

Introduction to the day

God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

A reading from Nehemiah.

The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that "the joy of the LORD is your strength."

PSALM: Psalm 19

The teaching of the LORD revives the soul. (Ps. 19:7)

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.

GOSPEL: Luke 4:14-21

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - Praised by Everyone

Jesus' ministry began in triumph. He had endured the testing in the wilderness and emerged victorious, ready to begin his good work in the community. One of the first places he stopped was in the synagogues, teaching in such a way that he "was praised by everyone" (Luke 4:15). One day, upon reading from Isaiah, Jesus revealed himself as the one who would bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recover the sight of people who were blind, free those who were oppressed, and proclaim the Lord's favor. Alleluia!

As followers of this very same Jesus, we know that God is still at work accomplishing these glorious tasks in our communities. We also know people who long for us, Jesus' followers full of the Holy Spirit, to bring good news to the poor.

How are we, members of the body of Christ, called to be in such a deep relationship with our neighbors that they share with us their greatest needs? Have we established such profound trust that they are willing to allow us to accompany them as God produces solutions sufficient to their greatest crises?

We have the most exhilarating mission—to proclaim the Lord’s favor in the neighborhood! We get to remind people that they are not forgotten. How we do this in our own contexts is as various as the number of churches represented around the world. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to Christian ministry. But in all cases, we are called to invite everyone to praise Jesus and live into his mission of freedom.

As we gather each week for word and sacrament, may we be filled with the Holy Spirit as we pray that Jesus’ fame will spread into “all the surrounding country” (Luke 4:14), as our neighbors experience God’s good work through each of us. Holy Spirit, reveal to us new ways to accompany our neighbors in this Epiphany season.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

As your word is opened in our midst, we give thanks for all who share scripture: for parents, grandparents, and godparents; teachers and mentors; deacons, pastors, bishops, and scholars. Inspire passion for the stories of faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As heavens declare your glory and the sky proclaims your work, we lift our voices in awe of quarks and atoms, vast stars and solar systems. Guide us to speak on behalf of your handiwork. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As Jesus proclaimed life and freedom in his community, energize communities and nations to eliminate poverty, engage in prison ministry and transformative justice, and envision new ways of working together for your promised reign. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As your word and presence revive the soul, accompany all experiencing depression, anxiety, or eating disorders; be a source of strength for all affected by memory loss and their caregivers; draw near to all undergoing medical treatment or surgery Linda Boland, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Claude Jeannotte, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Harold Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences.. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As we are made one body in baptism, strengthen all who serve. Renew and inspire all who use their gifts in this congregation, community, and the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As our faith is strengthened by saints who have gone before us, we remember leaders of the early church, and beloved friends and family who have died. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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