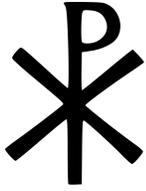


Praying with the Readings
Prayers of the Church
Based on the Readings
of the Three-Year Lectionary
Year C

Paul C. Stratman



Praying with the Readings: Prayers of the Church Based on the Readings of the Three-Year Lectionary, Year C

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A Collection
of Prayers

PUBLICATIONS

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 Church¹ 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.

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. Usually the petitions have this pattern:

- For some blessing mentioned in the readings for the day (which sometimes continues the idea of invocation, or is acclamation, praising God for some spiritual blessing).
- For those who do not know Christ
- For those who bring God’s blessings to us, sometimes drawing items from the civil calendar
- Thanks for those who have gone before us in faith, or prayers that we may imitate them, drawn from the minor festivals, saints and commemorations, or sometimes from church history

For the sick in mind or body, those who deal with pain, etc.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Closing collect—usually short, most are classic collects from the early church or Reformation era.

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 classic 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.

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 sometimes used for pacing in reading.

Our Christian friends in Canada, England, Australia and other English-speaking parts of Christendom may replace “the President of the United States, the governor and legislature of

¹ In my denomination, the main prayer in the Divine Service is called “The Prayer of the Church.” Other denominations or traditions may call it “The General Prayer,” “The Prayers of the Faithful,” “Prayers of Intercession,” or simply “The Prayers.”

this state” and other similar phrases with appropriate expressions for their respective countries.

Christians in denominations with different titles for positions of leadership may change “president of our synod, ... district president” with “presiding bishop... bishop of our diocese” or whatever may be appropriate.

The prayers are written for my denomination’s (WELS) version of the Revised Common Lectionary. The Gospels and Sunday themes should agree with the standard RCL readings most of the time, especially in the festival half of the year. Even if the Scriptures that are read are not all quoted in the prayers, the prayers will still be rich in biblical language.

A chart for use with older lectionaries (*Christian Worship* 1993, *ILCW/Lutheran Book of Worship* 1978 and *Lutheran Worship* 1982) is included.

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, and the new lectionary looks like it will do that well. 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.

The Conversion of St. Paul

January 25, 2021

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.

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Lift up our heads and prepare our hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, our heavenly King.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

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.

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

Lift up our heads and prepare our hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, our heavenly King.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

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.

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David.

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

Lift up our heads and prepare our hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, our heavenly King.

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

Or:

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David.

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

Lift up our heads and prepare our hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, our heavenly King.

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.

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:

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

O Lord, purify our consciences by your daily presence, that when your Son, our Lord comes, he may find in us a place prepared for himself; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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 A	Year B	Year C
Advent 1	A02	B02	C02
Advent 2	A03	B03	C03
Advent 3	A04	B04	C04
Advent 4	A05	B05	C05
Christmas Eve		ABC06	
Christmas Day		ABC07	
Christmas 1	A08	B08	C08
Christmas 2	A09	B09	C09
Epiphany	A10	B10	C10
Epiphany 1 / Baptism of Our Lord	A11	B11	C11
Epiphany 2	A12	B12	C12
Epiphany 3	A13	B13	C13
Epiphany 4	A14	B14	C14
Epiphany 5	A15	B15	C15
Epiphany 6	A16	B16	C16
Epiphany 7	A17	B17	C17
Epiphany 8	A18	B18	C18
Transfiguration	A19	B19	C19
Ash Wednesday		ABC20	
Lent 1	A21	B21	C21
Lent 2	A23	B22	C22
Lent 3	A24	B23	C23
Lent 4	A22*	B24	C24
Lent 5	A25	B25	C25
Palm Sunday		ABC26	
Maundy Thursday	A28	B28	C28
Good Friday		ABC29	
Easter Dawn	A31	B31	C31
Easter Day	A32	B32	C32
Easter 2	A33	B33	C33
Easter 3	A34	B34	C34
Easter 4	A35	B35	C35
Easter 5	A36	B36	C36
Easter 6	A37	B37	C37
Ascension	A38	B38	C38
Easter 7	A39	B39	C39
Pentecost	A40	B40	C40

