

The Feast of Mary Magdalene in Modern Anglican Liturgies

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Introduction

During the last half of the twentieth century the feast of Mary Magdalene was again included in Anglican liturgical books, after having been absent since the year 1552. The Mary Magdalene described in the collects, scripture readings and psalms set forth in contemporary liturgical books is, however, a different woman than the one raised up in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. Then, as in the medieval liturgy, the gospel reading shows us the penitent, caring and forgiven woman of Luke 7:36-51. Today, however, the gospel reading speaks of the witness to the resurrection in John, chapter 20. Contemporary liturgical books, however, also exhibit considerable insight and imagination in their choice of other scripture readings and in the composition of the collect for this feast.

Here I will consider the scripture readings, psalms and collects for the feast of Mary Magdalene used by ten Anglican liturgical books published in the late twentieth century, together with certain earlier Anglican texts and those of several other churches.

The process by which Mary Magdalene returned to the Anglican liturgy may be said to have begun with the *Proposed or Deposited Book of Common Prayer* of 1928. This book never received parliamentary approval, however, and therefore was never officially used. Its draft text of a feast of Mary Magdalene, however, influenced the 1962 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of Canada and the 1963 *Book of Common Worship* of the Church of South

India. Other influences on post-1970 Anglican liturgical books were the renewed Roman Catholic sacramentary and lectionary published in English in that year. Finally, a series of Anglican liturgical books published between 1978 and 1989 brought this feast to its present state. Lutheran liturgical books, at least in the United States, took part in this revival.

Here I will describe the scripture readings and collects chosen for the feast of Mary Magdalene, in the following order: gospel, collect, epistle (including Acts of the Apostles), lessons from the Hebrew Scriptures, and psalms. I will comment upon the gospel, collect and epistle selections, and invite readers to reflect as well. The complete texts follow.

Sources

The liturgical books used in this study are identified below both with a short title (e.g., England 1928) and by the full title of each book, with the customary publication information. Only the short title will be used subsequently.

Anglican books are listed first, followed by those of other churches. Within these categories, sources are listed chronologically.

Readings for the eucharistic liturgy of the feast of Mary Magdalene are listed for each book, always in the same order. All alternative readings are included, if there are any.

England 1928

The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928
London: Oxford University Press 1928
John 20:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Canada 1962

The Book of Common Prayer. . . According to the Use of The Anglican Church of Canada
Toronto: Anglican Book Centre 1962
John 20:11-18; Acts 13:27-31

United States 1978

The Book of Common Prayer... According to the use of The Episcopal Church
New York: Church Hymnal Corporation 1978
John 20:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-18; Judith 9:1, 11-14; Psalm 42:1-7

Australia 1978

An Australian Prayer Book for use together with The Book of common Prayer, 1662,
1978
Sydney: Church of England in Australia 1978
John 20:1-18 or John 20:1-2, 11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 (-21);

Song of Songs 3:1-4a; Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9

England 1980

The Alternative Service Book 1980

Clowes, Cambridge, SPCK 1980

John 20:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Zephaniah 3:14-end; Psalm 139:1-11;
Psalm 30:1-5

Wales 1984

The Book of Common Prayer for use in The Church in Wales, volume 1.

Church in Wales Publications 1984

John 20:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Hosea 6:1-3; Psalm 71:19, 21-end

Ireland 1984

Alternative Prayer Book 1984 according to the use of The Church of Ireland

Dublin: Collins Liturgical Publications 1984

John 20:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Psalm 30:1-5

Canada 1985

The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada

Toronto: Anglican Book Centre 1985

John 20:1-3, 11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-18; Judith 9:1, 11-14; Psalm 42:1-7

New Zealand 1989

A New Zealand Prayer Book / He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa: The Church of the Province of New Zealand

Auckland: William Collins Publishers 1989

John 20:11-18 or John 20:1-18 or John 20:1-2, 11-18;
2 Corinthians 5:14-19 or 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 (-21);
Isaiah 65:17-19; Song or Songs 3:1-4a; Psalm 63

