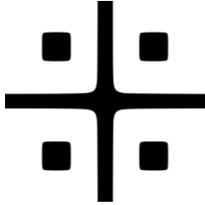


PREVIEW

Praying with the Readings
Prayers of the People
Based on the Readings
of the Revised Common Lectionary,
Year C, Advent through Pentecost

Paul C. Stratman



Praying with the Readings: Prayers of the People Based on the Readings of the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C

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Contact information:

Paul C. Stratman
1000 Mary Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
pcstratman@gmail.com

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Introduction

In his first letter, St. John wrote, “*if we ask [God] anything according to his will, he hears us*” (1 John 5:14). We pray according to God’s will by asking for the same things God promises, speaking back to God what he has spoken to us.

This resource strives to provide Prayers of the People¹ using classic forms and praying for the needs of God’s people in fresh ways. Prayers of the Church for each Sunday are composed of several petitions that reflect the thoughts in the readings for the day. My goal in this set was to compose prayers that were rich in scripture and substantial in their requests, yet be free in form and light in tone.

These prayers are written with petitions arranged in this outline:

Invocation, often drawing thoughts or phrases from the Psalm of the Day.

Three or more petitions that draw from the language in the readings, or prayable thoughts in the readings.

A petition for the sick in mind or body, those who deal with pain, etc.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow. Opportunity for Silent prayer.

Closing collect—often newly composed.

After each petition there is a short response drawn from the psalm or one of the readings for the day, or sometimes a classic liturgical response. Each prayer ends with a classically styled collect. See the section “Using These Prayers” for suggestions for their use and for variety in their use.

Scriptures are quoted from various versions of the Bible, chosen for familiarity, clarity, and appropriate liturgical usage. The preferred translation in the Revised Common Lectionary is the New Revised Standard Version.

Because these prayers are intended to be read aloud, the “Oxford comma” (comma before *and* at the end of a series, as in “*faith, hope, and love*”) is often used for pacing in reading.

A separate volume / resource, *Praying with the Readings: Historic Lectionary* is also available.

The goal of a lectionary should be to give a balanced diet of Scripture. When the readings tell us about the blessings and works of God, they also give us things to pray for.

The holy writer James wrote, “*You do not have because you do not ask*” (James 4:2).

So, Lord, we are asking.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Paul C. Stratman, S. T. M.

¹ The Prayers of the People are known by different names in different worship traditions. They also may be called “The Prayers,” “The Prayer of the Church,” or “Prayers of Intercession.”

Using These Prayers

These prayers can be used as desired—petitions omitted or added. The responses are all printed as a short call and response, usually adapted from some verse of Scripture or a classic liturgical response and selected to be seasonally or thematically appropriate.

Lord our righteousness, fulfill your promises to your people. Strengthen us in body and spirit that we may be watchful and ready for your coming.

God of our salvation, **for you we wait all day long.**

Restore us in faith, and make us abound in love for one another and for all people.

God of our salvation, **for you we wait all day long.**

If desired, the entire response may be read by the congregation. If this style is preferred, the prayer will have to be printed out in full with the whole response in bold for the congregation.

Lord our righteousness, fulfill your promises to your people. Strengthen us in body and spirit that we may be watchful and ready for your coming.

God of our salvation, for you we wait all day long.

Restore us in faith, and make us abound in love for one another and for all people.

God of our salvation, for you we wait all day long.

If a more classic litany is desired, replace the response with a more traditional litany response. This may work especially well with prayers during Advent or Lent.

Lord our righteousness, fulfill your promises to your people. Strengthen us in body and spirit that we may be watchful and ready for your coming.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Restore us in faith, and make us abound in love for one another and for all people.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Or:

Lord our righteousness, fulfill your promises to your people. Strengthen us in body and spirit that we may be watchful and ready for your coming.

Lord, hear our prayer. **Listen to our cry for mercy.**

Restore us in faith, and make us abound in love for one another and for all people.

Lord, hear our prayer. **Listen to our cry for mercy.**

Here are suggestions for classic litany responses:

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, hear our prayers. **Listen to our cries for help.** (*Psalm 39:12*)

Lord, hear our prayer. **Listen to our cry for mercy.** (*Psalm 86:6*)

Righteous God, answer us when we call. **Be merciful to us and hear our prayer.**
(*Psalm 4:1*)

Or for evening worship:

Lord, you are the God who saves us; **day and night we cry out to you.** (*Psalm 88:1*)

Let our prayers rise before you like incense, **the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice.** (*Psalm 141:2*)

These prayers could also work as pastoral prayers by eliminating the responses.