Holy Trinity	A41	B41	C41
Pentecost 2	A43	B43	C43
Pentecost 3	A44	B44	C44
Pentecost 4	A45	B45	C45
Pentecost 5	A46	B46	C46
Pentecost 6	A47	B47	C47
Pentecost 7	A48	B48	C48
Pentecost 8	A49	B49	C49
Pentecost 9	A50	B50	C50
Pentecost 10	A51	B51	C51
Pentecost 11	A52	B53	C52
Pentecost 12	A53	B54	C53
Pentecost 13	A54	B55	C54
Pentecost 14	A55	B52*	C55
Pentecost 15	A56	B56	C56
Pentecost 16	A57	B57	C57
Pentecost 17	A58	B58	C58
Pentecost 18	A59	B59	C59
Pentecost 19	A60	B60	C60
Pentecost 20	A61	B61	C61
Pentecost 21	A62	B62	C62
Pentecost 22	A63	B63	C63
Pentecost 23	A64	B64	C64
Pentecost 24	A67	B66	C65
Reformation	A71	B71	C71
Last Judgment	A68	B68	C68
Saints Triumphant	A72	B72	C72
Christ the King	A69	B69	C69
<i>ILCW/Lutheran Book of Worship (1978)</i>			
Pentecost 23	A64	B64	C64*
Pentecost 24	A66	B65	C65
Pentecost 25	A67	B66	C66
Pentecost 26	A65	B67*	C67
Pentecost 27	A68*	B68*	C68*
Christ the King	A69	B69	C69
<i>Lutheran Worship (1982)</i>			
Pentecost 23	A64	B64	C64*
Pentecost 24	A66	B65	C65
Pentecost 25	A67	B66	C66
Third-Last Sunday	A65	B67*	C67
Second Last Sunday	A66	B68	C68*
Last Sunday	A68	B69*	C69*

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First Sunday in Advent (*First Option*)

[C01]

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Lift up our heads and prepare our hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, our heavenly King.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Your Son's coming is nearer to us now than when we first believed. Make us shine like lights in this dark world as we live by faith. Empower us by your Spirit to witness to those around us in word and deed.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

We thank you for those authorities, parents in the home, pastors, teachers and elders in the church who watch over our souls, and those in the government who have the responsibility of watching over the safety of our bodies. Keep them faithful in their tasks, bless them, and make them a blessing to us.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

We pray for those who are weighed down with griefs and the anxieties of life, who wait for relief of sicknesses of body or mind, [*especially...*]. Heal, restore and relieve all pain and sorrow as it fits your gracious will and plan.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

O Lord, purify our consciences by your daily presence, that when your Son, our Lord comes, he may find in us a place prepared for himself; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is from Matthew 21:9.

Closing collect is adapted from *The New Ancient Collects*, #41 (Old edition, p. 16.3, Gelasian)

First Sunday in Advent (*Second Option*)

[C02]

Mighty Lord, faithful God, you have fulfilled your gracious promises and have sent your Son as the righteous Branch from the line of David and have given us eternal safety.

Turn to us and be gracious to us. **Relieve the troubles of our hearts.**

Lord our Righteousness, make our love increase and overflow for one another. Strengthen our hearts, and keep us faithful and blameless as we wait for Christ's appearing.

Turn to us and be gracious to us. **Relieve the troubles of our hearts.**

Your Son's coming is nearer to us now than when we first believed. Make us shine like lights in this dark world as we live by faith. Empower us by your Spirit to witness to those around us in word and deed.

Turn to us and be gracious to us. **Relieve the troubles of our hearts.**

We thank you for those authorities, parents in the home, pastors, teachers and elders in the church who watch over our souls, and those in the government who have the responsibility of watching over the safety of our bodies. Keep them faithful in their tasks, bless them, and make them a blessing to us.

