

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

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. We pray especially for . . . (current local, national, or international issues of peace or justice may be named). Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

### Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (commemoration of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397) Psalm 27. **Tuesday** Isaiah 4:2-6. **Wednesday** Luke 1:5-17. **Thursday** Psalm 126. **Friday** Philippians 3:12-16. **Saturday** Habakkuk 3:13-19. **Third Sunday of Advent** (commemoration of Lucy, martyr, 304) Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

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Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work (especially *Nicholas of Myra*). Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**



# Celebrate

Second Sunday of Advent  
December 6, 2020

*John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.*

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; 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 40:1-11

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's  
hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way  
of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a  
highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be  
made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be  
revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has  
spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of  
the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows  
upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand  
forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

continued

Righ - teous - ness shall pre -

pare a path - way for God.

You have been gracious to your <sup>1</sup>land, O LORD;  
you have restored the good for- <sup>1</sup>tune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>You have forgiven the iniquity <sup>1</sup>of your people  
and blotted out <sup>1</sup>all their sins.

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD <sup>1</sup>God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people  
and to those who turn their <sup>1</sup>hearts to you.

<sup>9</sup>Truly, your salvation is very near to <sup>1</sup>those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell <sup>1</sup>in our land. **R**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have <sup>1</sup>met together;  
righteousness and peace have <sup>1</sup>kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>Faithfulness shall spring up <sup>1</sup>from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look <sup>1</sup>down from heaven.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed <sup>1</sup>grant prosperity,  
and our land will <sup>1</sup>yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>Righteousness shall go be- <sup>1</sup>fore the LORD  
and shall prepare for <sup>1</sup>God a pathway. **R**

First Reading, continued

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

## Second Reading

2 Peter 3:8-15a

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons

ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

## Gospel

Mark 1:1-8

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,  
"See, I am sending my messenger  
ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;  
<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the  
wilderness:

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

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole

Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."