

## Prayers of Intercession

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

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

A brief silence.

The church in every land makes a joyful noise to herald your coming, O God. We give thanks for poets, musicians, and hymn writers who give voice to our praise, and for all who lead the church's worship. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

This day dawns with new hope for all living things, and from ocean depths to mountain peaks the earth rejoices. Inspire in us an urgent zeal to protect the planet and renew its resources (*local environmental concerns may be named*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Bring heavenly peace to this world and an end to armed conflict. Raise up leaders in every nation who will honor human rights and establish equal justice for all people. Give courage to all who speak out against oppression and advocate for the powerless. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Guard the lives of any in danger, especially those who work to protect others. Lead any who are in desperate circumstances to sanctuary, help, and safety. Grant rest to the weary and soothe those who are troubled (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Bless all who gather to worship on this holy day. Be present at our tables and celebrations, and watch over those who travel. Sustain charities, outreach ministries, and food pantries that give generously to people in need (*local organizations may be named*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In Christ we have beheld your glory, full of grace and truth. We give thanks for those in every generation who reflect the light of Christ. May their witness shine forth in our time. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God. **Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (Stephen, Deacon and Martyr) Matthew 23:34-39. **Tuesday** (John, Apostle and Evangelist) John 21:20-25. **Wednesday** (The Holy Innocents, Martyrs) 1 Peter 4:12-19. **Thursday** Psalm 20. **Friday** 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. **Saturday** 1 Kings 3:5-14. **Name of Jesus** Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4:4-7 or Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 2:15-21 **OR First Sunday of Christmas** Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23.

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# Celebrate

Nativity of Our Lord / Christmas Day  
December 25, 2022

*As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Day the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!*

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

*Isaiah proclaims news of great joy: "Your God reigns!" Just as God saved the people from oppression in Egypt, God delivers Israel from exile. All the earth will witness the saving acts of God.*

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who  
announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."  
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.



All the ends of the earth have seen the vic-to - ry of our God.

Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done <sup>1</sup> marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm have <sup>1</sup> won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>**O LORD, you have made <sup>1</sup> known your victory,  
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight <sup>1</sup> of the nations.**

<sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the <sup>1</sup> house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory <sup>1</sup> of our God.

<sup>4</sup>**Shout with joy to the LORD, <sup>1</sup> all you lands;  
lift up your voice, re- <sup>1</sup> joice, and sing. R**

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD <sup>1</sup> with the harp,  
with the harp and the <sup>1</sup> voice of song.

<sup>6</sup>**With trumpets and the sound <sup>1</sup> of the horn  
shout with joy before the <sup>1</sup> king, the LORD. R**

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and <sup>1</sup> all that fills it,  
the world and those who <sup>1</sup> dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup>**Let the rivers <sup>1</sup> clap their hands,  
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,  
who comes to <sup>1</sup> judge the earth.**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD will judge the <sup>1</sup> world with righteousness  
and the peo- <sup>1</sup> ples with equity. R

*This letter opens with a lofty declaration of Jesus' preeminent status as the Son through whom God created the world and through whom our sins are cleansed. God speaks to us now through the Son, who is exalted even above the angels.*

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. <sup>3</sup>He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

[<sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son;  
today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son"?

<sup>6</sup>And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

<sup>7</sup>Of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds,  
and his servants flames of fire."

<sup>8</sup>But of the Son he says,  
"Your throne, O God, is forever and  
ever,

and the righteous scepter is the  
scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness and  
hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has  
anointed you  
with the oil of gladness beyond  
your companions."

<sup>10</sup>And,

"In the beginning, Lord, you  
founded the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of  
your hands;

<sup>11</sup>they will perish, but you remain;  
they will all wear out like clothing;

<sup>12</sup>like a cloak you will roll them up,  
and like clothing they will be  
changed.

But you are the same,  
and your years will never end."]

## Gospel

John 1:1-14

*The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be "full of grace and truth."*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which en-

lightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And 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.