Turn to us and be gracious to us. **Relieve the troubles of our hearts.**

We pray for those who are weighed down with griefs and the anxieties of life, who wait for relief of sicknesses of body or mind, [*especially...*]. Heal, restore and relieve all pain and sorrow as it fits your gracious will and plan.

Turn to us and be gracious to us. **Relieve the troubles of our hearts.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you the prayers from the depths of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

O Lord, purify our consciences by your daily presence, that when your Son, our Lord comes, he may find in us a place prepared for himself; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is from Matthew 21:9.

Closing collect is adapted from *The New Ancient Collects*, #41 (Old edition, p. 16.3, Gelasian)

Second Sunday in Advent

[C03]

Righteous God, you send your messengers to prepare your way and to purify the hearts of your people with repentance. You are gracious and you give all people time to hear your call and repent.

We cry out to you, O Lord. **To you we shout for joy!**

With your Word and Spirit purify our hearts and minds to receive you in our hearts now, and to receive you when you come in glory.

We cry out to you, O Lord. **To you we shout for joy!**

John the Baptist called out, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near." Fill the world with the sound of your gospel that more people may enjoy your peace and goodwill.

We cry out to you, O Lord. **To you we shout for joy!**

We pray for those who watch over us for your sake, pastors, teachers, elders and others who lead us in your church. Fill their hearts with your Word that they take to heart what they also teach. Give them strength and patience as they do your work among us.

We cry out to you, O Lord. **To you we shout for joy!**

Lift up the heads of your people and cheer the hearts of all, especially those who suffer sickness and hardships of all kinds, [*especially...*] Comfort them and lift them up your Son came to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, and paid for our sins with his blood.

We cry out to you, O Lord. **To you we shout for joy!**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

O Lord, move our hearts to constant repentance, and turn our hearts from every temptation and evil, that at Christ's coming, we may be ready to receive what he has promised; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 66:17, 1

Closing prayer is adapted from *The New Ancient Collects*, #49, (Old edition, p. 18.3, Gelasian)

Third Sunday in Advent

[C04]

O Lord our God, you are with us, mighty to save, calming troubled hearts with your love and delighting in us as your own people.

We wait for you, O Lord, we wait for you. **In your Word we put our hope.**

By your one and only Son, our mediator, you have opened the way of prayer for us so that we can bring everything to you with prayer, petition and thanksgiving. Guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

We wait for you, O Lord, we wait for you. **In your Word we put our hope.**

Lead us in the way of joyful repentance. Free those who are still enslaved by sin. By your Word and Spirit equip us to proclaim the time of your favor to people everywhere.

We wait for you, O Lord, we wait for you. **In your Word we put our hope.**

Guide those you have established as authorities over us. Give them wisdom, mercy and eagerness to serve the people in their care. Give us hearts and hands that are eager and willing to serve others.

We wait for you, O Lord, we wait for you. **In your Word we put our hope.**

Your Word tells us to rejoice in you always. Move us to share our joy with those who suffer in body or soul, [*especially...*] Heal their diseases, relieve their pain, and restore their strength when it is your will.

We wait for you, O Lord, we wait for you. **In your Word we put our hope.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer.

Dear Lord God, awaken us, that we may be ready when your dear Son comes, that we may receive him with joy and serve you with pure hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 130:5

Closing collect is from Prayers from the Evangelical-Lutheran Heritage, #71, *Die Pommersche Kirchen Ordnung und Agenda*

Fourth Sunday in Advent

[C05]

O Lord, we magnify you and we rejoice in you as God our Savior. You have revealed the mystery of your plans and established your gospel in our hearts.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord, **and grant us your salvation.**

Your Son Jesus is the great one who stands and shepherds his flock in the strength of the Lord. Drive away our doubts, fears and loneliness with your gospel that tells us your Son became flesh, dwelled among us, and knows our needs and our weakness.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord, **and grant us your salvation.**

