Prayers of Intercession

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

Let us pray for the church, the world, and all people yearning for liberation.

A brief silence.

God who calls us through water and word, unite your church across borders, traditions, and languages. Fortify all the baptized for bold discipleship, that we may proclaim your good news with courage and compassion. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Creator of rivers and seas, you fill the waters with beauty and life—catfish and salmon, whales and minnows. Stir our hearts to safeguard these creatures and cherish the waters that nourish the world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of truth, you know the cost of proclaiming good news. Be with the imprisoned, silenced activists, journalists, and any who suffer under censorship and repression. Strengthen their voices and guide all in power to seek your truth. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Compassionate God, you know the weight of toil and suffering. Be near to the poor and any who are sick (*especially*). We pray for all in danger and for those in hazardous work: fishers, roofers, steelworkers (*others may be named*). Shelter them with your mercy. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Everlasting God, you are our rock and our salvation. Uphold this congregation and its outreach and service ministries (*specific ministries may be named*), that we may serve with courage, joy, and steadfast love in Christ's name. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have gone before us. Comfort all who mourn and hold us in your everlasting peace. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those we cannot name, as you claim us through the waters and call us to new life in Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (Conversion of Paul; Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends) Galatians 1:11-24. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries) Genesis 45:25—46:7. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Proverbs 8:1-21. **Thursday** (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274) Psalm 111. **Friday** Deuteronomy 12:28-32. **Saturday** Deuteronomy 13:1-5. **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.

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Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 24, 2027

As we continue through the time after Epiphany, stories of the call to discipleship show us the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading — Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

The word of the LORD came to
Jonah a second time, saying, 2"Get
up, go to Nineveh, that great city,
and proclaim to it the message that
I tell you." 3So Jonah set out and
went to Nineveh, according to the
word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was
an exceedingly large city, a three
days' walk across. 4Jonah began to
go into the city, going a day's walk.
And he cried out, "Forty days more,
and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"
5And the people of Nineveh believed
God; they proclaimed a fast, and
everyone, great and small, put on
sackcloth.

10When God saw what they did,
how they turned from their evil
ways, God changed his mind about
the calamity that he had said he
would bring upon them, and he did
not do it.

Psalm — Psalm 62:5-12; refrain, Ps. 62:6



For God alone I | wait in silence;
truly, my hope | is in God.
[6]God alone is my rock and | my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall nev- | er be shaken.
[7]In God is my deliverance | and my honor;
God is my strong rock | and my refuge.
[8]Put your trust in God al- | ways, O people,
pour out your hearts before the one who | is our refuge. R
[9]Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath;
those of low estate can- | not be trusted.
Placed on the scales together they weigh even less | than a breath.
[10]Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no | empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your | heart upon it.
[11]God has spoken once, twice | have I heard it,
that power be- | longs to God.
[12]Steadfast love belongs to | you, O Lord,
for you repay all according | to their deeds. R

Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, [30]and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, [31]and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Gospel — Mark 1:14-20

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God [15]and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

[16]As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. [17]And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." [18]And immediately they left their nets and followed him. [19]As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. [20]Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.