Southern Africa 1989

An Anglican Prayer Book 1989. Church of the Province of Southern Africa

London: Collins Liturgical Publications 1989

John 20:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Song of Songs 3:1-4a; Psalm 63:1-9

South India 1963

The Book of Common Worship : The Church of South India

London: Oxford University Press 1962

John 20:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Psalm 116:1-16

Lutheran 1978

Lutheran Book of Worship: Ministers Desk Edition

(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House 1978)

John 20:1-2, 11-18; Acts 13:26-33a; Ruth 1:6-18; Exodus 2:1-10; Psalm 73:23-29

Lutheran 1982

Lutheran Worship

(St Louis: Concordia 1982)

John 20:1-2, 11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-18; Acts 13:26-33a;
Ruth 1:6-18; Exodus 2:1-10; Psalm 73:23-28

Roman Catholic 1970

Lectionary for Mass

John 20:1-2, 11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Song of Songs 3:1-4;
Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9

Gospels

The gospel reading for the feast of Mary Magdalene in all of the liturgical books included in this study is principally John 20:11-18. A few add John 20:1-2 or John 20:1-3 as introduction and a few use verses 1-18. The verses used in individual books are as follows.

John 20:11-18

England 1928; Canada 1962; United States 1978; England 1980; Wales 1984;
Ireland 1984; New Zealand 1989; South India 1963

John 20:1-2, 11-18

Australia 1989; New Zealand 1989; Lutheran 1989; Lutheran 1982; Roman
Catholic 1970

John 20:1-3, 11-18

Canada 1985

John 20:1-18

Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989; Southern Africa 1989

Verse 1 plus verses 11-18 of chapter 20 speak mainly of Mary Magdalene. She is a woman who is a faithful disciple and comes to the tomb on Easter morn to care for the body of Jesus. She is the one who loves Jesus greatly and searches for his body; the one who encounters the risen Christ and who is the first witness to the resurrection; the one who is commissioned by the risen Christ to announce this good news to the other disciples; she is the apostle to the apostles.

Verse 2 puts Mary Magdalene in contact with Simon Peter and “the other disciples, the one whom Jesus loved,” though Mary is the only one whose speech is quoted: “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” Verses 3-10 have to do only with these two male disciples, their actions and what they see; no speech of theirs is quoted. One has to wonder if the use of verses 2, 3 or 2-10 in some liturgical books indicate a reluctance to proclaim only the woman’s story, or conversely, a need to name the male disciples as well as

Mary?

Collects

The collects for the feast of Mary Magdalene in most of the liturgical books considered here have a general similarity, but there are also a number of interesting and significant differences among them. The collects of Roman Catholic 1970 and Lutheran 1982 are entirely distinct from the others.

The collects studied here have four distinct parts or sections: *address* to God, a *basis* that tells what God has done, the *petition* that states what we ask of God, and a conclusion or *doxology*. I will comment on these in turn.

In terms of overall literary style, some may be considered “older,” using less direct constructions, while others may be considered “newer,” using more direct constructions. As this point does not affect content, I will not consider it further.

Address

The principal address is “O Almighty God” or simply “Almighty God.” A few prayers instead have “Merciful God” or “Merciful Lord”, while Roman Catholic 1970 uses “Father.”

Basis

The basis of England 1928 is the starting place for most subsequent collects. It reads, “whose blessed Son did call and sanctify Mary Magdalene to be witness to the resurrection.”

In subsequent texts, “whose blessed Son” was changed slightly, to “your Son”, “your blessed Son” and “your Son Jesus Christ.”

What Christ did is to “call and sanctify Mary Magdalene” This double action was subsequently divided into separate actions, within the single sentence. Thus Canada 1962 said, “sanctify Mary Magdalene, and call her to be witness to his resurrection.” while others used the form, “and called her to be witness...”

The word “sanctify” here was a challenge. What might it mean to “sanctify Mary to be a witness to the resurrection,” even if this action were separated from “call” her to be a witness? In subsequent liturgical books, “sanctify” underwent several kinds of transformation; In one case (Australia 1978) it was simply omitted entirely. In several other cases it was changed to refer to healing, both physical and spiritual. Thus: “[Christ] restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind” is used frequently, while one text has simply “brought healing to Mary Magdalene” (Ireland 1984).

