

## **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup> he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

## **Second Reading: Philippians 1:3-11**

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup> constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup> because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup> to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup> having produced the harvest

of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**Gospel: Luke 3:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

## **Prayers of Intercession**

As we await the coming of Christ, we pray in hope for all people, the church, and all of creation.

### ***A brief silence.***

God of peace, make your church strong and wise to proclaim your love to the world. Through the church, bring comfort and peace to those who are lost and afflicted. Send your church into the world to bring your forgiveness, mercy, and salvation. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all the nations. Inspire all world leaders to abide by your will, and work for the well-being of all your children. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in danger and afflicted by storms and natural disasters. Give strength to those who are rebuilding the landscape of their lives. Protect and strengthen first responders and all who assist others. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray that you raise up ministers and care-givers for the lonely, the lost, the forgotten, the outcast, and sinners. Remove obstacles that cause us to turn away from you. Help all people to experience the peace and joy of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick in our church family, and all who suffer. When your children are in deep valleys of illness and pain, lift them up with your love and healing. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Give the light of the resurrection to those who grieve, and all who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Hold them in your heart and give them your peace. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, faithful God, as we watch and wait for your coming among us, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.