**SEASON OF PRAYER 2023**

**WEEK 1 (SUNDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER)**

**Theme: Season of Prayer**

**COLLECT/PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

(Let us pray for a heart of prayer. [silence])  
Loving Heavenly Father,  
you dear Son Jesus Christ stands at your right hand and intercedes for us, and the Holy Spirit helps us to pray even in our weakness. Fill our hearts with trust and joy so we may approach your throne boldly with all kinds of prayers and requests. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**OR**

(Let us pray for boldness in prayer. *[silence]*)

Thank you, generous God,   
that you want to give us so much more   
than we even think of asking for.   
Keep us coming to you in prayer,   
knowing that you are waiting to answer.   
We ask this through your Son,   
Jesus Christ our Lord,   
who lives and reigns   
with you and the Holy Spirit,   
one God, now and forever.   
**Amen.**

**READINGS**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING:** Daniel 10:2-19 Daniel’s vision of an angel in answer to prayer

**PSALM 138**

*Antiphon:* On the day I called, you answered me. *(Ps 138:3a NRSV)*

**EPISTLE READING:** Romans 8:14-28 We have received the Spirit; the Spirit intercedes for us

**ALLELUIA VERSE** *(Luke 11:9 NRSV)*

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

(Jesus said:) 'Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find;

knock, and the door will be opened for you.'

**Alleluia.**

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 11:1-13 Jesus’ teaching on prayer

This is the gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Thank you, Lord Jesus,   
for teaching us how to pray.   
Help us to keep on praying with faith and confidence.   
**Amen.**

**ADDITIONAL PETITION FOR THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:**

Triune God, as we enter this season of prayer, we ask that you would pour your grace on your church. Renew your church, Lord! Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Let us overflow with the joy of your salvation, so that we may boldly and joyfully share your good news with others, especially those outside the church.

Renew your church, Lord! Raise up harvest workers and send them out with the good news.

Renew your church, Lord! Give us hearts that turn to you in repentance, worship, praise and adoration. Help us be present to your presence and to discern your work amongst us. Teach us to devote ourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

**OR**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

*Jesus has commanded us to pray and even given us the words to say. We can be certain that our prayer is pleasing to God, our Father in heaven. Let us come to him in Jesus' name and pray for ourselves, the church and the needs of all the world.*

**Congregation: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

Intercessor: Father, your name is already holy, but we ask you to help us to keep your name holy. Help us to teach your word clearly and correctly, and to live holy lives as your children, doing what you say. Do not let us bring disgrace on your name by going against your word in what we teach or the way we live.

**C: Your kingdom come.**

I: Father, you come to rule as king even if we don't ask for this to happen, but we ask you to come and rule over us. Give us your Holy Spirit, so that by your goodness to us we believe your holy word and live as your people on earth now and in heaven forever.

**C: Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

I: Father, you do the kind and good things you want for people even if we don't ask for this to happen, but we ask you to do these kind and good things for us too. Break the power of the devil, our sinful human nature, and people who are against God, since all these want to stop us from keeping your name holy and having you rule as our king. Make our faith in Jesus strong and help us to trust God's word as long as we live.

**C: Give us today our daily bread.**

I: Father, you give daily bread to all people, whether they are good or bad, even if we don't ask for this to happen. But we ask you to help us to see our daily bread as your gift, and to be thankful for it. Give us and all people everything we need for this life, things like food, clothes, a place to live, money and possessions, a good marriage, loving children, good people to work with, good and honest community leaders, good government, good weather, peace, health, respect for law, a good reputation, good friends, and helpful neighbours.

**C: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

I: Father, we don't deserve anything we pray for. We sin every day, and all we deserve is punishment. But we ask you not to look at our sins or refuse to listen to our prayers because of them. Instead, give us everything we need simply out of your kindness. When people sin against us, help us gladly to forgive them and be kind to them.

**C: Lead us not into temptation.**

I: Father, we know that you do not tempt anyone. But we ask you to keep us safe from the devil, our sinful nature, and people who are against you. Don't let them trick us into losing our Christian faith, giving up all hope, or doing other terrible things. And even though they attack us, we pray that in the end we will win the victory.

