First Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

1 All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. 2 Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. 3 He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. 4 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 5 Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 6 So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

7 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. 8 Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

The reading may be concluded:
The Word of the Lord.
The assembly responds:
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 19

Ask the congregation to: “Please read the Psalm responsively”

1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork.
2 One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.
3 Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,
4 their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world,
where God has pitched a tent for the sun.
5It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
    it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
6It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it
    again;
    nothing is hidden from its burning heat.
7The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
    the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
8The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
    the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
9The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
    the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
10More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,
    sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
11By them also is your servant enlightened,
    and in keeping them there is great reward.
12Who can detect one’s own offenses?
    Cleanse me from my secret faults.
13Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;
    then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.
14Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
    O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately
connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a
vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.

12For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though
    many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one
    body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
14Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15If the foot would say,
    “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of
    the body. 16And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that
    would not make it any less a part of the body. 17If the whole body were an eye, where would the
    hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18But as it is,
    God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19If all were a single
    member, where would the body be? 20As it is, there are many members, yet one body. 21The eye
cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need
    of you.” 22On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,
    23and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and
    our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; 24whereas our more respectable
    members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the
    inferior member, 25that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have
    the same care for one another. 26If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member

is honored, all rejoice together with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts.

The reading may be concluded:
The Word of the Lord.
The assembly responds:
Thanks be to God.


Near the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”