



Celebrate

Sunday, July 27, 2025
7th Sunday after Pentecost

Persistence in prayer is encouraged by Jesus and wins the attention of God when Abraham intercedes for Sodom. The life of the baptized—to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus—is to be nurtured with prayer. God hears and answers prayer and so strengthens God's own. "When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me."

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and you gladly give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us your abundant mercy. Forgive us those things that weigh on our conscience, and give us those good things that come only through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Genesis 18:20-32

In today's reading, Abraham undertakes the role of a mediator between God and sinful humanity. Appealing to God's justice, Abraham boldly asks for mercy for the city of Sodom for the sake of the few righteous people there, including Abraham's nephew, Lot.

The **LORD** said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know."

²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the **LORD**. ²³Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶And the **LORD** said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will

forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the **LORD**, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰Then he said, "Oh do not let the **LORD** be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the **LORD**. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³²Then he said, "Oh do not let the **LORD** be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

Your stead - fast love en - dures for - ev - er;

do not a - ban - don the works of your hands.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with ¹ my whole heart;
before the gods I will ¹ sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast ¹ love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name
and your word a- ¹bove all things. **R**

³When I called, you ¹ answered me;
you increased my ¹ strength within me.

⁴All the rulers of the earth will praise ¹ you, O LORD,
when they have heard the words ¹ of your mouth.

⁵They will sing of the ways ¹ of the LORD,
that great is the glory ¹ of the LORD.

⁶The LORD is high, yet cares ¹ for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty ¹ from afar. **R**

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you ¹ keep me safe;
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right ¹ hand shall save me.

⁸You will make good your pur- ¹pose for me;
O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever;
do not abandon the works ¹ of your hands. **R**

The writer of this letter warns the congregation in Colossae about "the empty lure" of philosophies and traditions that compromise faith. Through the gift of faith, the church is mystically connected with Christ in his death and resurrection which is enacted in baptism.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your

flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

[¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. ¹⁷These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.]

Gospel

Luke 11:1-13

In teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus also reminds them to focus on God's coming reign, God's mercy, and the strengthening of the community. Jesus encourages his disciples to childlike trust and persistence in prayer.

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone
indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time
of trial."

⁵And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are

with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Prayers of Intercession

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

In solidarity with all creation, we join our voice to the voice of the whole church and pray for the needs of the world.

A brief silence.

Loving God, create in your church a desire for union with you in prayer. Raise up leaders to teach Christ's devotion to prayer and model Christ's way of prayer, until all people experience prayerful intimacy with you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reveal to humanity the sacredness of all creation. With the breath of your Spirit, realign the balances of nature. Grant persistence in prayer and action for the sake of the earth, our common home. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Teach rulers of the earth to sing of your ways, caring for the lowly and having no preference for the powerful. Direct the heart of every person to seek your will on earth as in heaven. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

To all whose prayers are cries for help, give your good gifts, and satisfy their deepest needs. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Gather them to your constant, loving presence, that they may rest in the confidence of life with you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Center the ministries of this assembly on prayer and service. Guide our relationships in the wider community, being ready to assist those who seek help. Strengthen feeding, clothing, and housing ministries and community partnerships. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have gone before us. May we trust your steadfast love and continue in hope until we are united with all your saints. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Trusting in your lovingkindness, we place our prayer and hope in you, in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Johann Sebastian Bach, 1750; Heinrich Schütz, 1672; George Frederick Handel, 1759; musicians) Psalm 55:16-23. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, 1030) Romans 9:30—10:4. **Wednesday** Matthew 5:43-48. **Thursday** Psalm 49:1-12. **Friday** Proverbs 24:1-12. **Saturday** Ecclesiastes 1:1-11. **8th Sunday after Pentecost** Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21.

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