



Celebrate

Sunday, June 22, 2025
2nd Sunday after Pentecost

This Sunday's texts paint startling pictures of the horrific nature of sin. The church's repeated celebration of holy communion counters that tragic reality in a continued showing forth of the death of Jesus until he comes again. It is a dramatic declaration of "how much God has done for you."

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 65:1-9

The prophet announces God's impatience. The people's self-absorption is idolatry, and images of practices that displease God fill this reading. Like a vintner who crushes the grape to release the wine, God will use Israel's exile to establish a new community of the faithful.

I was ready to be sought out by those
who did not ask,
to be found by those who did not
seek me.

I said, "Here I am, here I am,"
to a nation that did not call on my
name.

²I held out my hands all day long
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;

³a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and offering incense on bricks;

⁴who sit inside tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat swine's flesh,
with broth of abominable things in
their vessels;

⁵who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too
holy for you."

These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all day long.

⁶See, it is written before me:

I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their laps

⁷their iniquities and their ancestors'
iniquities together,

says the LORD;

because they offered incense on the
mountains

and reviled me on the hills,
I will measure into their laps
full payment for their actions.

⁸Thus says the LORD:

As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, "Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,"
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.

⁹I will bring forth descendants from
Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my
mountains;

my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall settle there.



In the midst of the as - sem - bly I will praise you.

But you, O LORD, be not ¹ far away;
O my help, hasten ¹ to my aid.

²⁰**Deliver me ¹ from the sword,
my life from the power ¹ of the dog.**

²¹Save me from the ¹ lion's mouth!
From the horns of wild bulls you have ¹ rescued me.

²²**I will declare your name ¹ to my people;
in the midst of the assembly ¹ I will praise you. R**

²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's ¹ line, give glory.
Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- ¹ spring of Israel.

²⁴**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;
neither is the LORD's face hid- ¹ den from them;
but when they cry out, ¹ the LORD hears them.**

²⁵From you comes my praise in the ¹ great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who ¹ fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat ¹ and be satisfied.
Let those who seek the LORD give praise!
May your hearts ¹ live forever! R**

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn ¹ to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow ¹ before God.

²⁸**For dominion belongs ¹ to the LORD,
who rules o- ¹ ver the nations. R**

For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people not only with God but with other believers. Those who call themselves children of God experience a transformation that removes prejudices of race, social class, or gender in favor of true unity in Christ.

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Gospel

Luke 8:26-39

Jesus' mission includes foreigners and his authority extends to the casting out of demons. Some who witness Jesus' work are seized with confusion and fear, but the man who was healed is commissioned to give testimony to God's mercy and power.

Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"—²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission.

³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Prayers of Intercession

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

Drawn into the embrace of the holy Trinity, we lift our prayers for the wholeness of the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Clothe us in Christ, shower us in mercy, send us in love. Strengthen the faith and witness of Christians across the planet (*international companion churches and synods may be named*) and Christians in our community (*local congregations may be named*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We pray for creation. Deliver the earth from disaster, bring forth life amid uncertainty, inspire wonder at all you have made. Sustain all people who delight in the well-being of your creation: farmers, agricultural workers, gardeners, birdwatchers, conservationists, scientists, advocates, and policy makers. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the nations. Pave a way to justice, drown the forces of oppression, bring peace on earth. Give leaders the will to turn from war and violence (*areas in crises may be named*). When people

must flee their homes, guide them to safety. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We pray for people in need. Satisfy all who are poor, soothe those in pain, accompany all who are sick (*especially*). Give perseverance to each of us living with mental illness, and shield us from discrimination due to race, class, gender, or any other human distinction. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We pray for this assembly. Listen to our cries, come to our aid, make us one. Weave among us the fabric of belonging so that we rejoice in each person gathered here, and enliven our proclamation of how much you have done for us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Keep them in your peace, comfort us in sorrow, raise us to new life. As we remember their faith and witness, may we trust your promise that we are yours forever. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Gather all our prayers in your mercy, O God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 64. **Tuesday** (John the Baptist) Luke 1:57-67 [68-80]. **Wednesday** (commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession, 1530; Philipp Melanchthon, renewer of the church, 1560) Luke 9:37-43a. **Thursday** Psalm 16. **Friday** (commemoration of Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, 444) Galatians 4:8-20. **Saturday** (commemoration of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, c. 202) Luke 9:21-27. **Peter and Paul, Apostles** Acts 12:1-11; Psalm 87:1-3, 5-7; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; John 21:15-19, *OR* **3rd Sunday after Pentecost** 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62.

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