Prayers of Intercession

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

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering (*especially*). Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 126. **Tuesday** Isaiah 19:18-25. **Wednesday** Isaiah 35:3-7. **Thursday** Isaiah 12:2-6. **Friday** (commemoration of Lucy, martyr, 304) Amos 8:4-12. **Saturday** commemoration of John of the Cross, renewer of the church, 1591) Amos 9:8-15. **Third Sunday of Advent** Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18.

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Celebrate

Second Sunday of Advent
December 8, 2024

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; 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 — Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

See, I am sending my messenger to
prepare the way before me, and the
Lord whom you seek will suddenly
come to his temple. The messenger
of the covenant in whom you de-
light—indeed, he is coming, says the
LORD of hosts. [2]But who can endure
the day of his coming, and who can
stand when he appears?

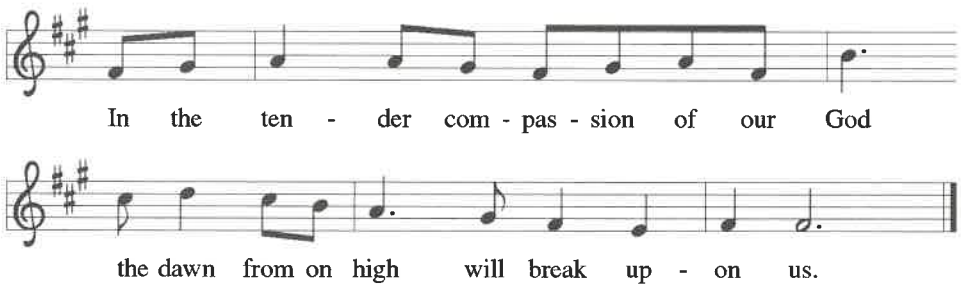
For he is like a refiner's fire and
like fullers' soap; [3]he will sit as a re-
finer and purifier of silver, and he
will purify the descendants of Levi
and refine them like gold and silver,
until they present offerings to the
LORD in righteousness. [4]Then the of-
fering of Judah and Jerusalem will
be pleasing to the LORD as in the
days of old and as in former years.

***or* Baruch 5:1-9 [not printed]**

A poem of hope from the school of the prophet Jeremiah speaks of the return of scattered Israel from Babylon, but also looks beyond that to the time when God's kingdom will be established.

Psalmody

Luke 1:68-79; refrain, Luke 1:78



Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.
[69]**You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,**
born of the house of your | servant David. R
[70]Through your holy prophets,
you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,
[71]from the hands of | all who hate us,
[72]**to show mercy | to our forebears,**
and to remember your | holy covenant.
[73]This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:
[74]to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,
free to worship you | without fear,
[75]**holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life. R**
[76]And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,
[77]**to give God's people knowledge | of salvation**
by the forgiveness | of their sins.
[78]In the tender compassion | of our God
the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,
[79]**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shad- | ow of death,**
and to guide our feet into the | way of peace. R

Second Reading

Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

I thank my God every time I remember you, [4]constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, [5]because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. [6]I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. [7]It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. [8]For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. [9]And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight [10]to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, [11]having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Gospel

Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, [2]during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. [3]He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, [4]as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
[5]Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
[6]and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"