

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

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church throughout the world. Form us into communities of forgiveness and grace. Help us to notice where you are calling us into new relationships, and give us courage to embrace the uncomfortable and unfamiliar. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the earth and all its inhabitants. Protect lands at risk of wildfire and heal dying forests. Where fire brings destruction, raise up new growth. Guide us in tending precarious ecosystems. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern nations, tribes, and cities. Open them to the cries of people in need. Direct them in shaping policies that prioritize the health and well-being of all who struggle with hunger and housing insecurity. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (commemoration of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, c. 258) Psalm 119:169-176. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, 1179) Colossians 3:1-11. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, 1961) John 7:25-36. **Thursday** Psalm 54. **Friday** Romans 11:25-32. **Saturday** (Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist) Matthew 9:9-13. **18th Sunday after Pentecost** Jeremiah 11:18-20 or Wisdom 1:16—2:1, 12-22; Psalm 54; James 3:13—4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37.

We pray for all who are ill, all who are lonely or anxious, and all who grieve (*especially*). Draw them close to you and soothe them with the promise of your enduring love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for teachers, professors, librarians, school administrators, staff, and all who support the education of young people. Sustain them as they shape learning communities, rooted in equity and authenticity. We pray for children of all ages in their learning. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember our beloved dead (*especially*), who with the great cloud of witnesses bear witness to your saving grace. Accompany us in our pilgrimage of faith, that we too place our hope and trust in you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**



# Celebrate

Sunday, September 15, 2024

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Three weeks ago we heard Peter's confession of faith as told in John's gospel. This week we hear Mark's version, when Peter says, "You are the Messiah." In John, the stumbling block is Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus' words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus' words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of messiah) in Mark only on the way to the cross (14:3); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

## Prayer of the Day

O God, through suffering and rejection you bring forth our salvation, and by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The image of the servant of the Lord is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he awakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled  
out the beard;

I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put  
to shame;

<sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.

<sup>9</sup>It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?





I will walk in the pres - ence of the LORD.

I love the LORD, who has <sup>1</sup> heard my voice,  
and listened to my <sup>1</sup> supplication,  
<sup>2</sup>for the LORD has given <sup>1</sup> ear to me  
whenev- <sup>1</sup> er I called.  
<sup>3</sup>The cords of death entangled me;  
the anguish of the grave <sup>1</sup> came upon me;  
I came to <sup>1</sup> grief and sorrow.  
<sup>4</sup>Then I called upon the name <sup>1</sup> of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray you, <sup>1</sup> save my life.” **R**  
<sup>5</sup>Gracious is the <sup>1</sup> LORD and righteous;  
our God is full <sup>1</sup> of compassion.  
<sup>6</sup>The LORD watches o- <sup>1</sup> ver the innocent;  
I was brought low, <sup>1</sup> and God saved me.  
<sup>7</sup>Turn again to your rest, <sup>1</sup> O my soul.  
for the LORD has dealt <sup>1</sup> well with you.  
<sup>8</sup>For you have rescued my <sup>1</sup> life from death,  
my eyes from tears, and my <sup>1</sup> feet from stumbling;  
<sup>9</sup>I will walk in the presence <sup>1</sup> of the LORD  
in the land <sup>1</sup> of the living. **R**

*This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.*

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup>For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. <sup>3</sup>If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup>Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our

members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, <sup>8</sup>but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

## Gospel

Mark 8:27-38

*This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.*

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” <sup>28</sup>And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup>He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” <sup>30</sup>And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup>Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said,

“Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”