The principal scriptural basis for Mary Magdalene’s being called to be a witness to the

resurrection obviously is John 20. That for restoring her to health of body and of mind, or simply healing, is Luke 8:3:

Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources. (Luke 8:1-3)

Petition

Most of these collects contain a double petition, just as most include a double basis. "Older" style collects begin the petition with the traditional "mercifully grant that" followed by a passive construction that includes other verbs, for example "Mercifully grant that by thy grace we may be healed of all our infirmities and always serve thee in the power of his endless life"(England 1928).

"Healed of our infirmities" is a reference to Luke 8:1-3, quoted above, now applied to ourselves instead of Mary Magdalene (to whom it was applied in the basis). This idea is omitted by one collect, and changed to "Heal us and make us whole" in another. Several others change the image more extensively: "forgive us and heal us by your grace", "we may be cleansed from all our sins" and "cleansed us and make us new". This seems to me to call Luke 7:36-50 to mind, the story of the unnamed sinful woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears and whose sins are forgiven because she has shown so much love Using this allusion here, however, would seem to confuse Mary Magdalene with that unnamed woman, when these are two separate persons. This confusion of Marys was of course a long tradition in the church, though rejected by Anglicans and Protestants at the time of the reformation.

The second petition is "always serve thee in the power of his endless life" (England 1928), and the dual motive of "serving God" through the "power of the resurrection" is continued in most of these collects. Though Mary Magdalene's "service" is to witness to the resurrection (in the basis), our response is the more general and vague "serve" without any specification.

The resurrection and its consequences are variously referred to as [Christ's] "endless life", "unending life", and "risen life"; Wales 1984 simply says "in the power of thy Son Jesus Christ."

Doxology / Conclusion

Most of these collects use a long, trinitarian, conclusion, while a few have a short, christological conclusion.

I will not comment specifically on the collects in Roman Catholic 1970 and Lutheran 1982, as these are quite distinct.

Epistles and Acts of the Apostles

2 Corinthians 5

Most liturgical books studied use verses from 2 Corinthians chapter 5; however, individual books select different verses, as shown here. The most commonly used reading from the epistles is 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 (-21).

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

England 1928; England 1980; Wales 1984; Ireland 1984; Southern Africa 1989;
South India 1963; Roman Catholic 1970

2 Corinthians 5:14-18

United States 1978; Canada 1985; Lutheran 1982

2 Corinthians 5:14-19

New Zealand 1989

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 (-21)

Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989

Most books use verses 14-17 only. These first of all proclaim Christ's death and resurrection, the basic message entrusted to Mary Magdalene to communicate to the other disciples. Verse 16 may be applied to Mary's encounter with the risen Christ in the garden. Verse 17 suggests the transformative nature of Mary's meeting and speech with the risen Christ.

A few liturgical books add verse 18, which speaks of reconciliation, first of all between God and humankind. It goes on to say that God has "given us the ministry of reconciliation." This can be applied not only to contemporary worshipers but also, presumably, to Mary Magdalene; it is an unusual way of describing Mary's ministry in the church. One book also adds verse 19, further emphasizing the message of reconciliation and saying that the message of reconciliation is entrusted to us – and to Mary Magdalene. Finally, one book adds, as an option, verses 20 and 21, which contain two additional images: that "we are ambassadors for Christ," and that "we might become the righteousness of God."

Acts of the Apostles 13

Some liturgical books offer a different "epistle" reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 13; again individual books differ slightly in the verses selected. The passage basically is a portion of a sermon of Peter.

Acts of the Apostles 13:27-31

Canada 1962

Acts of the Apostles 13:26-33a

Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Verses 30-33a certainly proclaim the resurrection and refer to the risen Christ appearing to “[all] those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem” which included several women; all “are now his witnesses.”

As used for the feast of Mary Magdalene, however, this passage is somewhat ironic in putting the message of the resurrection on the lips of the male disciples, Peter, though it had originally been entrusted to Mary Magdalene to communicate to the rest of the disciples.

