

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

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

A brief silence.

You gather your people into the body of Christ. Where your church is wounded, heal it. Where it is right, strengthen it. Where it is divided, reunite it. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

From before the foundation of the world, you are God. Revive ecosystems destroyed by human greed. Curb our desire to put wealth ahead of the health of all who call this planet home. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You establish equity and make justice. Within every nation, tribe, and land, cause laws to be written and customs to be observed that protect the most vulnerable. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

On the cross your beloved Son endured pain and death. Bring healing to those in need, hope to any in despair, and comfort to the dying. (*We pray especially for . . .*)
In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You send your Spirit into this community of faith. Empower our ministries that serve and build up local communities (*ministries may be named*). Nurture our partnerships with other community organizations (*organizations may be named*). In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

All peoples praise you, O God. We give you thanks and praise for the lives of our loved ones who now rest in you (*especially*). In the fullness of time gather us with all your saints in light. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 142. **Tuesday** Amos 9:1-4. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, 1566) Luke 7:31-35. **Thursday** Psalm 23. **Friday** Jeremiah 10:17-25. **Saturday** Luke 18:35-43. **9th Sunday after Pentecost** Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56.

When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod's fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God's saving love.

Prayer of the Day

O God, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

First Reading

Amos 7:7-15

Amos is not the kind of prophet attached to temples or royal courts. Rather, he is an ordinary farmer from Judah (the southern kingdom) called by God to speak to Israel (the northern kingdom). God's word of judgment through Amos conflicts with the king's court prophet Amaziah, whom Amos encounters at Bethel.

This is what [the Lord GOD] showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by; ⁹the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said,

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the

I will lis - ten to what the LORD God is
say - ing, I will lis - ten to the LORD.

- I will listen to what the LORD¹ God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their¹ hearts to you.
- ⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to¹ those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell¹ in our land. **R**
- ¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have¹ met together;
righteousness and peace have¹ kissed each other.
- ¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up¹ from the earth,
and righteousness shall look¹ down from heaven.
- ¹²The LORD will indeed¹ grant prosperity,
and our land will¹ yield its increase.
- ¹³Righteousness shall go be-¹ fore the LORD
and shall prepare for¹ God a pathway. **R**

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that

he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel

Mark 6:14-29

As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.

King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching], for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet

for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ²³And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ²⁵Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.