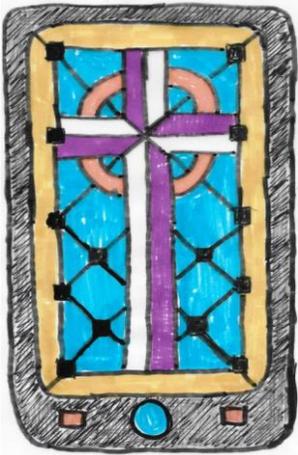




The MBPC Texter

... get into scripture – an ancient form of text messaging

Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church
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Issue 3

Lectionary Year C

The following texts have been chosen by Pastor Lant Davis from Revised Common Lectionary readings (<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>) for the 1st Sunday after Christmas Day and the Epiphany of the Lord. When you have a few minutes, look them up and read them.

Sunday, December 30th 2018

1st Sunday after Christmas Day

<p>Gospel Reading <i>Boy Jesus in the Temple</i> Luke 2: 41-52 (sermon text)</p>	<p>Epistle Reading <i>Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience (3:12)</i> Colossians 3:12-17</p>
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Sunday, January 6th 2018

The Epiphany of our Lord

<p>Gospel Reading <i>The Visit of the Wise Men</i> Matthew 2: 1-12 (sermon text)</p>	<p>Old Testament Prophet Reading <i>Gold and Frankincense</i> Isaiah 60:1-6</p>
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(read more.....)

-  Luke as Featured Gospel for Year C Lectionary Cycle
-  Introduction to Colossians
-  Matthew: Gospel for a Jewish Audience
-  Introduction to Isaiah





Luke as Featured Gospel for Year C Lectionary Cycle

The four books of the Bible which tell the story of Jesus' life on earth are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all follow the same sequence of events, and thus, are frequently referred to as "the synoptic gospels." The Gospel according to John differs significantly from the other three in sequence, characters, and events. For each year of the Revised Common Lectionary's 3-year cycle, readings from the synoptic gospels follow the pattern

-  Year A: Matthew
-  Year B: Mark
-  Year C: Luke

Lectionary readings from John appear throughout all years in the cycle particularly during the Easter season.

The Gospel According to Luke presents a dramatic narrative of the birth, words, deeds, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In its first paragraphs it claims to present "an orderly account" based on descriptions of "eyewitnesses and servants of the word." Unlike the author of Matthew, who wanted to tell the story for the Jews, the author of Luke had Gentiles in mind for his audience. Mark was probably the first Gospel to be written and both Luke and Matthew used Mark along with other sources for writing these second and third Gospels. The way that Luke used information from Mark and incorporated it with other sources displayed considerable literary talent.