In addition, verses 26-27 speak of the death of Jesus and of the responsibility of “the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders” for his death. Books differ whether they include verse 26, the initial address of Peter to the Jewish people.

Hebrew Scriptures: Lessons

In contrast to the relatively uniformity of the other two readings, that from the Hebrew Scriptures (when there is one) varies widely: seven different passages are listed in different sources.

Exodus 2:1-10

Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Ruth 1:6-18

Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Song of Songs 3:1-4a

Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989; Southern Africa 1989; Roman Catholic 1970

Isaiah 65:17-19

New Zealand 1989

Hosea 6:1-3

Wales 1984

Zephaniah 3:13-20

England 1980; Ireland 1984; South India 1963

Judith 9:1, 11-13

United States 1978; Canada 1985

Because of their number and diversity I will not comment on each of these readings. They are open to a wide range of interpretations; this also applies to the psalms given below. Readers are invited – indeed, urged – to reflect on these passages themselves, decide what the images they contain have to do with Mary Magdalene, and evaluate them – which passages seem better and which ones do not appeal.

Hebrew Scriptures: Psalms

Psalm 30:1-5

England 1980; Ireland 1984

Psalm 42:1-7

Canada 1985

Psalm 62:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Roman Catholic 1970

Psalm 63

Australia 1978

Psalm 63:1-9

New Zealand 1989; Southern Africa 1989

Psalm 71:19, 21-end

Wales 1984

Psalm 73:23-28

Lutheran 1982

Psalm 73:23-29

Lutheran 1978

Psalm 116:1-16

South India 1963

Psalm 139:1-11

England 1980)

A Lutheran Memory

As mentioned above, the image of Mary Magdalene set forth in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer was that of the sinful, penitent and forgiven woman of Luke 7:36-51; this woman disappeared from the Anglican liturgy in 1552. The collect for that day, however, though discarded by Anglicans, inspired a modern Lutheran collect. Thus the 1958 Service Book and Hymnal used the substance of the 1549 collect as an Occasional Collect for forgiveness; Mary Magdalene's name was omitted and the text was edited slightly. The two texts follow:

Mercyful father geue vs grace, that we neuer prosume to synne thorough the example of any creature, but if it shall chaunce us at any tyme to offende thy diuine maiestie: that then we may truely repent and lament the same, after the example of Mary Magdalene, and by lyuely fauth obtaine remission of all our sinnes, through the onl merites of thy sonne our sauour Christ.

Book of Common Prayer, 1549

Merciful Father, give us grace that we may never presume to sin; but if at any time we offend thy Divine Majesty, may we truly repent and lament our offence, and by a lively faith obtain remission of all our sins: solely through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Service Book and Hymnal 1958, p

Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy, vol 2, p 621

Texts

Scripture lessons are according to the New Revised Standard Version.

Psalms are according to the ICEL translation: *The Psalms: A faithful and inclusive rendering from the Hebrew into contemporary English poetry, intended primarily for communal song and recitation...* by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1995.

Gospels

John 20

- 1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.
- 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where

they have laid him.”

3 Then Peter and the other disciples set out and went toward the tomb.

4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5 He bent down to look in and saw the line wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 Then the other disciples, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb,

12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

13 They said to her, “Woman, who are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”

14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni” (which means Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to m God and your God.”

18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:1-18

Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989; Southern Africa 1989

John 20:11-18

England 1928; Canada 1962; United States 1978; England 1980; Wales 1984; Ireland 1984; New Zealand 1989; South India 1963

John 20:1-2, 11-18

Australia 1989; New Zealand 1989; Lutheran 1989; Lutheran 1982; Roman Catholic 1970

John 20:1-3, 11-18

Canada 1985

Collects

O Almighty God,
whose blessed Son did call and sanctify
Mary Magdalene to be a witness to the resurrection:
Mercifully grant that by thy grace
we may be healed of all our infirmities,
and always serve thee in the power of his endless life,
who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth,
one God, world without end. Amen.