**C: Deliver us from evil.**

I: Father, save us from every kind of evil - anything that could hurt our body or soul, our possessions or reputation. Be with us when we die and take us from the troubles of this world to be with you in heaven. Comfort those who mourn, those who are dying and those caring for them. Provide for the needs of all those we know to be in want and those we now name silently in our hearts…(brief silence).

All this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**OR**

The following prayer based on the Lord's Prayer from Martin Luther's Small Catechism may be used today. It is given here in two forms.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1960 version) | (1996 version) |
|  |  |
| Gracious God, since you encourage us to believe that you are truly our Father and we are your children, grant that we may pray to you with complete confidence, just as children speak to their loving father, and say: | Gracious God, you encourage us to believe that you really are our Father and we really are your children. Help us to pray to you with complete confidence, just as children speak to their loving parents, and say: |
| **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.** | **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.** |
| Since your name certainly is holy in itself, we ask that we may keep it holy. Grant that your word may be taught in its truth and purity, and help us as your children to live a holy life in harmony with it. Keep us from dishonouring your name by teaching and living contrary to your word. | Father, your name is already holy, but we ask you to help us to keep your name holy. Help us to teach your word clearly and correctly, and to live holy lives as your children, doing what you say. Do not let us bring disgrace on your name by going against your word in what we teach or the way we live. |
| **Your kingdom come.** | **Your kingdom come.** |
| Even though your kingdom comes without our praying for it, grant that it may come also to us. Give us your Holy Spirit, so that by your grace we believe your holy word and live a godly life on earth now and in heaven forever. | Father, you come to rule as king even if we don't ask for this to happen, but we ask you to come and rule over us. Give us your Holy Spirit, so that by your goodness to us we believe your holy word and live as your people on earth now and in heaven forever. |
| **Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.** | **Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.** |
| Even though your good and gracious will is surely done without our prayer, grant that it may be done also among us. Hinder and defeat every evil scheme of the devil, the world, and our sinful self which would prevent us from keeping your name holy and would oppose the coming of your kingdom. Graciously strengthen our faith and keep us firm in your word as long as we live. | Father, you do the kind and good things you want for people even if we don't ask for this to happen, but we ask you to do these kind and good things for us too. Break the power of the devil, our sinful human nature, and people who are against God, since all these want to stop us from keeping your name holy and having you rule as our king. Make our faith in Jesus strong and help us to trust God's word as long as we live. |
|  |  |
| **Give us today our daily bread.** | **Give us today our daily bread.** |
| Since you give daily bread, even without our prayer, to all people, though sinful, help us to realise this and to receive our daily bread with thanks. Give us and all people everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an ordered community, good government, favourable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbours. | Father, you give daily bread to all people, whether they are good or bad, even if we don't ask for this to happen. But we ask you to help us to see our daily bread as your gift, and to be thankful for it. Give us and all people everything we need for this life, things like food, clothes, a place to live, money and possessions, a good marriage, loving children, good people to work with, good and honest community leaders, good government, good weather, peace, health, respect for law, a good reputation, good friends, and helpful neighbours. |
| **Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.** | **Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.** |
| Do not hold our sins against us, heavenly Father, and because of them refuse to hear our prayer. Forgive us and give us everything by grace, for we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment. Help us heartily to forgive and gladly to do good to those who sin against us. | Father, we don't deserve anything we pray for. We sin every day, and all we deserve is punishment. But we ask you not to look at our sins or refuse to listen to our prayers because of them. Instead, give us everything we need simply out of your kindness. When people sin against us, help us gladly to forgive them and be kind to them. |
| **Lead us not into temptation.** | **Lead us not into temptation.** |
| Since you tempt no-one to sin, watch over us and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful self may not deceive us and draw us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins. And even though we are so tempted, help us still to win the final victory. | Father, we know that you do not tempt anyone. But we ask you to keep us safe from the devil, our sinful nature, and people who are against you. Don't let them trick us into losing our Christian faith, giving up all hope, or doing other terrible things. And even though they attack us, we pray that in the end we will win the victory. |
| **Deliver us from evil.** | **Deliver us from evil.** |
| Save us, heavenly Father, from every evil to body and soul, and at our last hour mercifully take us from the troubles of this world to yourself in heaven.  **Amen.** | Father, save us from every kind of evil - anything that could hurt our body or soul, our possessions or reputation. Be with us when we die. Be kind to us and take us from the troubles of this world to be with you in heaven.  **Amen.** |

**PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION**

Heavenly Father, you have fed us with the body and blood of your Son so we can be his body in the world. Grant that we may remember your presence, and turn to you in prayer, praise, petition and thanksgiving in all our needs and joys.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who always lives to intercede for us.