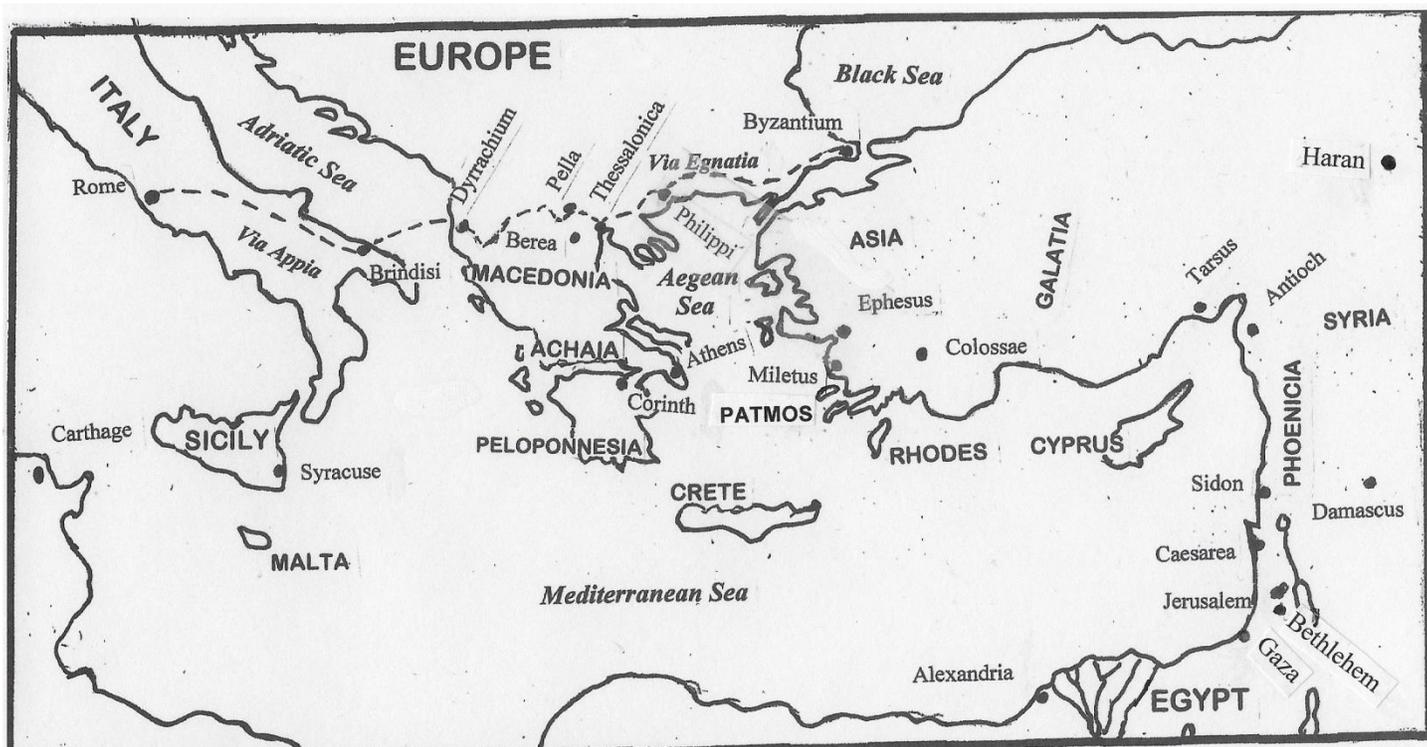
Many of the stories about Jesus' birth appear only in Luke, including the Angel Gabriel's "annunciation" of Jesus' birth to Mary (1:26-38); the birth of John the Baptist to Elizabeth and Zechariah(1:57-80); and the appearance of the angels to the shepherds near Bethlehem (2:8-20). Other parts of Jesus' life are also described only in Luke, including the story of boy Jesus in the Temple (2:41-52); the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37); the parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32); and the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10). The same author also wrote Acts of the Apostles, and both were probably written during the last two decades of the first century A.D., more than 20 years after the last of Paul's letters. Throughout these two Bible books – *The Gospel according to Luke* and *The Acts of the Apostles*, Luke tells marvelous stories of God's love in Christ as the good news began to spread to all people everywhere.





Introduction to Colossians

Colossae was a city in Asia Minor about 100 miles from Ephesus. The church at Colossae was not founded by Paul but probably by Epaphras, his friend and fellow evangelist. Even so, through Epaphras, Paul knew of the love and faith of the Christians there. This map shows lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, including places that Paul visited on his missionary journeys and all of the places to which Pauline epistles in the New Testament were written – Colossae, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Philippi, Rome, and Thessalonica.



We do not know whether Paul wrote this letter. Because the advice for new Christians is somewhat different from the unquestionably authentic Pauline letters (Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1st Thessalonians, and Philemon), many scholars believe that Colossians was written in Paul's name by later evangelists after his death. Colossians teaches that our salvation comes only through our belief in Christ is the one thing that really matters. Through belief we automatically have access to God. In Colossians 3:12-17, the scripture passage for Sunday, December 30, 2018, there is a beautiful expression of how God wants us to live together in community: forgiving one another and treating each other with kindness and love.





