Prayers of Intercession

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

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

As your word is opened in our midst, we give thanks for all who share scripture: for parents, grandparents, and godparents; teachers and mentors; deacons, pastors, bishops, and scholars. Inspire passion for the stories of faith. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

As heavens declare your glory and the sky proclaims your work, we lift our voices in awe of quarks and atoms, vast stars and solar systems. Guide us to speak on behalf of your handiwork. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

As Jesus proclaimed life and freedom in his community, energize communities and nations to eliminate poverty, engage in prison ministry and transformative justice, and envision new ways of working together for your promised reign. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

As your word and presence revive the soul, accompany all experiencing depression, anxiety, or eating disorders; be a source of strength for all affected by memory loss and their caregivers; draw near to all undergoing medical treatment or surgery (*especially*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

As we are made one body in baptism, strengthen all who serve. Renew and inspire all who use their gifts in this congregation, community, and the world (*especially parish nurses, fellowship hosts, worship leaders, council, and committee members*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

As our faith is strengthened by saints who have gone before us, we remember leaders of the early church (*especially Timothy, Titus, Silas, Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe*), and beloved friends and family who have died (*especially*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Psalm 119:89-96. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274) 2 Corinthians 7:2-12. **Wednesday** Jeremiah 36:27-32. **Thursday** Psalm 71:1-6. **Friday** 2 Chronicles 35:20-27. **Saturday** 2 Chronicles 36:11-21. **Presentation of Our Lord** Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 84 *or* Psalm 24:7-10; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40, *OR* **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30.

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Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 26, 2025

God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading — Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that "the joy of the LORD is your strength."

All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. [2]Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. [3]He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

[5]And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. [6]Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. [8]So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

[9]And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. [10]Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Psalm

Psalm 19; refrain, Ps. 19:7

The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,
and the sky proclaims its | maker's handiwork.
[2]One day tells its tale | to another,
and one night imparts knowledge | to another.
[3]Although they have no | words or language,
and their voices | are not heard,
[4]their sound has gone out into all lands,
and their message to the ends | of the world,
where God has pitched a tent | for the sun.
[5]It comes forth like a bridegroom out | of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to | run its course.
[6]It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of | it again;
nothing is hidden from its | burning heat. R
[7]The teaching of the LORD is perfect and re- | vives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom | to the simple.
[8]The statutes of the LORD are just and re- | joice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light | to the eyes.
[9]The fear of the LORD is clean and en- | dures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous | altogether.
[10]More to be desired are they than gold, more than | much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey | in the comb. R
[11]By them also is your ser- | vant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is | great reward.
[12]Who can detect one's | own offenses?
Cleanse me from my | secret faults.
[13]Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion | over me;
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a | great offense.
[14]Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable | in your sight,
O LORD, my strength and | my redeemer. R

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13]For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

[14]Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. [15]If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. [16]And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. [17]If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? [18]But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. [19]If all were a single member, where would the body be? [20]As it is, there are many members, yet one body. [21]The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." [22]On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, [23]and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; [24]whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, [25]that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. [26]If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

[27]Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. [28]And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. [29]Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30]Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? [31a]But strive for the greater gifts.

Gospel

Luke 4:14-21

Near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. [15]He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

[16]When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, [17]and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

[18]"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release
to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
[19]to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favor."

[20]And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21]Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."