You have made us holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Let the good news of his completed redemption be made known to the nations near and far, that the good tidings of great joy about Christ may come to people everywhere.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord, **and grant us your salvation.**

You have brought this good news to us by your messengers who have brought us your Word. Keep all pastors and teachers faithful to your Word, and encourage and instruct those who are preparing for the public ministry in your church.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord, **and grant us your salvation.**

When we are poor or in need, lift us up. We pray for all who deal with hardships, illnesses and losses [*especially...*]. Show them your favor. Uphold them in all their troubles, supply what they need for wholeness and healing, and strengthen their faith in your goodness with your Word of peace.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord, **and grant us your salvation.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

In the silent prayers of our hearts we cast all our cares on you.

Silent prayer.

O Lord, by your prophets you promised that your Son would come in the flesh for us and be born of a virgin. Mercifully fulfill all you have promised your Church to the end of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 85:7

Closing collect is a combination of two classic collects.

The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve

[C06]

Gracious Father, when the time had fully come, you sent your Son, born of a woman, born under law, that we might receive full adoption as your children. You have given us blessed hope in the birth of our Savior, Christ the Lord.

“Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to his people on earth.**”

Your Christmas gospel, proclaimed by angels, gives us your gift: “To you is born a Savior.” Cheer our hearts with the good news of a Savior born for us, who lived for us, who died and rose again for us.

“Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to his people on earth.**”

When the shepherds heard the good news and saw their Savior, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about the child. Help us to treasure this good news of great joy, and to remember that it is for all people.

“Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to his people on earth.**”

The emperor and governor served your purpose in bringing Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem when the set time had fully come. We pray for our leaders, the President of the United States, the governor of this state, and for all who work for safety and the common good. Work also in them to serve your greater purpose. Guide them with your message of peace.

“Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to his people on earth.**”

Your Son entered this world in poverty, born in a stable with a manger as his crib, and he was first visited by poor shepherds. We remember the poor, the homeless, the sick and the lonely. Fill our hearts with your goodwill and move us to provide for their needs.

“Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to his people on earth.**”

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

O Lord, strengthen the faith of your people, that as we confess the birth of your glorious and eternal Son in human flesh, born of his virgin mother, we may be delivered from all earthly troubles and receive your eternal joys; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

This prayer uses some of the phraseology of the King James Version and Christmas carols because of their familiarity.

Closing collect is from *The New Ancient Collects*, #72, (Old edition p. 28.3, Leonine)

The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day

[C07]

Beloved Immanuel, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High and Son of the virgin, we give you thanks for your compassion. You came to us from the Father's throne and took on yourself our flesh and blood that we might share your own divine nature.

Lord, you are great and worthy of praise. **Let all creation sing for joy!**

Now has the heavenly Father shared his loving heart with us. Boundless joy is ours, and in you God's anger is stilled forever. By your holy birth, we are born again for heaven, and you have become the true gateway to heaven for us. By you we have access to the Father and open entrance into your kingdom.

Lord, you are great and worthy of praise. **Let all creation sing for joy!**

Dear Lord, gracious Immanuel, help us rightly know the depth of your holy love. Help us remember your tender mercy to us, your poverty and distress, that we may always rejoice in your gracious birth, confident of your mighty power.

Lord, you are great and worthy of praise. **Let all creation sing for joy!**

Lift up our hearts. Open our lips. Loosen our tongues that with all the angels we may worship, praise and magnify you, and finally sing your praise in the everlasting joys of heaven.