Matthew: Gospel for a Jewish Audience

Recall that centuries of study of the four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – lead scholars to believe that these accounts of Jesus’ life were written by different people, at different times; in different places; and for different audiences. All were written after the Pauline letters (65 A.D.) and probably before 105 A.D. Additionally, most scholars believe that Mark was written first and that authors of both Matthew and Luke used Mark as one of their sources. Unlike Luke, which was written for a gentile audience, Matthew was written for Jews to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. Thus, the Gospel of Matthew often makes connections between Jesus’ teachings and Old Testament scriptures. Matthew begins Chapter 1 with a genealogy of Jesus, linking his ancestry in Verse 1 to both Abraham and King David. Furthermore, Matthew is the only gospel that includes the story of the wise men from the East who follow a star and bring gifts to the “king of the Jews” born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12).

Below is a table presenting comparative information on the four gospels.

Gospel	When written?	Where?	Author/Audience
Mark	68-73 A.D.	Rome	Since the early 2 nd century Mark has been referred to as the interpreter of Peter’s ministry and wrote down what he said. Also known as “John Mark,” he was mentioned in the book of Acts as well as some of the New Testament epistles.
Matthew	80-90 A.D.	Antioch	The Gospel of Matthew is believed to have been written for a Jewish audience by a Greek-speaking Jewish-Christian, probably a scribe.
Luke	85-95 A.D.	unknown	The Gospel of Luke was written for a gentile audience and had the same author as Acts. Luke’s obvious attachment to Paul and the Pauline tradition in Acts connect him with numerous cities of Pauline missions around the Aegean Sea. Thus, it is difficult to determine which of many places Luke and Acts may have been written. In both Luke and Acts, the author displays extraordinary literary talent and storytelling ability. His employment of rhetorical conventions indicate a Hellenistic education.
John	90 – 105 A.D.	Ephesus	The Gospel of John is attributed to the disciple John, son of Zebedee, and spoken of in the book as “the disciple Jesus loved.” Even so, because of its late dating and numerous revisions, it makes more sense to attribute the writing of this gospel to followers of John the disciple.





Introduction to Isaiah

With 66 chapters, Isaiah is the first and longest book in the “Prophets” section of the Protestant Old Testament. It’s important to think about it as a composite work of several different prophets who ministered at periods in the history of Israel which were 200 years apart.

- **Chapters 1-39** (approximately 740-690 B.C.E.) The book bears the name of Isaiah, son of Amoz, who was preaching in Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Judean kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The times of Isaiah were very different than in the 900s, when David united all the tribes and Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. During the 800s, 700s, 600s, and 500s the descendants of Abraham, whom Moses had led out of Egypt into the Promised Land, were no longer united in one kingdom but divided along tribal and geographic lines into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. According to 1st and 2nd Kings, there were wars between the two kingdoms, as well as wars with neighboring nations throughout this period of history. It also helps to realize before reading Isaiah that, 1st and 2nd Kings provide judgments as well as chronologies for rulers of both kingdoms. Some of these kings “did what was right in the sight of the Lord” and others “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” In 721 B.C.E. a catastrophe struck the northern kingdom of Israel. In many of the sermons/oracles delivered by Isaiah of Jerusalem in the late 700s B.C.E., he reminded the Judahites about the fate of the northern kingdom, warning them that the same fate could be theirs if they continued their wicked ways and did not follow God’s commandments.
- **Chapters 40-66** (approximately 540 – 500 B.C.E.) Two hundred years later, the prophetic messages in these chapters of Isaiah speak more of deliverance than judgment. Chapters 40-55 address Jews living in Babylon toward the end of their exile period and their eminent release from captivity and return to the land God had promised them. In Chapters 56-66, the Judahites, having been released from exile by their Persian overlords, and the only tribe of Israel now remaining intact are once more living around Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple. Even so, they are surrounded by difficult circumstances, including economic oppression and a resurgence of paganism in the region. But though challenges are present in these closing years of the sixth century, the Jews move forward with determination and hope with renewed beliefs that God’s promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be fulfilled.