England 1928

O Almighty God,
whose blessed Son did sanctify Mary Magdalene,
and call her to be witness to his resurrection:
Mercifully grant that by thy grace we may be healed of all our infirmities,
and always serve thee in the power of his endless life;
who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth,
one God, world without end. Amen

Canada 1962

Almighty God,
whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind,
and called her to be a witness of his resurrection:
Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities
and know you in the power of his unending life;
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

United States 1978

Merciful God,
whose Son Jesus Christ called Mary Magdalen
to be a witness to his resurrection:
mercifully grant that by your grace
we may serve you in the power of his risen life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Australia 1978

Almighty God,
whose Son restored Mary Magdalen
to health of mind and body
and called her to be a witness to his resurrection:
forgive us and heal us by your grace,
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

England 1980

Almighty God,
whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene
to health of mind and body,
and called her to be a witness to the Resurrection:
mercifully grant that by thy grace
we may be cleansed from all our sins
and serve thee in the power of thy Son Jesus Christ;
who now lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end. Amen

Wales 1984

Almighty God,
your blessed Son brought healing to Mary Magdalene,
and called her to be witness of his resurrection:
Forgive us and heal us by your grace,
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Ireland 1984

Almighty God,
whose Son restored Mary Magdalene
to health of mind and body,
and called her to be a witness of his resurrection,
forgive us and heal us by your grace,
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Canada 1985

Merciful God,
your Son restored Mary Magdalene to health
of body and mind
and called her to be a witness
of his resurrection;
heal us and make us whole
that we may serve you
in the power of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

New Zealand 1989

Merciful Lord
your Son restored Saint Mary Magdalene
to health of body and mind
and called her to be witness of his resurrection:
cleanse us and make us new
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life;
who with you and the Holy spirit is alive and reigns
one God, now and for ever.

Southern Africa 1989

O Almighty God,
whose blessed Son did sanctify Mary Magdalene,
and called her to be a witness to his resurrection:
Mercifully grant that by thy grace we may be healed of all our infirmities,
and always serve thee in the power of his endless life,
who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth,
one God, world without end. Amen.

South India 1962

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and mind,
and called her to be a witness of his resurrection.
Heal us now in body and mind,
and call us to serve you in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Lutheran 1978

O almighty God,
whom to know is everlasting life,
grant us perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ
to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life that,
following his steps, we may steadfastly walk
in the way that leads to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Lutheran 1982

Father, your Son first entrusted to Mary Magdalene
the joyful news of his resurrection.
By her prayers and example
may we proclaim Christ as our living Lord

and one day see him in glory,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Roman Catholic 1970

Epistles and Acts of the Apostles

2 Corinthians 5

- 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all;
therefore all have died.
- 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for
him who died and was raised for them.
- 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we
once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.
- 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; wee,
everything has become new!
- 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the
ministry of reconciliation;
- 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses
against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us
- 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us;
we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the
righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

England 1928; England 1980; Wales 1984; Ireland 1984; Southern Africa
1989; South India 1963; Roman Catholic 1970

2 Corinthians 5:14-18

United States 1978; Canada 1985; Lutheran 1982

2 Corinthians 5:14-19

New Zealand 1989

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 (-21)

Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989

Acts 13

- 26 My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the
message of this salvation has been sent.
- 27 Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand
the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by
condemning him.

- 28 Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed.
- 29 When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.
- 30 But God raised him from the dead,
- 31 and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people.
- 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors
- 33a he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus;

Acts of the Apostles 13:27-31

Canada 1962

Acts of the Apostles 13:26-33a

Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Hebrew Scriptures: Lessons

Exodus 2

- 1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.
- 2 The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months.
- 3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river.
- 4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.
- 5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basked among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it.
- 6 When she opened it she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. This must be one of the Hebrews' children, she said.
- 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you? Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Yes. So the girl went and called the child's mother.
- 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages. So the woman took the child and nursed it.
- 10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, because, she said, I drew him out of the water.

