically arranged. Rather than presenting the daily readings sequentially after the Sunday readings, citations are presented from Thursday to Wednesday, placing Sunday at the midpoint—thus reinforcing the intention that the daily selections lead up to and flow from each Sunday. As was the case with *Between Sundays*, no additional daily readings (as, for example, for daily prayer) are provided for Sundays and other special days noted in the Revised Common Lectionary.

The introduction to *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* ended with the invitation to submit “responses and feedback.” *Expanded Daily Readings* is such a response, developed especially out of feedback received that *Daily Readings* was less useful in situations where eucharist is celebrated more frequently or even daily during the week. It retains the Thursday to Wednesday structure. It generally retains the citations from *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings*, though with some adjustments in order and versification. The major change is the addition of five new gospel readings and two new non-gospel New Testament selections, so as to offer a set of three readings and a psalm response for each day (Old Testament, psalm, non-gospel New Testament, and gospel), a structure that parallels that of the Revised Common Lectionary appointed readings.

Criteria for selection of readings

In the Introduction to *Between Sundays* (x–xi), Gail Ramshaw provided a detailed explanation of the criteria used in choosing the readings. One way to summarize the approach is to say that the daily reading choices

1. provide background for the Sunday readings; or
2. identify parallel narratives elsewhere in the Bible; or
3. deal with actions, themes, or imagery similar to the Sunday readings; or
4. fill in gaps in the sequence of lessons in the Sunday lectionary.

The Introduction to *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* (7) is less specific about the criteria for selection, noting in a descriptive way the following categories, which echo the *Between Sundays* criteria:

- “awareness of the multiple layers of scripture and the interrelatedness of biblical stories”
- “the same story told by other witnesses (through the use of other gospel accounts)”
- “allusions to similar imagery in various parts of the Bible”
- “other so-called typological selections that . . . open up scripture in a broad way”

In short, *Daily Readings* generally conformed to the criteria offered in *Between Sundays* with one important change of emphasis. The primary focus in *Between Sundays* was to “expound further on the Sunday *gospel reading*” (x, emphasis added). *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* offered, in contrast, a consistent set of selections related to the Old Testament and non-gospel New Testament readings. One indication of this choice was that it provided two sets of Old Testament readings and related psalms for the season after Pentecost, one that corresponded to the semicontinuous track of the Revised Common Lectionary and another that corresponded to the complementary track. If the readings had been selected simply for relationship to the gospel—as in *Between Sundays*—this would not have been necessary.

The new selections added in *Expanded Daily Readings* follow the trajectory of *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings*, continuing the *Between Sundays* criteria with, however, the expansion of readings related to the Old Testament and non-gospel New Testament selections. In addition, one new criterion is added to those for the selection of gospel readings. In some cases—often on Wednesdays—a gospel passage is chosen that stands in juxtaposition to the Sunday gospel, in order to suggest the complexity of the biblical narrative. The gospel on 3 Epiphany B, for example, tells of the excitement created by Jesus’ healing in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28), while the Wednesday reading notes the confusion created by the disciples’ inability to heal (Mark 9:14-29).

Arrangement of readings

Between Sundays presented the Sunday readings from the Revised Common Lectionary and followed them with the daily readings for the week. It had, as noted above, only one set of readings for the season after Pentecost, for use with either the semicontinuous or complementary Old Testament option. The Introduction allowed for multiple alterations, including moving texts to other days, grouping several texts on a single day, or reading them prior to the Sunday rather than following it (xi–xii).

Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings arranged its eighteen selections around the Sunday citations in the middle of week. That is, the Sunday readings were preceded by three sets of readings (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, with a common psalm), listed as “Preparation for Sunday,” and followed by three more (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, with a different common psalm), listed as “Reflection on Sunday.” This arrangement highlighted the intention that the daily readings lead up to and flow from the Sunday readings (though the difference between preparation and reflection is not always clear from the content of the selections themselves). It offered two different tracks for the Old Testament reading and psalm during the season after Pentecost.

