**Celebration of God's Word** (Other suitable readings may be taken from the Lectionary.)

READINGS (Option 1)

**1. Romans 6: 3-5 Baptism, a sharing in Christ's death and resurrection.**

You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection.

**The Word of the Lord**.

**2. 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 Baptised in one Spirit to form one body**. (Option 2)

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make up one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

**The Word of the Lord**.

**3. 1 Peter 2: 4-5; 9-10 A chosen race, a royal Priest-hood**. (Option 3)

He is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people at all and now you are the People of God; once you were outside the mercy and now you have been given mercy.

**The Word of the Lord.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

Reader: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

All: **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

Reader: The Lord is my shepherd;

There is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.

All: **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

Reader: He guides me along the right path;

He is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness

No evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff,

With these you give me comfort.

All: **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

Reader: You have prepared a banquet for me

In the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil;

My cup is overflowing.

All**: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want**.

Reader: Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me

All the days of my life.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell

For ever and ever.

All: **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want**.

**ALLELUIA Alleluia, alleluia!**

I am the Light of the world says the Lord;

Whoever follows me will have the light of life.

**GOSPEL READINGS (Priest reads Gospel)**

1. John 3: 1-6: The meeting with Nicodemus

There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leading Jew, who came to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who comes from God ; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him'. Jesus answered: 'I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God'. Nicodemus said, 'How can a grown man be born? Can he go back into his mother's womb and be born again?' Jesus replied: 'I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God: what is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is spirit.'

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

2. Matthew 28: 18-20: The apostles are sent to preach the gospel and to baptize

Jesus came up and spoke to his disciples. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

3. Mark 1: 9-11: The baptism of Jesus

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you'.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

4. Mark 10: 13-16 Let the little children come to me

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them ; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**