Exodus 2:1-10

Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Ruth 1

- 6 Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she

- had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food.
- 7 So she set out from the place where she had been living; she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah.
- 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, God back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.
- 9 The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband. Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud.
- 10 They said to her, No, we will return with you to your people.
- 11 But Naomi said, Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husband?
- 12 Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I though there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons,
- 13 would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.
- 14 Then they wept aloud again. Orpha kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
- 15 So she said, See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.
- 16 But Ruth said:
- Do not press me to leave you
or to turn back from following you
Where you go, I will go.
Where you lodge, I will lodge,
your people shall be my people;
and your God my God.
- 17 Where you die, I will die –
there will I be buried.
May the Lord do thus and so to me,
and more as well,
if even death parts me from you!
- 18 When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.
- Ruth 1:6-18
Lutheran 1978; Lutheran 1982

Song of Songs 3

- 1 Upon my bed at night
I sought him whom my soul loves;
I sought him, but found him not;
I called him, but he gave no answer.
- 2 I will rise now and go about the city,
in the streets and in the squares;

I will seek him whom my soul loves.
I sought him, but found him not.
3 The sentinels found me,
as they went about in the city,
Have you seen him whom my soul loves?
4a Scarcely had I passed them,
when I found him whom my soul loves.
Song of Songs 3:1-4a
Australia 1978; New Zealand 1989; Southern Africa 1989;
Roman Catholic 1970

Isaiah 65

17 For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth,
the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.
Isaiah 65: 17-19
New Zealand 1989

Hosea 6

1 Come, let us return to the Lord;
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.
2 After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that he may live before him.
3 Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;
he will come to us like the showers,
like the spring rains that water the earth.
Hosea 6:1-3
Wales 1984

Zephaniah 3

- 14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!
- 15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
- 16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion,
do not let your hands grow weak.
- 17 The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
- 18 as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not hear reproach for it.
- 19 I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.
- 20 At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

Zephaniah 3:14-20

England 1980; Ireland 1984; South India 1963

Judith 9

- 1 Then Judith prostrated herself, put ashes on her head, and uncovered the sackcloth she was wearing. At the every time when the evening incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord with a loud voice, and said.
- 11 For your strength does not depend on numbers, nor your might on the powerful. But you are the God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, savior of those without hope.
- 12 Please, please, God of my father, God of the heritage of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all your creation, hear my prayer.

- 13 Make my deceitful words bring wound and bruise on those who have planned cruel things against your covenant, and against your sacred house, and against Mount Zion, and against the house your children possess.
- 14 Let your whole nation and every tribe know and understand that you are God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but you alone!

Judith 9:1, 11-14

United States 1978; Canada 1985

Hebrew Scriptures: Psalms [icel]

Psalm 30:1-5 (ICEL = 2-6)

- 1 I give you high praise,
for you, Lord, raised me up
above my gloating enemy.
- 2 Lord, how I begged you,
and you, God, healed me,
- 4 You pulled me from the pit,
brought me back from Sheol.
- 5 Celebrate, all you saints,
praise this awesome God.,
- 6 whose anger passes quickly,
whose mercy lasts a life time—
as laughter fills a day
after one brief night of tears.

England 1980; Ireland 1984

Psalm 42:1-7 (ICEL = 2-8)

- 2 As a deer craves running water,
I thirst for you, my God;
- 3 I thirst for God,
the living God.
When will I see your face?
- 4 Tears are my steady diet.
Day and night I hear,
“Where is your God?”
- 5 I cry my heart out,

I remember better days:
when I entered the house of God,
I was caught in the joyful sound
of pilgrims giving thanks.

6 Why are you sad, my heart?
Why do you grieve?
Wait for the Lord.
I will yet praise God my savior.

7 My heart is sad,
Even from Jordan and Hermon,
from the peak of Mizar,
I remember you.

8 There the deep roars to deep;
your torrents crash over me.
Canada 1985

Psalm 62:2-6, 8-9 (ICEL = 2-10)

2 My soul waits, silent for God,
for God alone, my salvation,
3 alone my rock, my safety,
My refuge: I stand secure.
4 How long will some of you attack
tearing others down
as if walls or fences
on the verge of collapse?

