Prayers of Intercession

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

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change (especially), grant relief from natural disasters (especially), and nurture new growth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer (especially); grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You called followers to tend Jesus' body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith that you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week


Celebrate March 28, 2021

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Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday
March 28, 2021

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieving, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsting for the completion of God's astonishing work.

Procession with Palms Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16 [not printed]

If possible, the assembly gathers at a designated place outside the usual worship space, so that all may enter in procession. Palm branches, or branches of other trees and shrubs, are distributed before the service begins.

The presiding minister begins (repeated one or more times).

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!" Hosanna in the highest.

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

"Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other. The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

continued
The assisting minister addresses the assembly.

Let us go forth in peace,
in the name of Christ. Amen.

The assembly follows the ministers into the church. “All glory, laud, and honor” (ELW #344) and other suitable hymns, psalms, or anthems may be sung as the people process into the church or once they have taken their places.

The presiding minister concludes the procession.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Psalm

Psalm 31:9-16; refrain, Ps. 31:5

In to your hands, O LORD, I com mend my spir it.

Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.

I am the scorn of my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors,
a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.

Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.

For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD.
I have said, “You are my God.”

My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.”

First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The image of the servant of God is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today’s reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God’s steadfast love.

The Lord has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Second Reading

Philippians 2:5-11

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ’s example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ’s death.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Gospel

Mark 14:1—15:47 or Mark 15:1-39 [40-47] [not printed]

The passion story in Mark’s gospel presents Jesus as one who dies abandoned by all. He shows himself to be the true Son of God by giving his life for those who have forsaken him.