



# Rhythms of grace

In the ebb and flow of liturgy, God is at work, whether we hear him or not.



by  
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## Telling the story of life

### Everyone loves a good story.

Whether we're adults or children, there is something about a story that can draw us in, engage our imagination, and help us see the world in a new way.

Sure, sometimes stories are just for fun, but they can also shape our sense of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, of beauty and ugliness. Maybe we also love stories because our own lives resemble a drama ... or a comedy or tragedy as the case may be!

But as dramatic (or not) as our life story is, it's actually part of a much bigger story: God's story. Every Sunday we hear three readings which recount the drama of God, the world and the whole human race. The Gospel lesson (to begin with the third reading) sets the theme for the day and usually narrates some episode in the life and ministry of Jesus, or else his words and teaching.

The second reading, usually in the form of an epistle (letter), unpacks the ongoing relevance of Jesus' story, both for the church and its members. And the first reading, taken from the Old Testament, recounts the faith and life of Israel, which Christians see fulfilled in Jesus and the church.

Taken over a three-year period, these lectionary readings cover many of the key biblical episodes: creation and fall, the birth of Israel, the Exodus and gift of the law, the rise and fall of the monarchy, exile and restoration ... and finally, the good news of Jesus, whose life, death and resurrection

sustain the life of the church into the future. Throughout these episodes we hear familiar themes unfolded again and again: death and life, sin and forgiveness, mortal weakness and divine strength. On the one hand, pride, futility and despair: on the other, faith, hope and love.

And it is within this great narrative profusion, in which heavenly and human stories intertwine, that our life dramas find their meaning. The biblical stories help us understand our personal stories. Whoever we are, we are not self-made, but dependent creatures of God. Whatever we achieve, we do by grace, not by works; no matter how far we fall, we are still defined by forgiveness and not by failure. Just as it is in Scripture, so it is in our lives. In fact, because we are 'in Christ', our own stories can even start taking on a Christ-like pattern.

But there's more. Unlike many a tale where the author is absent or deceased, our storyteller is present with us. That is why we announce his 'real presence' by proclaiming, '—This is the Gospel of the Lord'. That is why we stand up (or at least sit up) to pay attention. And that is why readers should aim for no less than the best-quality public reading possible. The author of the world is speaking, telling us both his story and ours.

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