

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

With the people of God gathered here and throughout the world, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

brief silence.

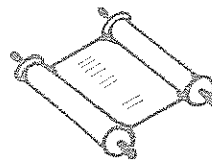
Holy and almighty God, gather all of our thoughts, emotions, and desires, and teach them your will. Turn our hearts, souls, and minds to love you and our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us how to live in harmony with our good earth and all its creatures. Restrain our urge to overconsume, and help us to trust in the sufficiency of what you have provided. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Fill our public servants and we who elect them to office with your wisdom. Let your justice flow through our governments and institutions. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 51. **Tuesday** Deuteronomy 28:58—29:1. **Wednesday** (commemoration of John Christian Frederick Heyer, 1873; Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, 1719; Ludwig Nommensen, 1918; missionaries) Micah 6:1-8. **Thursday** Psalm 146. **Friday** Deuteronomy 15:1-11. **Saturday** Mark 11:12-14, 20-24. **25th Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Martin, Bishop of Tours, 397; Søren Aabye Kirkegaard, teacher, 1855) 1 Kings 17:8-16; Psalm 146; Hebrews 1:1-3; Mark 12:28-34.



Celebrate

Sunday, November 4, 2018
24th Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus states the core of God's law: love God with all you are and have, and love your neighbor as yourself. The scribe agrees that Jesus has rightly identified the most important commandments, much more important than sacrifices. It's easy for us to say with the writer of the letter to the Hebrews that sacrifices aren't needed anymore; harder, though, to acknowledge that all our worship, all our community service, all our social action, all our family caregiving is worthless if it is done without love.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have taught us in your Son that love fulfills the law. Inspire us to love you with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength, and teach us how to love our neighbor as ourselves, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

As the children of Israel enter the promised land, Moses instructs them to love the Lord and to teach God's law to future generations. Verses 4-5 are called the Shema (Hebrew for "hear"), which is still used in Jewish daily prayer and which forms the basis for the "greatest commandment" in today's gospel reading.

[Moses said to the people,] Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, ²so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. ³Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the

LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.



Hap-py are they who seek the LORD with all their hearts.

Happy are they whose way is blameless,
who follow the teaching of the LORD!

²Happy are they who observe your decrees
and seek you with all their hearts,

³who never do any wrong,
but always walk in your ways.

⁴You laid down your commandments,
that we should fully keep them. **R**

⁵Oh, that my ways were made so direct
that I might keep your statutes!

⁶Then I should not be put to shame,
when I regard all your commandments.

⁷I will thank you with a true heart,
when I have learned your righteous judgments.

⁸I will keep your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me. **R**

In ancient systems of worship, temporary forgiveness and purity came through rituals using the blood of sacrificial animals. Now, however, our forgiveness and purity comes eternally through the death of Jesus.

When Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹²he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls,

with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

When a scribe asks Jesus which commandment is first of all, Jesus answers that love of God and love of neighbor are interconnected and define the heart of the kingdom of God.

One of the scribes came near and heard [Jesus and the Sadducees] disputing with one another, and seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater

than these." ³²Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; ³³and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself;'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.