

# The Congregation at Prayer

*A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer*

*For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Advent and the Nativity of Our Lord*

*December 19 through December 26, 2021*

**Catechesis Notes for the Week — Psalm 138: To Praise God with One’s Whole Heart**—Psalm 138 confesses the Lord’s goodness and lovingkindness as the source of joy, comfort, and life for the Christian. When David prays, “I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You,” he confesses that there is only one God, the God of mercy and salvation in Jesus Christ, our Savior. We worship Him who gave His life for us upon the cross. In the day of trouble, the Lord will hear. One day, all the kings of the earth will confess that He is God and Lord! Though the Lord is on high, Yet He regards the lowly. It is why we love Him. In the lowliness of our sinful, human condition, He looks upon us in mercy and revives our soul with His grace, turning away the wrath of those who would rise against us. When the psalmist declares, “The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever,” he reflects what the Apostle Paul would later declare, “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

## **The Order of Meditation and Prayer**

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

## **Theme: Redeemed to Be His Own!**

### **Invocation**

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### **Apostles’ Creed**

**Verse: John 1:14**

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
and we beheld His glory,  
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,  
full of grace and truth.**

**Psalm 138 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.**

**Prayer on the Psalm:** *I will praise You with my whole heart, O Lord, for when I hear the words of Your mouth, I am filled with the joy of Your salvation. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, revive me, stretch out Your hand and save me for Your mercy endures forever and You will not forsake those who are the work of Your hands; in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	24	122	33	50	18:1-20	19	2	116
Evening	25, 110	40, 67	85, 91	14, 16	126, 62	132, 114	98, 96	119:1-24, 27

### **Bible Readings for the Week:**

	<b>Bible Narrative</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
Sunday	<b>“Make Straight the Way of the Lord”—John 1:19-28</b>	
Monday	The Annunciation—Luke 1:26-38	Isaiah 7:10-14
Tuesday	<b>St. Thomas, Apostle:</b> John 20:24-29	Ephesians 4:7, 11-16
Wednesday	<b>MIDWEEK: Prayer for God’s Final Judgment—2 Thess. 1:3-12</b>	
Thursday	The Birth of Christ is Foretold to Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25	1 John 4:7-16
Friday	<b>Christmas Eve:</b> Luke 2:1-20	Titus 2:11-14
Saturday	<b>Christmas Day:</b> John 1:1-18	Titus 3:4-7

### **The Catechism: The Lord’s Prayer — The Second Article**

What is the Second Article of the Creed? <b>And [I believe] in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...</b>	Preschool +
<i>What does this mean?</i> I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,	First Grade +
That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, Just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.	Second Grade +

## **Prayers: Catechism Prayers, In Our Prayers at Peace, and the Collect for the Week**

### **Prayer on the Second Article**

Heavenly Father, You have given us Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried, taking all of the punishment that we deserved for our sin upon Himself. He descended into hell, proclaiming His victory over the devil; and on the third day He rose again from the dead, preaching the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life in His name to the whole world. We give thanks to You for all that Your Son has done for us. Help us to know and believe in Jesus. He has now ascended into heaven and sits at Your right hand as our Savior and Lord. All the enemies of sin, death, and hell have been placed under His feet and He now rules over all things for the sake of His Church. Give us fervent faith in Jesus and the blessed hope that He will come again to judge the living and the dead, giving the gift of eternal salvation to all who believe in Him; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **In Our Prayers this Week**

**The Office of the Ministry:** *The Lord's guidance and blessing upon our calling of an Associate Pastor and Headmaster.*

**Baptismal Birthdays:** Charles Hartwig (12/19), Ashley (Walentoski) Swiskoski (12/21), Charlotte Anderson (12/22), Marc Schneider, Maggie Gehlbach (12/25).

**Thanksgiving for Healing Mercies:** Jeremy LaFore for continued recovery from paralysis; Gabby Hartwig for a reprieve from cancer, even as she continues to undergo therapeutic treatment.

**The Sick:** Jon Bruss, awaiting pacemaker surgery; Walter Ikenberry in treatment for PANS and Lily Seifferlein recovering from a severed finger, grandchildren of Jim and Cathy Verage; Doug Pom and Tom Pinzl recovering from hernia surgery; Karen Leach, awaiting surgery for spinal compression fractures; Brett Arnold hospitalized and recovering from kidney transplant surgery;

**Cancer Treatment:** Nancy Thiele, friend of Polly Joubert and Jon and Marty Bruss, diagnosed with acute leukemia, Aburuyeba Amaso (breast cancer), Jim Nitzsche (lung cancer); James Loker (liver cancer), Josiah Boehringer (childhood cancer).

**Hospice Care:** Luise Bollmeyer; and Fern Worfel, sister-in-law of Carol Bender

**For Those Who Mourn:** family of Dave Reinheimer, friend of Chuck and Jan Finke.

### **Collect for the week of the Fourth Sunday in Advent: (for December 19 through the morning of December 24)**

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

### **Collect for St. Thomas, Apostle (December 21)**

Almighty and ever-living God, You strengthened Your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in the resurrection of Your Son. Grant us such faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that we may never be found wanting in Your sight; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

### **Collect for the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve and the remainder of the week)**

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism**

#### **Hymn of the Week**

#### **"We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth"**

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#### **Looking forward to the First Sunday after Christmas, St. Stephen, the First Martyr**

**December 26, 2021**

**Hymns: 378, 517 (1, 4, 7, 3), 370, 433, 624, 674, 386**

**Acts 6:8—7:60; Matthew 23:34-39**

The Martyrdom of St. Stephen is celebrated on the day after Christmas. The feast day reminds us of why the Son of God was born and how His martyrdom upon the cross is the source of our salvation. The sermon of St. Stephen is an example of how Christ's death and resurrection, and the call to repentance and faith, is to be preached from the Old Testament Scriptures. Stephen's sermon helps us to understand what the important stories and themes from the Old Testament are. Stephen's message was firm and unyielding as he exposed the sin of impenitence, but it was delivered without hatred for his countrymen. He preached in this way because, like his Lord, he desired to save his hearers. Stephen's face shone with the glory of God's love for unworthy sinners. The content of Stephen's sermon made his hearers angry. They were so imbued with self-righteousness and pride that they refused the message of God's love in Christ and desired to kill anyone who dared suggest that they were sinners in need of salvation. Stephen delivered his call to repentance with compassion, mercy, and love in his heart for his hearers in the same way that Jesus had preached. Like His Lord who wept in love over Jerusalem, prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies, and commended Himself to the Father in death, so Stephen commended himself to his Lord and prayed that the sins of his persecutors might not be charged against them. Persecution, suffering, and even martyrdom for the cause of the Gospel give faithful testimony to Him who by His persecution and martyrdom won salvation for the world. In faithful suffering at the hands of persecutors, Christ's undeserved love for the lost is manifest in His Church and before the world for the salvation of many.