

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

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Merciful God, your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Help your church witness to the surprising yet common ways you encounter us in daily life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of your creation; guide the work of scientists and researchers. Treasuring the earth, may we live as grateful and healing caretakers of our home. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. (Here a particular world struggle may be named.) Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed, and healing to the sick (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of you what we need. Help this congregation ask boldly for what is most needed. Refresh us with new dreams of being your people in this place and time. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In you our lives are never lost. Strengthen us by the inspiring witness of your people in all times and places. Embolden our witness now and one day gather us with all your saints in light (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** Psalm 119:121-128. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Johann Sebastian Bach, died 1750; Heinrich Schütz, died 1672; George Frederick Handel, died 1759; musicians) 1 Kings 4:29-34. **Wednesday** (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, died 1030) Proverbs 1:1-7, 20-33. **Thursday** Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21. **Friday** Isaiah 51:17-23. **Saturday** Isaiah 44:1-5. **Ninth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21.

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# Celebrate

Sunday, July 26, 2020  
8th Sunday after Pentecost

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

## Prayer of the Day

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people,

so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."