

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer
 For the Week of the First Sunday after Christmas
 December 31, 2023, through January 7, 2024

Catechesis Notes for the Week — The Gloria in Excelsis — “The Gloria is the second of the five great pillars of the Divine Service. It is based on the song of the angels at the birth of Christ: ‘Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ In the Divine Service, where our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present according to both His divine and human natures, there is no hymn that is more appropriate than the hymn that announces Immanuel—God with us! The song of the angels becomes our song in the Divine Service. In it we confess faith in Christ ‘who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man’ (Nicene Creed). His name is Jesus, “for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). This is God’s greatest glory!” (Lutheran Catechesis p. 95).

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Theme: Lord, Now Let Your Servant Depart in Peace

Invocation

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

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: Galatians 5:17

The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;
 and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Psalm 89:1-8 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

Prayer on the Psalm: Lord God, heavenly Father, who by the mouth of Simeon declared that Jesus Christ is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, we beseech You, enlighten our hearts with true knowledge of Your Son, that, in perils and adversities, we may not be offended by Him, but cling to Him and rise with Him and abide in Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	98	97	48	111	103	99	72	48, 49
Evening	45, 96	99, 8	45, 29	107, 15	93, 97	96, 110	100, 67	50

Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	Christmas 1: The Presentation —Luke 2:22-40	
Monday	Circumcision and Name of Jesus —Luke 2:21 (No School)	Galatians 3:23-29
Tuesday	The Epiphany of Our Lord—Matthew 2:1-12	Numbers 24:15-19
Wednesday	The Flight into Egypt—Matthew 2:13-15	Hosea 11:1-4
Thursday	The Slaughter of the Holy Innocents—Matthew 2:16-18	Jeremiah 31:10-17
Friday	The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth—Matthew 2:19-23	Judges 13:2-24
Saturday	The Ark Is Brought into the Temple—1 Kings 8:6-13	Romans 12:1-5

The Catechism: The Lord’s Prayer— The Fifth and Sixth Petitions

<p>What is the Fifth Petition? And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.</p>	Preschool +
<p>What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.</p>	Second Grade +
<p>What is the Sixth Petition? And lead us not into temptation.</p>	Preschool +
<p>What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.</p>	Third Grade +

Prayers: Collects for the Week, Daily Themes for Prayer, and In Our Prayers at Peace

Collect for the week of the First Sunday after Christmas:

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Collect for the New Year (December 31):

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Collect for the Circumcision and Name of Jesus (January 1):

Lord God, You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Themes for Prayer — “Let us pray...”

- Sunday:** *For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacraments.*
- Monday:** *For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one’s calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.*
- Tuesday:** *For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with besetting sins.*
- Wednesday:** *For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.*
- Thursday:** *For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deacons, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed sacrament of Christ’s body and blood.*
- Friday:** *For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.*
- Saturday:** *For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God’s Word on the Lord’s Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ’s holy gifts.*

In Our Prayers this Week — “Let us pray for...”

Baptismal Anniversaries: *Brian and Rachel Galles (12/31), Christoher Clark, Keith Gierach, Rachel Ruehle, Cheryl Thompson (1/1), Rosanne Fell, Rebecca Ligrow, Patrick Meyer (1/2), Joanne Smith, Victor Stanley (1/4), Terry O’Neill, Maria Stemke (1/5), Pam Kirk, Bill Schaefer (1/6).*

Wedding Anniversaries: *Fritz and Robin Theilacker (1/4), Rich and Melinda Burger (1/5).*

The Sick: *Rev. Dr. John Wille, Rev. Luke Boehringer, Jean Reuss, Gabby Hartwig, and Michael, in cancer treatment; Karen (Mark Thoni’s aunt) in hospice. Those Who Mourn:* family & friends of Sue Everhardt (Gil Leon’s family friend).

Lord’s Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism.

Hymn of the Week

“Let All Together Praise Our God”

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Looking forward to the First Sunday after Epiphany

January 7, 2024

Hymns: 383, 410, 402, 398, 530, 401, 862

I Kings 8:6-13: *The Old Testament reading for Christmas morning described the building of the Ark of the Covenant. Now, on the First Sunday after Epiphany, the Ark of the Covenant is brought into the Temple of the Lord. Jesus is the true Ark of the Covenant for He completes and fulfills all to which the Old Testament pointed. He now “tabernacles” among us through His Word and Sacraments.*

Romans 12:1-5: *As Jesus became the Temple of the Holy Spirit, so every Christian is a Temple of the Holy Spirit. “He was poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior.” We are one body in Christ and the Holy Spirit transforms our minds and hearts in Christ Jesus that we might offer the living sacrifices of love and service in the body of Christ.*

Luke 2:41-52: *Luke alone records the occasion of Jesus, at 12-years of age, lingering in the Temple in Jerusalem after the Passover both listening to the teachers of the Law and asking them questions. At the age of 12 Jesus begins to take on the calling of a man by occupying Himself with God’s Word. Mary and Joseph were confused. Why would Jesus linger? Why had He not returned with them to Nazareth? The words of the prophet Malachi come to mind, “The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom you delight in” (Malachi 3:1). It had been the Passover Feast. It was now the third day. One cannot help but think about Jesus’ death on Good Friday and His resurrection on the third day. He is the true Temple of the Lord. He is the place of God’s saving presence. And after His resurrection He will bring us into His saving presence through the preaching of the Gospel. Jesus returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and submitted Himself to them. But at the age of 12 we see a foretaste of His Messianic ministry.*