**Amen.**

**WEEK 2 (SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER)**

**Theme: Always pray and never give up**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Let us pray for persistence in prayer. (silence)

Heavenly Father, you are always more willing to answer our prayers than we are to pray. Teach us to always pray and never give up, depending on you in all things and trusting that your answers to our prayers are good. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**OR**

(Let us pray for persistence in prayer. *[silence]*)

Merciful Lord of heaven and earth,   
teach us to come to you with confidence   
in all our needs,   
and rely on your help and protection.   
We ask this through your Son,   
Jesus Christ our Lord,   
who lives and reigns   
with you and the Holy Spirit,   
one God, now and forever.   
**Amen.**

**READINGS**

**The Old Testament Reading: Daniel 6:1-12a** Daniel continues to pray after Darius' decree

**Psalm 121**

*Antiphon:* My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. *(Ps 121:2 NRSV)*

**The Second Reading: Acts 4:23-31** The believers' prayer

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

God will grant justice to his chosen ones

who cry to him day and night.

**Alleluia.**

**The Gospel Reading: Luke 18:1-8** The parable of the persistent widow and

the judge

This is the gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for encouraging us to pray.   
Help us to persist in prayer,   
knowing that God wants what is good for us.   
**Amen.**

**ADDITIONAL PETITIONS FOR THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:**

Teach us, O God, to always pray and never give up. May our prayers be a reflection of our dependence on you, acknowledging that apart from you, we can do nothing. Help us to bring before you all kinds of prayers and requests, entrusting our lives, our needs, and the needs of others into your loving hands.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we gather in your presence, we are reminded of the parable of the widow who never gave up on seeking justice. Help us to be persistent like the widow, always seeking your guidance, mercy, and grace. Let us never grow weary in praying for ourselves and others, for our needs and the needs of the world. Teach us to trust in your timing, for you are faithful and just.

Lord, instill in our hearts a deep trust in your unfailing love and a joy that springs from knowing you intimately. May we approach your throne boldly, lifting up all kinds of prayers and requests, knowing that you hear and answer according to your perfect will. May our hearts be steadfast in prayer, never ceasing to communicate with you.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

*Call to prayer*

Jesus encourages us never to give up praying. With faith in God, and in his justice, let us pray for the church, the world and all in need.

*The regular response, OR:*

Lord, in your justice and mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Suggested intercessions*

\* for pastors of the church, that they may rightly use Scripture for the benefit of the church

\* for Bible study groups, and for those who make Bible reading a part of their personal and family life, that love for the Scriptures will grow

\* for the legal professions, for judges, magistrates, and lawyers, that justice may be done in the courts of our land

\* for all widows and widowers

\* for those who have asked for our prayers

*Concluding prayer*

Heavenly Father, hear our prayers for faith and for justice, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION**

Heavenly Father,

You have nourished us with the precious body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. In this coming week, remind us of your abiding presence with us, so we may always turn to you in prayer, in times of need and in moments of joy. Make our lives an offering of praise, petition, and thanksgiving to you. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**OR**

Almighty and merciful God,   
through his body and blood   
your Son has opened for us   
a new and living way into your presence.   
Give us pure hearts and a sure faith   
to draw near to you as our Father,   
and to ask you for whatever we need.   
We ask this through your Son,   
Jesus Christ our Lord,   
who lives and reigns   
with you and the Holy Spirit,   
one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**WEEK 3 (SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24)**

**Theme: ‘Prayer in every place’**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Let us pray that we may be devoted to prayer. (Silence)

Heavenly Father,

In your grace you provide evangelists

to serve the world with the gospel,

and intercessors to serve the church with prayer.

