

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

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

God, you renew the church in every age. We give thanks for hymn writers and theologians (*especially John of Damascus, whom we commemorate today*). Inspire teachers, writers, and musicians to delight and instruct your people. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You give us a vision of creation in harmony, when hurting and destruction will be no more. Teach us to be stewards of the earth and companions to its creatures. Restore to balance and wholeness what human greed has harmed. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You defend the cause of all who are poor and oppressed. Raise up leaders who will govern with equity and serve the common good. Guide judges, lawmakers, and public officials to protect the rights of those who cannot advocate for themselves. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 21. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342) Romans 15:14-21. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397) Genesis 15:1-18. **Thursday** Psalm 146:5-10. **Friday** 2 Peter 3:11-18. **Saturday** 1 Samuel 2:1-8. **Third Sunday of Advent** Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11.

CELEBRATE December 4, 2022

Volume 54, Number 1

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 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$5.79 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 © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Robert A. Hobby. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year A* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year A.

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Tracks 1 and 2

You deliver those in need from suffering and fear. Come to the aid of any who are exploited or abused, especially children, elders, and victims of human trafficking. Provide safety and help to our neighbors without shelter, refugees, and those fleeing violence. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You urge your people to welcome one another as you have welcomed us. Nurture ministries of hospitality and care in this and every congregation (*local examples may be named*). We pray for people who are homebound, hospitalized, or separated from loved ones (*especially*). God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all who have died trusting in your promises, and we give thanks for their faithful witness. Sustain us in hope until we are united with them in the joy of your eternal presence. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**



Celebrate

Second Sunday of Advent
December 4, 2022

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; 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

Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

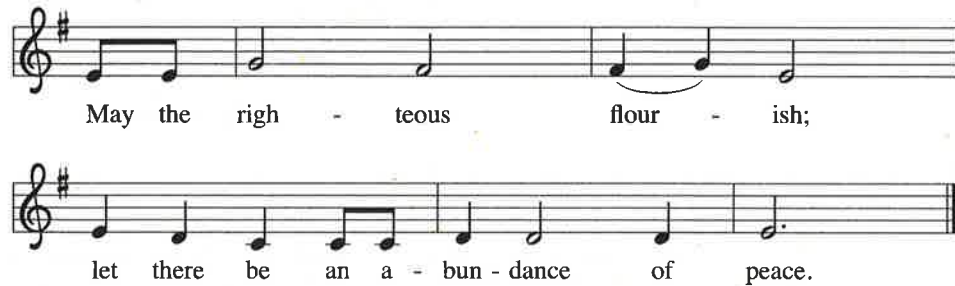
A shoot shall come out from the stump
of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his
roots.
²The spirit of the LORD shall rest
on him,
the spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of
the LORD.
³His delight shall be in the fear of
the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the
poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of
the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of
his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall
kill the wicked.
⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around
his waist,

and faithfulness the belt around
his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with
the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fating
together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like
the ox.
⁸The nursing child shall play over the
hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its
hand on the adder's den.
⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my
holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the
knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand
as a signal to the peoples; the nations
shall inquire of him, and his dwelling
shall be glorious.



Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
²that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;
³that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor. **R**
⁵May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
⁶Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.
⁷In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace
till the moon shall be no more.
¹⁸Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!
¹⁹And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory.
Amen. **R**

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name";
¹⁰and again he says,
"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people";
¹¹and again,
"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him";
¹²and again Isaiah says,
"The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the
Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope."
¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace in believing, so that you may
abound in hope by the power of the Holy
Spirit.

Gospel

Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.'"

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to

them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."