

Prayers of Intercession

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

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Call your people to seek your wisdom in difficult conversations and action. Give the church everywhere courage to repent for the ways we have tolerated and practiced injustice (*injustice such as systemic racism, church sanction of colonialism, church protection of sexual abusers may be named*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Inspire our wonder at creation, from the light of dawn to the beauty of the dark night. Sustain the unseen depths of the ocean to the plants and animals we know well. Bring healing to lands and communities experiencing natural disasters (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Instruct the powerful in your ways. Provide upright leadership in business and industry, that workers are not oppressed. Throughout the world, inspire voters and raise up politicians to heed your call for nations to practice righteousness. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 119:105-112. **Tuesday 2** Corinthians 4:1-12. **Wednesday** John 8:12-30. **Thursday** Psalm 119:1-8. **Friday 1** John 2:7-17. **Saturday** Deuteronomy 30:1-9a. **Sixth Sunday after Epiphany** Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or Sirach 15:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37.

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Tracks 1 and 2



Celebrate

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 5, 2023

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]

Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked.

Show out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

²Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced
righteousness

and did not forsake the ordinance of
their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do
not notice?

Look, you serve your own interest on
your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to
fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on
high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the
hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into
your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your
own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like
the dawn,
and your hearing shall spring up
quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your
rear guard.

continued