Open a door for the gospel through our words and actions,

and move our hearts to be devoted to you in prayer.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**READINGS**

**The First Reading: Nehemiah 1:1-11** Nehemiah's prayer on behalf of the people of Israel

**Psalm 145:8-18**

*Antiphon:* The Lord is near to all who call on him. *(Ps 145:18a NRSV)*

**The Second Reading: Colossians 4:2-6,12-13** Devote yourselves to prayer; Epaphras prays for the church

**The Gospel Reading: Mark 11:20-25** Teaching about prayer after the fig tree withers

**SERMON** ‘The Epaphras Project – prayer in every place’ by Pastor Nathan Hedt

**ADDITIONAL PETITIONS FOR THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:**

Heavenly Father, according to your invitation, we intercede for our brothers and sisters in Christ, that they may grow in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of your will. Fill them with spiritual insight and revelation that they may walk in a manner worthy of you, bearing fruit in every good work.

We lift up those who labour diligently in your service, like Epaphras, who was always wrestling in prayer for others. Grant them strength, perseverance, and a deep sense of joy as they serve your people in this way..

Lord, we also pray for those who have yet to embrace the Gospel. Open doors for us to share the mystery of Christ with grace and clarity, that they too may experience the transforming power of your love.

May our speech always be seasoned with salt, filled with grace and love, so that we may represent you well to the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

**PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION**

Heavenly Father, as you have fed us with the body and blood of your son, you have drawn us into the unity and fellowship of the Body of Christ. Through this sacrament, strengthen us to stand firm in your will and be mature and fully assured in our faith, and lead us to intercede for the church and the world..

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**MUSIC SUGGESTIONS**

These suggestions could be used across all three Sundays.

**LH**

* 16 Hail to the Lord's Anointed G6
* 121 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord\* G4
* 355 May we Thy precepts, Lord, fulfil\* G3
* 390 Wait, my soul, with patience\* G3
* 395 O for a faith that will not shrink\* G7
* 409 Commit whatever grieves thee\* G6
* 420 Come my soul thy suit prepare
* 421 Our Father, Thou in heaven above\* G5
* 422 Great Shepherd of Thy people, hear\* G6
* 424 Prayer is the soul's sincere desire\* G5
* 425 Lord, teach us how to pray aright G6
* 426 What a friend we have in Jesus
* 894 Father God in heaven GS
* 901 Our Father, you from heaven above G5

**AT**

Any of the All Together songs related to the theme of prayer including:

* 34 Seek ye first
* 74 The Lord's Prayer
* 168 Hear our prayer
* 219 Then I will praise you
* 233 He will listen to you
* 274 In Jesus' name
* 278 Lord, hear our prayer
* 282 O Lord, hear my prayer
* 283 Our Father
* 286 Sorrowing song
* 289 Thank you that you hear me
* 301 Prayer of peace
* 372 Teach me your way
* 385 If there was ever a time
* 405 Lord of all hopefulness
* 480 On the day I called
* 485 Praying
* 575 Lord, listen to your children
* 660 Jesus speak

**OTHER SONGS**

* Great Is Thy Faithfulness
* Take My Life and Let It Be
* [Your Will be Done - CityAlight](https://youtu.be/8nLXXephYRI)
* ‘Grace’ by City Alight
* [Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me – City Alight](https://youtu.be/hwc2d1Xt8gM)
* [Where Can I Look? - Emu Youth](https://youtu.be/Hwt3x6d5OBs)
* Only a Holy God by City Alight
* Christ is Mine Forevermore by City Alight
* ‘By Faith’ by Keith and Kristyn Getty
* [‘Holy Spirit Living Breath of God’ by Keith and Kristyn Getty](https://youtu.be/kDYjn-YdnD4)
* ‘Speak o Lord’ by Keith and Kristyn Getty
* [Hear Our Prayer - Emu Music](https://youtu.be/oiCB4BbF8oI)
* [10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)- Matt Redman](https://youtu.be/XtwIT8JjddM)
* [Hear Me, Lord - Emu Music](https://youtu.be/bF1VKZiMxP0)
* [What A Friend - Emu Music](https://youtu.be/lrZsewDH_2s)
* [Rejoice - Emu Music](https://youtu.be/NvyYK09Haq4)