

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

A brief silence.

Rooted and built up in Christ, we pray for the church. Embolden church leaders to take risks for the sake of the gospel, and equip the baptized to proclaim your extravagant love for the whole world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Rejoicing in the works of your hands, we pray for the natural world. Make rivers and lakes, oceans and all waterways, sparkle with your radiance. Protect water sources (*local water sources may be named*) and strengthen those who defend them. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Interceding on behalf of the vulnerable, we pray for the peoples of the world. Inspire all rulers and governing authorities with your justice. Guide the work of legislators and public officials, that they advocate for the well-being of those they serve. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (James, Apostle) Mark 10:35-45. **Tuesday** Romans 9:30—10:4. **Wednesday** Matthew 5:43-48. **Thursday** (commemoration of Johann Sebastian Bach, 1750; Heinrich Schütz, 1672; George Frederick Handel, 1759; musicians) Psalm 49:1-12. **Friday** (commemoration of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, 1030) Proverbs 24:1-12. **Saturday** Ecclesiastes 1:1-11. **8th Sunday after Pentecost** Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21.

CELEBRATE July 24, 2022 (Lectionary 17)

Volume 53, Number 3

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by John Paradowski. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year C* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year C.



Celebrate

Sunday, July 24, 2022
7th Sunday after Pentecost

Persistence in prayer is encouraged by Jesus and wins the attention of God when Abraham intercedes for Sodom. The life of the baptized—to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus—is to be nurtured with prayer. God hears and answers prayer and so strengthens God's own. "When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me."

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and you gladly give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us your abundant mercy. Forgive us those things that weigh on our conscience, and give us those good things that come only through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Genesis 18:20-32

In today's reading, Abraham undertakes the role of a mediator between God and sinful humanity. Appealing to God's justice, Abraham boldly asks for mercy for the city of Sodom for the sake of the few righteous people there, including Abraham's nephew, Lot.

The LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know."

²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will

forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³²Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

Your steadfast love endures for ever;

do not abandon the works of your hands.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart;

before the gods I will sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;

for you have glorified your name

and your word - I love all things. **R**

When I called, you answered me;

you increased my strength within me.

⁴All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD, when they have heard the words of your mouth.

⁵They will sing of the ways of the LORD,

that great is the glory of the LORD.

⁶The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar. **R**

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;

you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

⁸You will make good your promise for me;

O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands. **R**

The writer of this letter warns the congregation in Colossae about "the empty lure" of philosophies and traditions that compromise faith. "Through the gift of faith, the church is mystically connected with Christ in his death and resurrection which is enacted in baptism."

As you therefore have received Christ and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. ¹⁷These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.]

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses

Gospel

In teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus also reminds them to focus on God's coming reign, God's mercy, and the strengthening of the community. Jesus encourages his disciples to childlike trust and persistence in prayer.

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

him whatever he needs. ⁹"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are