

Prayers of Intercession

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

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

A brief silence.

You reveal yourself to us in the reading of scripture. Fulfill your word through the faithful witness of your church. Send us out to bring your liberating good news to all people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

All creation proclaims your handiwork. Teach us to love the intricate and beautiful bodies that you have created. Bless tiny insects, enormous whales, and every creature in between. Sustain species at risk of extinction. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You desire that there be no dissension among us. Where we are divided in our society, nation, or world, come quickly to reunite us into one body. Ease conflict, dispel violence, and bring an end to war. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 119:89-96. **Tuesday** (Conversion of Paul, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends) Galatians 1:11-24. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries) Jeremiah 36:27-32. **Thursday** (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Psalm 71:1-6. **Friday** (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274) 2 Chronicles 35:20-27. **Saturday** 2 Chronicles 36:11-21. **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30.

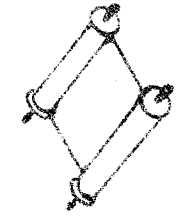
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Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 23, 2022

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

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.²Accordingly, 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.³He 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.

⁵And 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.⁶Then 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.⁸So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹And 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.¹⁰Then 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."

