

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

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

God our rock and deliverance, do not let your church be shaken. We trust you never abandon your promises to the most vulnerable among us. Give your church wisdom and empathy in its varied ministries. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God our hope and refuge, you placed the fish in the sea. Guide our care of oceans and all creatures that live in them. Hold us accountable for actions that endanger water sources and the people who depend on them. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God who proclaims judgement and offers mercy, be a model to the leaders of our nation and the world. As they lead, may they follow in your way of justice and truth. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

## Preparing for Next Week

Monday Genesis 12:1-9. Tuesday Genesis 45:25-46:7. Wednesday Proverbs 8:1-21. Thursday (Conversion of Paul; Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends) Galatians 1:11-24. Friday (commemoration of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries) Deuteronomy 12:28-32. Saturday (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Deuteronomy 13:1-5. Fourth Sunday after Epiphany (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274) Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; I Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.

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God who cares for the suffering, care for survivors of assault and sexual abuse and sustain all who minister to them (*as the martyr, Agnes, ministered to victims of sexual abuse*). Keep safe any who live under threat of violence, those living in poverty, and any among us who are ill or in pain (*especially*). God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection and new life, as the first disciples shared the good news, empower us and this faith community to be open to your call. When we are uncertain of your call, assure us. When we have strayed from your ways, redirect us. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God who holds the saints against your tender bosom, we trust you welcome them into your care. Comfort those who grieve, even as we place our hope in your salvation. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



# Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 21, 2024

*As we continue through the time after Epiphany, stories of the call to discipleship show us the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance tight after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of brothers have everything they have known and worked for all their lives to foUow Jesus and fish for people.*

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## First Reading

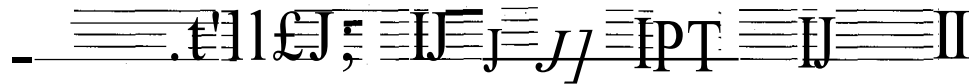
Jonah 3:1-5, 10

*The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"*

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup>So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall

be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.



God a - lone is my rock and my sal - va - tion.

For God alone I wait in silence;  
truly, my hope is in God.

**6 God alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.**

**7** In God is my deliverance and my honor;  
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

**8 Put your trust in God always, O people,  
pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge. R**

**9** Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath;  
those of low estate cannot be trusted.

Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.

**10 Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;  
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.**

**11** God has spoken once, twice have I heard it,  
that power belongs to God.

**12 Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,  
for you repay all according to their deeds. R**

*Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as

though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

## Gospel

**Mark 1:14-20**

*Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.*

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen.

<sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."  
<sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.