

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

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

God of Sarah and Abraham, inspire your church to pursue righteousness in its ministry. Equip us to share your compassion that unites us as one family of faith. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Remind us that from the beginning of creation, you knit together a world meant for harmony. Protect and restore the wasted places to joy and gladness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Stir the leaders of nations and towns, military and courts, to respond to your teachings. Let your call for justice reach all people and bring deliverance where there is oppression. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Show your steadfast love and faithfulness to those in despair. Increase their strength, care for all who feel low, keep safe any in the midst of trouble, and protect vulnerable people from harm. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Encourage those who offer their gifts and talents in service to your church. Energize this congregation's rostered and lay leaders, musicians, teachers, greeters, and administrators so they may be transformed in sharing your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all the saints, death is overcome in Christ's resurrection. We rejoice with the faithful departed (*especially*). Sustain us in hope until we come at last to our heavenly home. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.



Celebrate

Sunday, August 27, 2023
13th Sunday after Pentecost

In Isaiah the people are advised to look to their spiritual ancestors as the rock from which they were hewn. Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter's bold confession of faith. God's word of reconciliation and God's mercy are keys to the church's mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ. From the table we go forth to offer our spiritual worship through word and deed.

Prayer of the Day

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 51:1-6

Just as God had called Abraham and Sarah and given them many descendants, so now God offers comfort to Zion. God's deliverance will come soon and will never end.

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the LORD.
Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

²Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.

³For the LORD will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places,
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the LORD;

joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation;
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,
my salvation has gone out
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats;

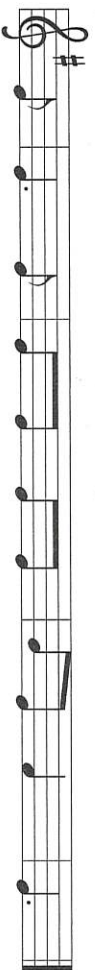
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.

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Tracks 1 and 2
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I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with ¹ my whole heart;
before the gods I will ¹ sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast ¹ love and faithfulness;

³for you have glorified your name and your word a- ¹bove all things.
When I called, you ¹ answered me;

you increased my ¹ strength within me.

⁴All the rulers of the earth will praise ¹ you, O LORD,
when they have heard the words ¹ of your mouth. **R**

⁵They will sing of the ways ¹ of the LORD,
that great is the glory ¹ of the LORD.

⁶The LORD is high, yet cares ¹ for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty ¹ from afar.

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you ¹ keep me safe;
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;

your right ¹ hand shall save me.

⁸You will make good your pur- ¹pose for me;

O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever;
do not abandon the works ¹ of your hands. **R**

In response to God's merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-blessing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit's renewing work. God's grace empowers different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure

of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members,

and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Gospel

Matthew 16:13-20

At a climactic point in Jesus' ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has

not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.