Revised Common Lectionary Expanded Daily Readings continues the arrangement and structure of *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings*. It also generally arranges the gospel readings in years A and C so that the Mark parallel, if there is one, comes on the Saturday before the Sunday readings and the other synoptic parallel occurs on Monday or Tuesday. When the gospel reading is from Mark in year B, the parallels from Matthew and Luke are often on Monday and Tuesday.

Use of *Revised Common Lectionary Expanded Daily Readings*

The Introduction to *Between Sundays* suggests private or household use (xii). The Introduction to *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* provides additional counsel about ways in which it can

serve as the basis for such household prayer and meditation (8–9). Three additional possibilities are suggested (9): “for corporate worship,” “for Sunday educational and leadership preparation,” and “for midweek services of word and sacrament.” *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* has been well received for such uses, has been adopted or recommended for use by several denominations and other worshiping communities, and continues to provide a supportive structure for praying through the days of the week that surround each Sunday.

The Introduction notes, however, that one consequence of the limited number of gospel readings is that *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings* “is not offered as a daily eucharistic lectionary” (9). This resource, *Revised Common Lectionary Expanded Daily Readings*, is designed to be especially useful to communions and individual worshiping communities that desire more frequent or even daily eucharistic celebrations during the week. However, it may be found useful also in all the circumstances named in *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings*, supplementing and enriching the choice of selections for household and non-eucharistic use.

Acknowledgments

The impetus for this project came from several members of the faculty of the Virginia Theological Seminary, an Episcopal seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. It arose from a concern that use of the “Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary” of the Episcopal Church (a lightly edited version of the Roman Catholic Church’s daily eucharistic lectionary) resulted in chapel lessons and sermons that were unconnected to the Revised Common Lectionary’s Sunday lessons. The faculty created a subcommittee to work on the project with a charge to report back to the dean of the institution. The primary work on this project during the years 2017–2021 was undertaken by Stephen L. Cook (Old Testament), A. Katherine Grieb (New Testament), and Robert Prichard (Church History and Liturgy). A subcommittee of the Consultation on Common Texts composed of Taylor Burton Edwards, Christina Ronzio, Thomas E. Dipko, and Robert Prichard reviewed, corrected, and completed the project.

The CCT commends this proposal as an alternative and supplement to *Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings*, with the hope that its exploration and use will continue to enrich and deepen a lively encounter with the Holy Scriptures in alignment with the rhythms of the liturgical year, whether as a resource for communal worship or as a “companion to the faithful on their daily journey of prayer and reflection” (*Daily Readings*, 10). Responses and feedback to this proposal are welcome. The best way to communicate with the CCT regarding this project or any other is by visiting the Consultation’s website at www.commontexts.org.

Robert Prichard
Chair, Consultation on Common Texts
August 2023

ADVENT
CHRISTMAS
EPIPHANY

YEAR A

ADVENT — CHRISTMAS — EPIPHANY

First Sunday of Advent

Preparation for Sunday

THURSDAY

Daniel 9:15-19

A plea for forgiveness

James 4:1-10

A plea for God's grace and human humility

Matthew 24:1-14

The day of the Lord is coming

FRIDAY

Genesis 6:1-10

Humankind's wickedness, Noah's righteousness

Hebrews 11:1-7

Noah acts in faith

Matthew 24:15-28

The desolating sacrilege

SATURDAY

Genesis 6:11-22

The command to build an ark: Noah's obedience

Hebrews 11:8-16

Greeting the promises from a distance

Mark 13:32-37

The necessity for watchfulness

DAILY

Psalm 122

Gladness in God's house

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5

War transformed into peace

Psalm 122

Gladness in God's house

Romans 13:11-14

Salvation is near; wake from sleep

Matthew 24:36-44

The sudden coming of salvation

Reflection on Sunday

MONDAY

Genesis 8:1-19

The flood waters subside

Romans 6:1-11

Dying and rising with Christ through baptism

Luke 17:22-37

The coming of the kingdom

TUESDAY

Genesis 9:1-17

Command to be fruitful; sign of the rainbow

Hebrews 11:32-40

The heroes of faith

Luke 12:49-56

Jesus the cause of division

WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 54:1-10

God will save the people

Romans 6:12-23

Do not let sin exercise dominion

Matthew 24:23-35

The end is coming

DAILY

Psalm 124

We have escaped like a bird