

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

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (commemoration of John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, c. 749) Psalm 79. **Tuesday** Revelation 18:1-10. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342) Micah 5:1-5a. **Thursday** (commemoration of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397) Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13. **Friday** Jeremiah 1:4-10. **Saturday** Ezekiel 36:24-28. **Second Sunday of Advent** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

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Tracks 1 and 2



# Celebrate

First Sunday of Advent  
December 3, 2023

*Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.*

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

*This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.*

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

<sup>2</sup>as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

<sup>3</sup>When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

<sup>4</sup>From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

<sup>5</sup>You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

<sup>6</sup>We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

<sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

continued

Let your face shine up - on us and  
we shall be saved, and we shall be saved.

- Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph <sup>1</sup> like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- <sup>1</sup> on the cherubim.  
<sup>2</sup>**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, <sup>1</sup> and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and <sup>1</sup> come to help us.**  
<sup>3</sup>Restore <sup>1</sup> us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup> shall be saved.  
<sup>4</sup>**O LORD <sup>1</sup> God of hosts,  
how long will your anger fume when your <sup>1</sup> people pray? R**  
<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the <sup>1</sup> bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of <sup>1</sup> tears to drink.  
<sup>6</sup>**You have made us the derision <sup>1</sup> of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh <sup>1</sup> us to scorn.**  
<sup>7</sup>Restore us, O <sup>1</sup> God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup> shall be saved.  
<sup>17</sup>**Let your hand be upon the one at <sup>1</sup> your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong <sup>1</sup> for yourself. R**  
<sup>18</sup>And so will we never turn a- <sup>1</sup> way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- <sup>1</sup> on your name.  
<sup>19</sup>**Restore us, O LORD <sup>1</sup> God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup> shall be saved. R**

- <sup>8</sup>Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our  
potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
<sup>9</sup>Do not be exceedingly angry,  
O LORD,

and do not remember iniquity  
forever.  
Now consider, we are all your  
people.

## Second Reading

## 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

*As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.*

Grace to you and peace from God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for  
you because of the grace of God that  
has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for  
in every way you have been enriched in  
him, in speech and knowledge of every  
kind—<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ

has been strengthened among you—  
<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any  
spiritual gift as you wait for the reveal-  
ing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will  
also strengthen you to the end, so that  
you may be blameless on the day of our  
Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by  
him you were called into the fellowship  
of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Gospel

## Mark 13:24-37

*Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.*

[Jesus said:] “In those days, after that  
suffering,

the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give  
its light,

<sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling  
from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens  
will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Man  
coming in clouds’ with great power  
and glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the  
angels, and gather his elect from the  
four winds, from the ends of the earth  
to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson:  
as soon as its branch becomes tender  
and puts forth its leaves, you know  
that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when  
you see these things taking place, you  
know that he is near, at the very gates.

<sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will  
not pass away until all these things  
have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth  
will pass away, but my words will not  
pass away.

<sup>32</sup>“But about that day or hour no  
one knows, neither the angels in heav-  
en, nor the Son, but only the Father.

<sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert; for you do not  
know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is  
like a man going on a journey, when  
he leaves home and puts his slaves in  
charge, each with his work, and com-  
mands the doorkeeper to be on the  
watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake—for  
you do not know when the master of  
the house will come, in the evening,  
or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at  
dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else he may find you asleep  
when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I  
say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”