

## Prayers of the People

After hearing the Word of God during our worship, we begin our response to the Word together as a community. We first share our faith with one another by using the Creed. And then we pray together for the current needs of the world.

In prayer, we turn to God's presence and help in dealing with the concerns in our lives. And it is extremely important for us to pray as a community.

The Roman Catholic tradition has monasteries where monks devote their lives to be a part of a praying community. In monasteries, monks are devoted to living a daily life of communal prayer and to build community with other monks. Their main service for the world is to pray for it. Prayer has this type importance in our lives as well – even if we don't live in a monastery.

The Prayers of the People are also called the Prayers of the Church and the Prayers of Intercession. In some congregations, the prayers are written either by the pastor or by the worship committee. There are Lutheran resources available to provide prayers that are appropriate for the church season and the Scripture readings of the day. (This is what we use at Community Lutheran Church.)

In some congregations, the pastor prays the petitions out loud. In other congregations, the worship assistant prays the petitions out loud, and other congregations – including ours – several people from the congregation say a petition of the prayers. The congregation responds after each petition in affirmation of this being all of our prayers usually with the words, "Hear our prayer."

During the Prayers of the People, we pray for concerns that are current in our society, in our lives, and in the church today. Certainly not every concern is lifted up; and we are invited to continue our own prayers for what was left out individually in our own lives. The Prayers of the People is just the beginning of our prayerful response to God's Word.

We often teach our children that prayer is a way to talk to God. This is a nice way to introduce someone to prayer, but it should be noted that prayer is much deeper than this. It is when God is listening to our soul and we are reminded of God's loving presence in our lives and of our faith in Christ.

Conclude by praying for those whom you specifically think of when you read the Prayers of the Church for Sunday, January 24 (p. 82, *Sundays and Seasons*; Augsburg Fortress, 2020).

**Guided by Christ, made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.**

**For the church throughout the world** *(name different churches that come to mind)*, **for pastors and teachers** *(name pastors and teachers who come to mind)*, **deacons and deaconesses** *(name any lay ministers who come to mind)*, **for musicians and servers** *(name any musician and communion server from our congregation)*, **that all proclaim the good news of God's reconciling love, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.**

**For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean air, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.**

**For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world** *(name specific city and worldwide leaders who come to mind)*, **for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations** *(name helping organizations that come to mind)*, **for planning commissions and homeless advocates** *(name any specific ones that come to mind)*, **that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.**

**For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving** *(name those who come to mind)*. **For the outcast and all who await for relief** *(name the groups of people who come to mind)*, **that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them, let us pray. Have mercy, O Lord.**

**For our congregation and community, and for families big and small, that God's steadfast love serves as a model for all relationships, let us pray. Have mercy, O Lord.**

**In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living, that they point us to salvation through Christ, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.**

**Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**