

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

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Do a new thing in the church. Free us from paradigms that no longer serve the gospel and bring forward leaders who imagine fresh ways of doing ministry. Give us courage in the face of change. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing for creation. Reverse the trajectory of climate change and environmental catastrophe. Revive habitats already impaired by human disregard. Amplify the voices of climate scientists and researchers working to chart a new course. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing in our world. Break barriers that prevent political enemies from working together for the well-being of all. Make a way for peace and collaboration among the nations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Benedict the African, confessor, 1589) Psalm 20. **Tuesday** 1 John 2:18-28. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Albrecht Dürer, 1528; Matthias Grünewald, 1529; Lucas Cranach, 1553; artists) Luke 18:31-34. **Thursday** Psalm 31:9-16. **Friday** Isaiah 54:9-10. **Saturday** (commemoration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, 1945) Leviticus 23:1-8. **Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday** (commemoration of Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, 1557) Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 22:14—23:56 *or* Luke 23:1-49.

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Celebrate

Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 3, 2022

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

Prayer of the Day

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 43:16-21

The prophet declares that long ago God performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage through the waters of the sea. Now, God is about to do a new thing, bringing the exiles out of Babylon and through the wilderness in a new Exodus.

Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched
like a wick:
¹⁸Do not remember the former
things,
or consider the things of old.

¹⁹I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

²⁰The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹the people whom I formed for
myself

so that they might declare my praise.



Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

When the LORD restored the for-¹ tunes of Zion,
then were we like¹ those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with¹ shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great¹ things for them.”**

³The LORD has done great¹ things for us,
and we are¹ glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for-¹ tunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses¹ of the Negeb. R**

⁵Those who¹ sowed with tears
will reap with¹ songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry-¹ ing the seed,
will come again with joy, shoulder-¹ ing their sheaves. R**

Writing to Christians in Philippi, Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised 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; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More 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 ⁹and 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. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Judas willfully misinterprets as waste Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume. Jesus recognizes that her lavish gift is both an expression of love and an anticipation of his burial.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray

him), said, ⁵“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”