The closing collects could also be used alone, either as a conclusion to other petitions, or as an opening or closing prayer.

If space in the worship materials is an issue, the congregation's directions could be printed like this while the presiding minister has the copy of the whole prayer:

Prayer of the Church

Several prayers and petitions will be made. Each ends:

God of our salvation, **for you we wait all day long.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, stir up your power and strengthen us, that we may shine as lights in this dark world, and be ready for your return. You live and reign, now and forever.

Amen.

This resource does not have page numbers. Instead each prayer has its own reference number, in square brackets, e. g., [C03].

Using These Prayers with Older Lectionaries

An asterisk (*) means that the prayer's themes and language may not be a perfect match to the Sunday's Gospel. Items out of regular order have the reference numbers highlighted.

<i>Christian Worship (1993) Sunday/Festival</i>	Year C
Advent 1	C01
Advent 2	C02
Advent 3	C03
Advent 4	C04
Christmas Eve	C05, C06
Christmas Day	C07
Christmas 1	C08
Christmas 2	C09
Epiphany	C10
Epiphany 1 / Baptism of Our Lord	C11
Epiphany 2	C12
Epiphany 3	C13
Epiphany 4	C14
Epiphany 5	C15
Epiphany 6	C16
Epiphany 7	C17
Epiphany 8	C18
Transfiguration	C19
Ash Wednesday	C20
Lent 1	C21
Lent 2	C22
Lent 3	C23
Lent 4	C24
Lent 5	C25
Palm Sunday	C26
Maundy Thursday	C31
Good Friday	C27, C32
Easter Dawn	C34, C36
Easter Day	C35
Easter 2	C37
Easter 3	C38
Easter 4	C39
Easter 5	C40
Easter 6	C41
Ascension	C42
Easter 7	C43
Pentecost	C44

Second Sunday in Advent

[C02]

Lord of hosts, refine and purify your people, that we may serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Give light to those in darkness. **Guide us in the way of peace.**

Work repentance in us, that your way may be prepared into our hearts. Lay low the mountains of our pride and raise us up from the valleys of despair.

Give light to those in darkness. **Guide us in the way of peace.**

Clothe us in the righteousness of Christ, that we may show your splendor as we live as your holy people.

Give light to those in darkness. **Guide us in the way of peace.**

As you have begun your good work in us, bring it to completion in Jesus Christ. Let our love overflow with knowledge and insight.

Give light to those in darkness. **Guide us in the way of peace.**

You give light to those in the shadow of death. Lift up those who are burdened with afflictions of mind or body, [*especially...*]. Lead your people with joy, and with the hope that comes from you.

Give light to those in darkness. **Guide us in the way of peace.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Listen, Lord, to the thoughts and cares of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

Lord God of Israel, show us your mercy. Forgive us our sins. Rescue us from all threats to body and soul that we may serve you without fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is based on Luke 1:79.

Fourth Sunday in Advent

[C04]

Shepherd of Israel, lead your people like a flock. Restore us. Feed us. Let your face shine on us.

We magnify your name, Lord. **Our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior.**

Show your strength. Cast down the mighty and proud who rage against you. Show your mercy and lift up the lowly who fear you.

We magnify your name, Lord. **Our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior.**

Remember your mercy, Lord, and fill the hungry with good things. Provide for those in need with food, clothing, and shelter.

We magnify your name, Lord. **Our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior.**

Bless us once again as we hear your ancient prophecies and the good news of their fulfillment. Let your word assure us of your faithfulness and goodness.

We magnify your name, Lord. **Our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior.**

Help your people. Lift up those who are distressed. Heal those who are hurting, [*especially...*]. You have done great things for us by sending your Son to be our Savior.

We magnify your name, Lord. **Our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Listen, Lord, to the thoughts and cares of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

Restore us, O God. Let your face shine on us, and answer our prayers. Fill our hearts with your grace, that we too may sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is based on Luke 1:46-47.