

Readings for March 3, 2024
United Church of Strafford, Vermont

Responsive Reading *from Psalm 51*

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;

**People: According to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions,
for I know my wrongs,
and they are ever before me.**

Leader: You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

**People: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Leader: Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

**People: Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put in me a new and right spirit.**

Leader: Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

**People: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

Leader: Then my liife will show others your ways,
and those who have strayed will return to you.

**People: Open my heart and instruct it how to serve you,
for you have no delight in superficial sacrifice;**

Leader: If I were to give a burnt offering,
you would not be pleased.

**People: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
A broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise.**

John 12:17-33

So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

continued on the next page

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.