Prayers of Intercession

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

Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

A brief silence.

God of every generation, we give thanks for all who have sought to renew and transform your holy church (*especially Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society*). Inspire us to follow their example in our own day. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of every creature, bless and protect the earth and all those who dwell within it. We give thanks for those who have helped us to see your Spirit in creation (*especially Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of every tribe and nation, restore peace to the world's conflict zones (*regions in crisis may be named*), and shelter those who live within them. We pray especially for the safety of displaced people and refugees. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of every comfort, you made us in your own image. Grant healing and relief to all who are sick or suffering (*especially*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of every truth, you draw us nearer to you through your holy word. We give thanks for teachers of the faith (*congregational formation ministries may be named*). Fill their hearts with your Spirit, that they inspire others with your truth. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of every soul, you are the one who calls us home. We give thanks for all the saints who have been restored to perfect unity with you (*especially*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 144. **Tuesday** (commemoration of William Tyndale, translator, martyr, died 1536) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, pastor in North America, died 1787) John 11:45-57. **Thursday** Psalm 23. **Friday** James 4:4-10. **Saturday** Isaiah 24:17-23. **Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14.

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Celebrate

Sunday, October 4, 2026
19th Sunday after Pentecost

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

Prayer of the Day

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading — Isaiah 5:1-7

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "rotten grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

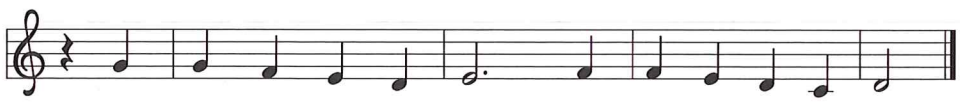
I will sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
[2]He dug it and cleared it of stones
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded rotten grapes.

[3]And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.
[4]What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield rotten grapes?

[5]And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
[6]I will make it a wasteland;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

[7]For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his cherished garden;
he expected justice
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness
but heard a cry!

Psalm

Psalm 80:7-15; refrain, Ps. 80:14, 15

Restore us, O | God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
[8]**You have brought a vine | out of Egypt;**
you cast out the nations and | planted it.
[9]You cleared the | ground for it;
it took root and | filled the land.
[10]**The mountains were covered | by its shadow**
and the towering cedar trees | by its boughs. ℟
[11]You stretched out its tendrils | to the sea
and its branches | to the river.
[12]**Why have you broken | down its wall,**
so that all who pass by pluck | off its grapes?
[13]The wild boar of the forest has | ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have | grazed upon it.
[14]**Turn now, O | God of hosts,**
look | down from heaven;
[15]behold and | tend this vine;
preserve what your right | hand has planted. ℟

Second Reading

Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

[Paul writes:] If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: [5]circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6]as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

[7]Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. [8]More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9]and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. [10]I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, [11]if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[12]Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. [13]Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14]I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel

Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said:] "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. [34]When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. [35]But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36]Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. [37]Then he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' [38]But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' [39]So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. [40]Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" [41]They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

[42]Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?

[43]"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. [44]The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

[45]When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. [46]They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.