Prayers of Intercession

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

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

For the church of Jesus Christ in this and every land, that all followers of Christ share the mind of Christ and strive to live together in peace, staying firm in the Lord. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

For green pastures and still waters and all the beauty of the natural world (*local natural areas may be named*), that creation flourishes and humankind lives in right relationship with all you have made. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

For the nations of the world and all who hold positions of authority, that they govern in accordance with God's vision of justice, providing shelter and refuge to all in need, striving toward the goal of peace and prosperity for all. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

For all experiencing valleys of illness and grief, that they be healed and comforted and find rest in the presence of the Good Shepherd who walks beside them. (*We pray especially for . . . .*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

For this community of believers, that wherever there is conflict or discord, the love of Christ may keep us united and make us mindful of all that is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, and excellent. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving for the beloved saints who now rest in your mercy (*especially Teresa of Avila, teacher, renewer of the church*), that their faithful witness guides your church until the day we join them at your heavenly feast. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 34. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyr, died around 115) Amos 9:5-15. **Wednesday** (Luke, Evangelist) Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53. **Thursday** Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]. **Friday** 1 Peter 5:1-5. **Saturday** Isaiah 14:3-11. **Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22.

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 $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 © 2023 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 Mark Sedio. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year A* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year A.
CELEBRATE is protected through trademark registration in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Celebrate

Sunday, October 15, 2023
20th Sunday after Pentecost

In Isaiah we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

Prayer of the Day

Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 25:1-9

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

O LORD, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
[2]For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.
[3]Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
[4]For you have been a refuge to the poor,
a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
[5]the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.
[6]On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.
[7]And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.
[8]Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
[9]It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Psalm

Psalm 23; refrain, Ps. 23:5

The LORD | is my shepherd;
I shall not | be in want.
[2]**The LORD makes me lie down | in green pastures**
and leads me be- | side still waters.
[3]You restore my | soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake.
[4]**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,**
I shall | fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me. R
[5]You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.
[6]**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,**
and I will dwell in the house of the | LORD forever. R

Second Reading

Philippians 4:1-9

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

My brothers and sisters, whom I love and
long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in
the Lord in this way, my beloved.
[2]I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to
be of the same mind in the Lord. [3]Yes,
and I ask you also, my loyal companion,
help these women, for they have strug-
gled beside me in the work of the gospel,
together with Clement and the rest of my
co-workers, whose names are in the book
of life.
[4]Rejoice in the Lord always; again I
will say, Rejoice. [5]Let your gentleness be
known to everyone. The Lord is near.
[6]Do not worry about anything, but in ev-
erything by prayer and supplication with
thanksgiving let your requests be made
known to God. [7]And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding, will
guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus.
[8]Finally, beloved, whatever is true,
whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing,
whatever is commendable, if there is any
excellence and if there is anything wor-
thy of praise, think about these things.
[9]Keep on doing the things that you have
learned and received and heard and
seen in me, and the God of peace will be
with you.

Gospel

Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

Once more Jesus spoke to them in par-
ables, saying: [2]"The kingdom of heaven
may be compared to a king who gave a
wedding banquet for his son. [3]He sent
his slaves to call those who had been in-
vited to the wedding banquet, but they
would not come. [4]Again he sent other
slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been
invited: Look, I have prepared my din-
ner, my oxen and my fat calves have been
slaughtered, and everything is ready;
come to the wedding banquet.' [5]But they
made light of it and went away, one to his
farm, another to his business, [6]while the
rest seized his slaves, mistreated them,
and killed them. [7]The king was enraged.
He sent his troops, destroyed those mur-
derers, and burned their city. [8]Then he
said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready,
but those invited were not worthy. [9]Go
therefore into the main streets, and in-
vite everyone you find to the wedding
banquet.' [10]Those slaves went out into
the streets and gathered all whom they
found, both good and bad; so the wed-
ding hall was filled with guests.
[11]"But when the king came in to see
the guests, he noticed a man there who
was not wearing a wedding robe, [12]and
he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get
in here without a wedding robe?' And
he was speechless. [13]Then the king said
to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and
foot, and throw him into the outer dark-
ness, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.' [14]For many are called,
but few are chosen."