

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

Challenged by God's Word in Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of our ancestors, we give thanks for the church in all times. May we listen for the prophets of this age who bear messages that stir the church toward renewal and justice. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Creator of every creature on earth, direct our lives toward the renewal and sustaining of cattle, birds of the air, animals of the field, and those who share our homes. Reveal the ways we can work alongside creation for the health and well-being of all. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, we give thanks that you are mindful and benevolent to even us, mere mortals. Accompany us when hardness of heart gets in the way of justice between people and nations. Endow leaders with minds for justice and hearts for compassion. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, pastor in North America, 1787) Psalm 112. **Tuesday** Deuteronomy 24:1-5. **Wednesday** Matthew 5:27-36. **Thursday** Psalm 90:12-17. **Friday** Deuteronomy 5:22-33. **Saturday** Matthew 15:1-9. **21st Sunday after Pentecost** Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31.

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Tracks 1 and 2



Celebrate

Sunday, October 6, 2024
20th Sunday after Pentecost

Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 2 stresses that people are not meant to live in isolation but in relationship. Out of love for humanity, God creates them male and female, to provide companionship for each other and to become with each other "one flesh." The Hebrew words used here are *ish* (man) and *ishshah* (woman).

The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon

the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Second Reading

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Quoting from the psalms, this passage from Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus, the one through whom God created everything and who sits at God's right hand, is also the one who experienced human suffering and death in order to blaze the path of salvation for us.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to

us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.³ He is the reflection

continued



You crown us with glo - ry and hon - or.

- O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!—
- 2** you whose glory is chanted above the heavens
out of the mouths of infants and children;
you have set up a fortress against your enemies,
to silence the foe and avenger.
- 3** When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
4 what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them? **R**
- 5** Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.
- 6** You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:
- 7** all flocks and cattle,
even the wild beasts of the field,
8 the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.
- 9** O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth! **R**

of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

^{2:5} Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?”

⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor,

⁸subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

Gospel

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus announced and enacted in history the new reality of God's surprising activity. These two stories demonstrate this new reality: Women and children are accepted and valued, not dismissed as inferior to adult men.

Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” ³He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” ⁵But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.