## Prayers of Intercession

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

In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church. Reassure all who gather in your name of your steadfast presence with us in joys and sorrows, in hope and uncertainty (*joys and/or concerns of the community may be named*). God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for the healing of the earth: for clean air, clear water, rich soils, and thriving ecosystems. Revive your creation for generations to come. God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for legislators, mayors, governors, and all who hold elected office. Fill leaders with a commitment to service, humility, and justice for all people. God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for vulnerable people in our communities, for families experiencing poverty, for people in prisons, for individuals facing a difficult diagnosis, and for any who are ill (*especially*). Come to their aid and assure them of your faithfulness. God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who travel to be with loved ones as Christmas approaches. Make their roads safe and their journeys smooth. Abide with any who cannot travel or who are alone in this season. God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We remember all who have died in Christ, (*Katharina von Bora Luther and*) the faithful saints whose lives magnified your name, that your world-turning love continues to shine forth. God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior.
**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** Luke 1:46b-55. **Tuesday** Hebrews 8:1-13. **Wednesday** 1 Samuel 2:1-10. **Thursday** (Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve) Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]. **Friday** (Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day) John 1:1-14. **Saturday** (Stephen, Deacon and Martyr) Acts 6:8—7:2a, 51-60. **First Sunday of Christmas** Isaiah 61:10—62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40.



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# Celebrate

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**
**December 20, 2026**

*God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."*

## Prayer of the Day

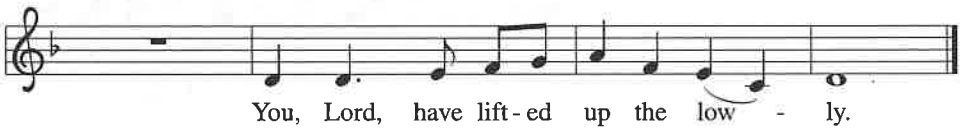
Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading — 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

*Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.*

Now when the king was settled in his
house and the LORD had given him
rest from all his enemies around him,
2the king said to the prophet Nathan,
"See now, I am living in a house of
cedar, but the ark of God stays in a
tent." 3Nathan said to the king, "Go, do
all that you have in mind, for the LORD
is with you."
4But that same night the word of the
LORD came to Nathan, 5"Go and tell
my servant David: Thus says the LORD:
Are you the one to build me a house
to live in? 6I have not lived in a house
since the day I brought up the people
of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I
have been moving about in a tent and
a tabernacle. 7Wherever I have moved
about among all the people of Israel,
did I ever speak a word with any of the
tribal leaders of Israel, whom I com-
manded to shepherd my people Israel,
saying, 'Why have you not built me a
house of cedar?' 8Now therefore thus
you shall say to my servant David: Thus
says the LORD of hosts: I took you from
the pasture, from following the sheep
to be prince over my people Israel,
9and I have been with you wherever you
went and have cut off all your enemies
from before you, and I will make for
you a great name, like the name of the
great ones of the earth. 10And I will ap-
point a place for my people Israel and
will plant them, so that they may live
in their own place and be disturbed no
more, and evildoers shall afflict them
no more, as formerly, 11from the time
that I appointed judges over my people
Israel, and I will give you rest from all
your enemies. Moreover, the LORD de-
clares to you that the LORD will make
you a house. 16Your house and your
kingdom shall be made sure forever
before me; your throne shall be estab-
lished forever."

## Psalmody — Luke 1:46b-55; refrain, Luke 1:52




My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
47my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
**48for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**
**From this day all generations will | call me blessed;**
49you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me,
and holy | is your name.
**50You have mercy on | those who fear you,**
**from generation to | generation.** **R**
51You have shown strength | with your arm;
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
**52casting down the mighty | from their thrones**
**and lifting | up the lowly.**
53You have filled the hungry | with good things,
and sent the rich | away empty.
**54You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,**
**to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**
55the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. **R**

*or* **Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; refrain, Ps. 89:1** [not printed]

## Second Reading — Romans 16:25-27

*Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—27to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

## Gospel — Luke 1:26-38

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little-known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37For nothing will be impossible with God." 38Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.