Prayers of Intercession

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

Rejoicing with all creation at the birth of Christ, we pray with thanksgiving for the church, the world, and God's good creation.

A brief silence.

Fill your church, the body of Christ, with grace upon grace, so that through our service, worship, and common life your people experience and share your love with all people. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Make your creation like a watered garden, that all creatures from the smallest insects to the largest whales might have abundant life. Renew struggling ecosystems and protect habitats that sustain endangered species. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Establish peace in places where conflict, war, and fear endure (*especially*). Shelter all people displaced by violence, poverty, or famine. Sustain local and international aid organizations (*especially*). God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Comfort all who sorrow, console all who mourn, and fill all who feel hopeless with grace upon grace (*especially*). Draw close to those who are near to death, and reassure them of your steadfast love. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Accompany congregations and ministries in transition. Give call committees, interim ministers, and council leaders wisdom, creativity, and courage in their discernment about faithful next steps in their communities. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Blessed are you for the saints of today and ages past. In the fullness of time, gather us with all the faithful departed into eternal life with you. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God-with-us, we commend these and all our prayers to your care, in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 110. **Tuesday** Luke 6:27-31. **Wednesday** (Epiphany of Our Lord) Matthew 2:1-12. **Thursday** Psalm 29. **Friday** 1 Samuel 16:1-13. **Saturday** (Adrian of Canterbury, teacher, c. 710) Luke 5:1-11. **Baptism of Our Lord** Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1553. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part $6.79 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Robert Benson. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year B* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year B.
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Celebrate

Second Sunday of Christmas
January 3, 2027

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 — Jeremiah 31:7-14

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."
[8]See, 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.
[9]With 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.
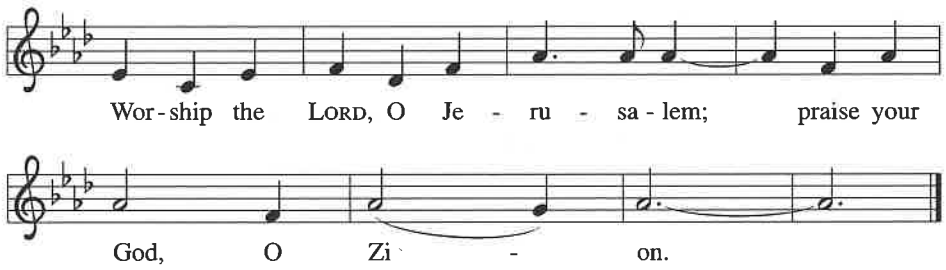
[10]Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock."
[11]For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
[12]They shall come and sing aloud 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.
[13]Then 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.
[14]I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD.

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.

Psalm

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



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

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

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 ac-
cording to the purpose of him who ac-
complishes 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 to-
ward 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 enlight-
ens 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.