Lord, you are great and worthy of praise. **Let all creation sing for joy!**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

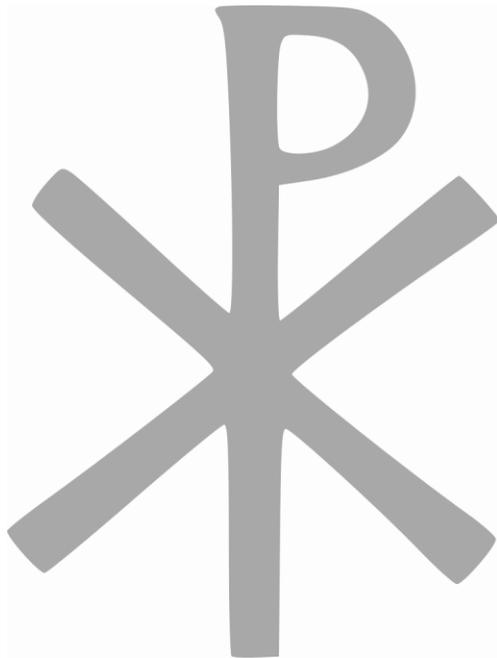
Silent prayer.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. Blessed be his holy name. All the earth is full of his glory.
Alleluia!
Amen.

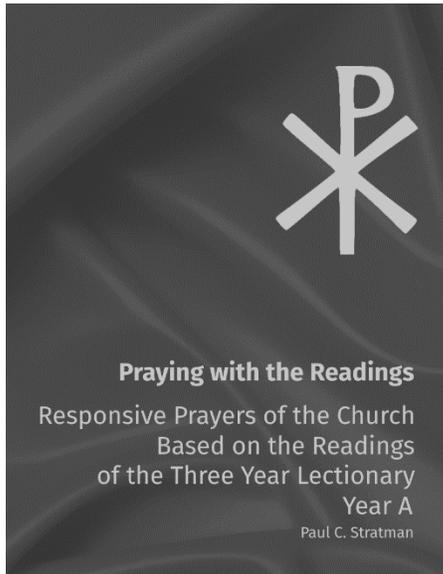
Notes:

Modified from a prayer by Johann Gottfried Olearius, 1635–1711, in *Prayers from the Evangelical-Lutheran Heritage*, #83

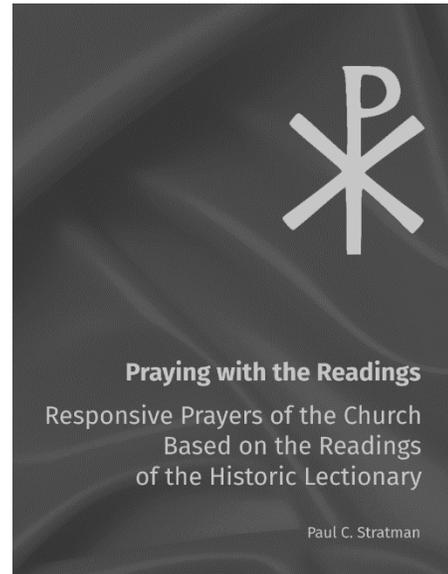
Response is modified from Psalm 96:4, 12



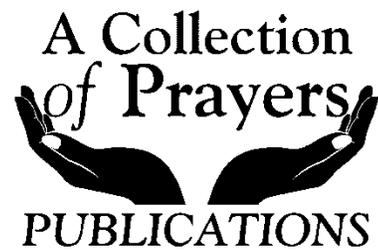
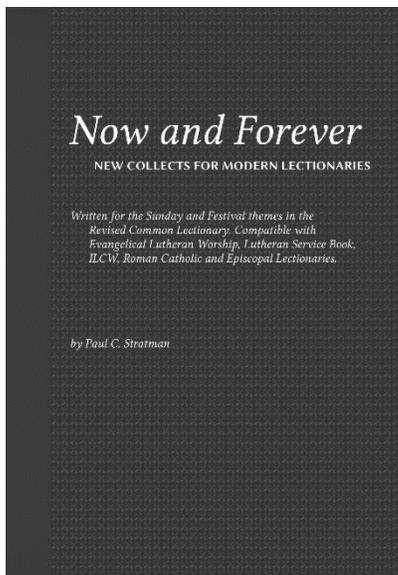
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