

### **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

### **First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a**

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of  
the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
<sup>5a</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

### **Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

<sup>8</sup>When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup>then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### **Gospel: Luke 1:39-45**

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Guided by the light of Christ, we pray for healing, comfort, and peace for all God's people.

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

Loving God, as so many in the world cry out in hunger, anxiety, and suffering, guide your church to fill the hungry with good things, to bring peace to the anxious, and to bring healing to those who suffer. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Bring peace and justice to all the nations of the world. Guide every world and local leader to be merciful and live according to your will. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Grant this congregation faith and strength to live lives of kindness, compassion, and service. Through our ministries, fill the hungry with good things and lift up the lowly. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for every mother who is carrying new life. Keep them safe, and bless them with joy and gladness. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those in the military, especially those who are far from home, and those who are in harm's way. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Grant strength and healing to the sick and those who suffer physical pain. We pray for those close to us. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who grieve, all who are stressed, all who are troubled, all who are depressed, all who are lost during these days of celebrating Christmas. Open their ears to hear your promises of hope, peace, joy, and love. God of love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Hear the prayers of your people, O God. In your mercy grant us all we need, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.