

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

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

God of righteousness, your people live in hopeful expectation of your coming. Fill your church with renewed passion for our shared mission, and deepen our relationships with other Christians and other faith traditions in our local community and across the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the cosmos, all creation shows that your presence is near. Help us sense your goodness and love in the sun and moon, in sprouting leaves and bare branches, in the roaring sea and quiet breeze. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, your reign extends over all principalities and powers. Give leaders and all in authority hearts for justice and peace. Encourage efforts to enact policies that benefit the common good. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of change, you accompany us through life's transitions. Be near to all who are changing jobs, moving, welcoming children, or facing the loss of loved ones. Sustain those who are ill or suffering (*especially*). In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of community, your Spirit holds us together. Sustain our care for one another (*especially through [local ministries] supported by this congregation*). Inspire us to seek new ways to live together and to embrace the diversity of thought and identity in our communities. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of memory, we give you thanks for faithful ones who have died (*especially*). Tend to our grief and sorrow with renewed trust in your promise of abundant and eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** Psalm 90. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552) Revelation 22:12-16. **Wednesday** (commemoration of John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, c. 749) Luke 11:29-32. **Thursday** Luke 1:68-79. **Friday** (commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342) Malachi 3:13-18. **Saturday** (commemoration of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397) Luke 9:1-6. **Second Sunday of Advent** Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6.

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# Celebrate

First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2024

*Advent is about the "coming days." God's people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a "righteous Branch to spring up for David." The Thessalonians awaited "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints." Jesus' contemporaries hoped for the time "to stand before the Son of Man." With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.*

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

*In the Old Testament, "righteousness" often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today's reading, Jerusalem's future name—"The LORD is our righteousness"—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.*

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for

David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."



To <sup>1</sup>you, O LORD,  
I lift <sup>1</sup>up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be <sup>1</sup>put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph <sup>1</sup>over me.**

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be <sup>1</sup>put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame <sup>1</sup>who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>**Show me your <sup>1</sup>ways, O LORD,  
and teach <sup>1</sup>me your paths. R**

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your <sup>1</sup>truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
in you have I trusted all <sup>1</sup>the day long.

<sup>6</sup>**Remember, O LORD, your compas- <sup>1</sup>sion and love,  
for they are from <sup>1</sup>everlasting. R**

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and <sup>1</sup>my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love  
and for the sake of your good- <sup>1</sup>ness, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>**You are gracious and up- <sup>1</sup>right, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners <sup>1</sup>in your way.**

<sup>9</sup>You lead the low- <sup>1</sup>ly in justice  
and teach the low- <sup>1</sup>ly your way.

<sup>10</sup>**All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast <sup>1</sup>love and faithfulness  
to those who keep your covenant and your <sup>1</sup>testimonies. R**

*Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.*

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup>Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct

our way to you. <sup>12</sup>And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup>And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

## Gospel

Luke 21:25-36

*God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.*

[Jesus said:] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these

things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup>"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."