5 You scheme to topple them,
so smug in your lies;
your lips are all blessing,
but murder fills your heart.

6 Wait, my soul, silent for God,
for God alone, my hope,
7 alone my rock, my safety,
my refuge: I stand secure.

8 God is my glory and safety,
My stronghold, my haven,

9 People, give your hearts to God,
trust always! God is our haven.

10 Mortals are but a breath,
nothing more than a mirage;
set them on the scales,
they prove lighter than mist.

Roman Catholic 1970

Psalm 63:1-11 (ICEL = 2-12)

2 God, my God, you I crave;
my soul thirsts for you,
my body aches for you
like a dry and weary land.

3 Let me gaze on you in your temple:
a vision of strength and glory.

4 Your love is better than life,
my speech is full of praise.

5 I give you a lifetime of worship,
my hands raised in your name.

6 I feast at a rich table,
my lips sing of your glory.

7 On my bed I lie awake,
your memory fills the night,

8 You have been my help,
I rejoice beneath your wings

9 Yes, I cling to you,
your right hand holds me fast.

10 Let those who want me dead
end up deep in the grave!

11 They will die by the sword,
their bodies food for jackals,

12 But let the king find joy in God.
All who swear the truth be praised,
every lying mouth be shut.

Australia 1978 (vv 2-12)

Southern Africa 1989 (vv 2-10)

Psalm 71:19, 21-24

- 19 Your goodness is boundless,
your works so great;
who can equal you?
- 21 You will restore my honor
and wrap me again in mercy.
- 22 I will thank you, Lord,
for your true friendship
and place the lyre and harp for you,
the Holy One of Israel.
- 23 I will sing out with joy,
sing of how you saved me.
- 24 From morning till night
I will trumpet your goodness;
those who sought my ruin
are defeated and shamed.
Wales 1984

Psalm 73:23-28

- 23 But I stayed close to you,
and you took my hand.
- 24 You teach me wisdom,
leading me to glory.
- 25 What more would I have in heaven?
Who else delights me on earth?
- 26 If mind and body fail,
you, God, are my rock,
my support for ever.
- 27 Those who abandon you perish;
you destroy the unfaithful.
- 28 But my joy is to be near you,
Lord God, my only refuge.
I want to proclaim all your ways.
Lutheran 1978, Lutheran 1982

Psalm 116:1-16

- 1 I am filled with love,
for the Lord hears me;
- 2 the Lord bends to my voice
whenever I call.
- 3 Death had me in its grip,
the grave's trap was set,
grief held me fast.
- 4 I cried out for God,
"Please, Lord, rescue me!"
- 5 Kind and faithful is the Lord,
gentle is our God.
- 6 The Lord shelters the poor,
raises me from the dust.
- 7 Rest once more, my heart,
for you know the Lord's love.
- 8 God rescues me from death,
wiping my tears,
steadying me feet.
- 9 I walk with the Lord
in this land of the living.
- 10 I believe, even as I say,
:"I am afflicted."
- 11 I believe, even though I scream,
"Everyone lies!"
- 12 What gift can ever repay
God's gift to me?
- 13 I raise the cup of freedom
as I call on God's name!
- 14 I fulfill my vows to you, Lord,
standing before your assembly.
- 15 Lord, you hate to see
your faithful ones die.
- 16 I beg you, Lord, hear me:
it is I, the servant you love,
I, the child of your servant.

You freed me from death's grip.
South India 1963

Psalm 139:1-11 (ICEL = 1b-12)

2 You search me, Lord, and know me.
Wherever I sit or stand,
3 you read my inmost thoughts;
whenever I walk or rest,
you know where I have been.

4 Before a word slips from my tongue,
Lord, you know what I will say.
5 You close in on me,
pressing your hand upon me.
6 All this overwhelms me—
too much to understand!

7 Where can I hide from you?
How can I escape your presence?
8 I scale the heavens, you are there!
I plunge to the depths, you are there!
9 If I fly toward the dawn,
or settle across the sea,
10 even there you take hold of me,
your right hand directs me.

11 If think night will hide me
and darkness give me cover.
12 I find darkness is not dark.
For your night shines like day,
darkness and light are one.
England 1980)