

Prayers of Intercession

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

Gathered with one voice, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church in the world, its leaders, and its mission to share the good news of healing and restoration. Inspire us to embody the beloved community in ways that faithfully witness to the Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the trembling mountains and glad streams of creation. Preserve and renew your coastlines, deep seas, forests, and grasslands. Guide all who tend flocks or care for creatures of all kinds. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for leaders and advocates in government, civic life, and public safety. Support equity across the globe, and heal division with accountability and truth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Preparing for Next Week

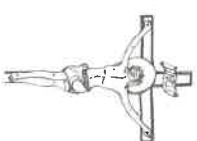
Monday (commemoration of Justus Falkner, 1723; Jehu Jones, 1852; William Passavant, 1894; pastors in North America) Psalm 24. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, 1748) Revelation 22:8-21. **Wednesday** Isaiah 60:8-16. **Thursday** (Day of Thanksgiving [USA]) Psalm 122. **Friday** Hebrews 11:1-7. **Saturday** Genesis 6:11-22. **First Sunday of Advent** Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44.

CELEBRATE November 23, 2025 (Christ the King)

Volume 56, Number 4

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 55440-1553. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$5.79 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 © 2025 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 David Cherwien. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship*, Year C (Augsburg Fortress, 2006). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year C.

ITEM013343 Tracks 1 and 2



Celebrate

Christ the King
November 23, 2025

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

Prayer of the Day

O God, our true life, to serve you is freedom, and to know you is unending joy. We worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory. Abide with us, reign in us, and make this world into a fit habitation for your divine majesty, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

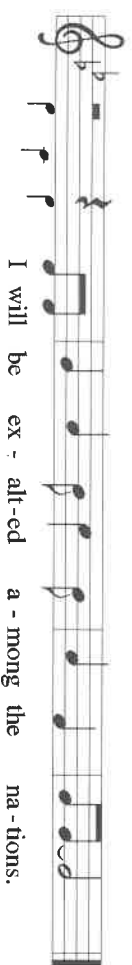
Jeremiah 23:1-6

Today's reading builds on the common, ancient Near Eastern metaphor of the king as shepherd. Judah's unjust rulers have caused their people, their "flock," to be scattered. Nevertheless, God will raise up a new and righteous shepherd who will rule a restored Judah.

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."



God is our ref-uge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;
³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.
⁶The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away. **R**
⁷The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
⁸Come now, regard the works of the Lord,
what desolations God has brought up on the earth;
⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
and burns the shields with fire.
¹⁰Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth."
¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold. **R**

An early Christian hymn praises the mystery of the political, personal, and mystical Christ, the one who was present at creation and is eternally reigning with God.

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible

and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Gospel

Luke 23:33-43

Amid scoffing and slander from those who sarcastically call him Messiah and King, Jesus reveals that to be Messiah and King is to give one's life for others. Here he uses his power to welcome a despised criminal to paradise but puts his own death into God's hands.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."