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 our sovereign, direct your global church and all the baptized to proclaim your truth boldly. Cast out the evils that divide and destroy, and unite us in love and service. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of creation, your mighty works reveal your power and wisdom. Bless the majestic wonders of the earth—mountains, rivers, skies—and move us to protect all life flourishing within your vast and beautiful world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of justice, raise up prophetic leaders in our towns and nations. Inspire those in authority to govern with wisdom and courage, rejecting corruption, oppression, and fear (*government leaders or officials may be named*). Guide us toward peace and righteousness. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of compassion, we pray for all around the world whose land was stolen through colonization and genocide. Heal their wounds, protect the displaced, and inspire justice for those working to reclaim home and dignity. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of community, guide this congregation to build up one another in love and respect. Let us continually pray for all in need (*especially*). Open us to your Spirit, that we may all grow in faith and unity. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of eternity, we give thanks for the saints who have gone before us, especially your prophet Moses, who spoke your truth with courage. Comfort those 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 Psalm 35:1-10. **Tuesday** (Presentation of Our Lord) Luke 2:22-40. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, 865) Jeremiah 29:1-14. **Thursday** Psalm 50:1-6. **Friday** (commemoration of the Martyrs of Japan, 1597) 1 Timothy 1:12-20. **Saturday** Luke 19:41-44. **Transfiguration of Our Lord** 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9.

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 Hal Hopson. 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

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
January 31, 2027

In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that prevails over any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

Prayer of the Day

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading — Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.

[Moses said:]"The LORD your God
will raise up for you a prophet like
me from among your own people; you
shall heed such a prophet. 16This is
what you requested of the LORD your
God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, 'Let me not hear
again the voice of the LORD my God
or see this great fire any more, lest I
die.' 17Then the LORD replied to me,
'They are right in what they have said.
18I will raise up for them a prophet like
you from among their own people;
I will put my words in the mouth of
the prophet, who shall speak to them
everything that I command. 19Anyone
who does not heed the words that the
prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. 20But any
prophet who presumes to speak in
my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak or who
speaks in the name of other gods, that
prophet shall die.'"

Psalm — Psalm 111; refrain, Ps. 111:10



Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with | my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the | congregation.
[2]Great are your | works, O LORD,
pondered by all who de- | light in them.
[3]Majesty and splendor | mark your deeds,
and your righteousness en- | dures forever.
[4]You cause your wonders to | be remembered;
you are gracious and full | of compassion. R
[5]You give food to | those who fear you,
remembering forev- | er your covenant.
[6]You have shown your people the power | of your works
in giving them the lands | of the nations.
[7]The works of your hands are faithful- | ness and justice;
all of your pre- | cepts are sure.
[8]They stand fast forev- | er and ever,
because they are done in | truth and equity. R
[9]You sent redemption to your people
and commanded your cove- | nant forever;
holy and awesome | is your name.
[10]The fear of the LORD is the begin- | ning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding.
God's praise en- | dures forever. R

Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.

Now concerning food sacrificed to
idols: we know that "all of us possess
knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but
love builds up. [2]Anyone who claims
to know something does not yet have
the necessary knowledge, [3]but anyone
who loves God is known by him.
[4]Hence, as to the eating of food of-
fered to idols, we know that "no idol in
the world really exists" and that "there
is no God but one." [5]Indeed, even
though there may be so-called gods in
heaven or on earth—as in fact there
are many gods and many lords—[6]yet
for us there is one God, the Father,
from whom are all things and for
whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus
Christ, through whom are all things
and through whom we exist.
[7]It is not everyone, however, who
has this knowledge. Since some have
become so accustomed to idols until
now, they still think of the food they
eat as food offered to an idol, and
their conscience, being weak, is de-
filed. [8]"Food will not bring us close
to God." We are no worse off if we do
not eat and no better off if we do. [9]But
take care that this liberty of yours does
not somehow become a stumbling
block to the weak. [10]For if others see
you, who possess knowledge, eating
in the temple of an idol, might they
not, since their conscience is weak,
be encouraged to the point of eating
food sacrificed to idols? [11]So by your
knowledge the weak brother or sister
for whom Christ died is destroyed.
[12]But when you thus sin against broth-
ers and sisters and wound their con-
science when it is weak, you sin against
Christ. [13]Therefore, if food is a cause
of their falling, I will never again eat
meat, so that I may not cause one of
them to fall.

Gospel — Mark 1:21-28

Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.

[Jesus and his disciples] went to
Capernaum, and when the Sabbath
came, he entered the synagogue
and taught.[22]They were astounded at
his teaching, for he taught them as
one having authority and not as the
scribes. [23]Just then there was in their
synagogue a man with an unclean
spirit, [24]and he cried out, "What have
you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?
Have you come to destroy us? I know
who you are, the Holy One of God."
[25]But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be
quiet and come out of him!" [26]And
the unclean spirit, convulsing him
and crying with a loud voice, came
out of him. [27]They were all amazed,
and they kept on asking one another,
"What is this? A new teaching—with
authority! He commands even the
unclean spirits, and they obey him."
[28]At once his fame began to spread
throughout the surrounding region
of Galilee.