

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

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

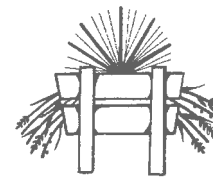
Love proclaims that a Savior has been born to us! Inspire your church throughout the world to proclaim the good news of Jesus' birth to all who seek salvation, hope, and new life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Love whispers to a weary world that the time for rest and restoration has come. Maintain healthy cycles of wake and sleep for all creatures. Where light pollution disrupts natural rhythms, encourage new practices. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Love cries to a warring world that the time for peace is at hand. Direct those in power who make decisions on behalf of others, that they nurture and sustain all that is healthy, good, and holy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Saturday (Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day) John 1:1-14. **First Sunday of Christmas** 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52.



Celebrate

Nativity of Our Lord

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep
darkness—
on them light has shined.
³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing
plunder.
⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of
Midian.
⁵For all the boots of the tramping
warriors

and all the garments rolled in
blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his
kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and
forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do
this.

