

Celebrate

Sunday, June 21, 2026
4th Sunday after Pentecost

God does not promise that the path of the disciple will be easy. Jeremiah feels the pain of rejection from those who do not want to hear what he has to say. Jesus declares that his words may bring stark division. Even so, we need not be afraid for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death, God's grace and love make us a new creation each day. Marked with the cross and filled with holy food, we are sent from worship to witness to Christ in the world.

Prayer of the Day

Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

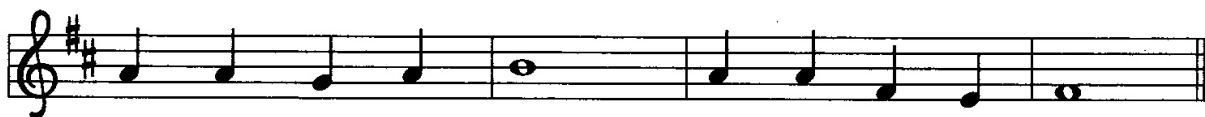
First Reading

Jeremiah 20:7-13

Jeremiah accuses God of forcing him into a ministry that only brings him contempt and persecution. Yet Jeremiah is confident that God will be a strong protector against his enemies and commits his life into God's hands.

O LORD, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all day
long;
everyone mocks me.
⁸For whenever I speak, I must cry out;
I must shout, "Violence and
destruction!"
For the word of the LORD has become
for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
⁹If I say, "I will not mention him
or speak any more in his name,"
then within me there is something like
a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
¹⁰For I hear many whispering:
"Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.

"Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him
and take our revenge on him."
¹¹But the LORD is with me like a
terrifying warrior;
therefore my persecutors will
stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.
¹²O LORD of hosts, you test the
righteous;
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my
cause.
¹³Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the
needy
from the hands of evildoers.



An - swer me, O LORD, for your love is kind.

Surely, for your sake I have suf- | fered reproach,
and shame has cov- | ered my face.

**⁸I have become a stranger to | my own kindred,
an alien to my | mother's children.**

⁹Zeal for your house has eat- | en me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fall- | en upon me.

**¹⁰I humbled my- | self with fasting,
but that was turned to | my reproach. R**

[¹¹I put on | sackcloth also,
and became a by- | word among them.]

**¹²Those who sit at the gate mur- | mur against me,
and the drunkards make | songs about me.**

¹³But as for me, this is my prayer to you, at the time you have | set, O LORD:
"In your great mercy, O God, answer me with your un- | failing help.

**¹⁴Save me from the mire; do not | let me sink;
let me be rescued from those who hate me
and out of | the deep waters. R**

¹⁵Let not the torrent of waters wash over me,
neither let the deep swal- | low me up;
do not let the pit shut its | mouth upon me.]

**¹⁶Answer me, O LORD, for your | love is kind;
in your great compassion, | turn to me.**

¹⁷Hide not your face | from your servant;
be swift and answer me, for I am | in distress.

**¹⁸Draw near to me | and redeem me;
because of my enemies de- | liver me. R**

In baptism we were incorporated into the reality of Christ's death and resurrection. We have been made new in Christ through his death and resurrection to live freed from sin.

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may increase? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like

his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus warns his disciples that their ministry in his name will meet with opposition. However, he assures them that they need not fear for the truth will come to light. Life is found in Christ.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] "A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶"So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²"Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,

³⁶and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Prayers of Intercession

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

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church and the needs of the world.

A brief silence.

Life-giving God, you have called your people to lose their lives for Jesus' sake. Strengthen your church to follow you in the face of difficulty. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, you know every sparrow that falls to the ground. Protect migrating birds, endangered species, and their natural habitats. Empower us to care for your creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, you call us to act justly and love mercy. Protect those with marginalized identities to whom we have not shown the abounding love of Jesus. Bring an end to oppression and bigotry in all forms. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Sustaining God, you promise to provide for us. Help those living with disability. Comfort those experiencing any sort of illness or suffering (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Empowering God, strengthen us to live out our diverse callings. We pray especially for fathers and father figures, that they show your compassion and care. We pray for all for whom this day is difficult or painful. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Faithful God, we give thanks for saints (*like Onesimos Nesib*) who have claimed their baptismal promises. May we follow their example of faith and service. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting you receive all our prayers, we commend our spoken and unspoken prayers to you, O God, through Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 6. **Tuesday** Revelation 2:8-11. **Wednesday** (John the Baptist) Luke 1:57-67 [68-80]. **Thursday** (commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession, 1530; Philipp Melancthon, renewer of the church, died 1560) Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18. **Friday** Galatians 5:7-12. **Saturday** (commemoration of Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, died 444) Jeremiah 28:1-4. **Fifth Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, died around 202) Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42.

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