

Prayers of Intercession

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

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we command our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

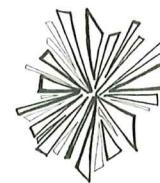
Monday Hebrews 11:32—12:2. **Tuesday** (Epiphany of Our Lord) Matthew 2:1-12. **Wednesday** 1 Kings 10:1-13. **Thursday** Ephesians 4:7, 11-16. **Friday** Micah 5:2-9. **Saturday** Psalm 29; **Baptism of Our Lord** Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17.

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Celebrate

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 4, 2026

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, 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

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

Thus says the LORD:
Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the
nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”
⁸See, I am going to bring them from the
land of the north
and gather them from the farthest
parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor
together;
a great company, they shall return here.
⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them
back;
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path where they shall not
stumble,
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far
away;

say, “He who scattered Israel will gather
him
and will keep him as a shepherd does a
flock.”

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too
strong for him.

¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the
height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the
goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the
herd;

their life shall become like a watered
garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in
the dance,
and the young men and the old shall
be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy;
I will comfort them and give them
gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with
my bounty,

says the LORD.

Psalm

Psalm 147:12-20; refrain, Ps. 147:12



Wor-ship the LORD, O Je - ru - sa - lem; praise your God, O Zi - on.

Worship the LORD, ¹ O Jerusalem;
praise your ¹ God, O Zion,
¹³**who has strengthened the bars ¹ of your gates
and has blessed your chil- ¹ dren within you.**
¹⁴God has established peace ¹ on your borders
and satisfies you with the ¹ finest wheat.
¹⁵**God sends out a command ¹ to the earth,
a word that runs ¹ very swiftly. R**
¹⁶God gives ¹ snow like wool,
scattering ¹ frost like ashes.
¹⁷**God scatters ¹ hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand a- ¹ gainst God's cold?**
¹⁸The LORD sends forth the ¹ word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the ¹ waters flow.
¹⁹**God declares the ¹ word to Jacob,
statutes and judg- ¹ ments to Israel.**
²⁰The LORD has not done so to any ¹ other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. ¹Hallelujah! R

or Wisdom 10:15-21; refrain, Wis. 10:20 [not printed]

or Sirach 24:1-12 [alternate First Reading, not printed]

The figure of Wisdom played a major role in early discussions of Christology. Wisdom is the divine word, coming from the mouth of God, and ruling over all of creation. Wisdom, created at the beginning of time, made her dwelling place in Jerusalem among God's people.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that

he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did

not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.