

Praying with the Readings

Prayers of the Church
Based on the Readings
for Minor Festivals
and Occasions

Paul C. Stratman



Praying with the Readings: Prayers of the Church Based on the Readings for Minor Festivals and Occasions

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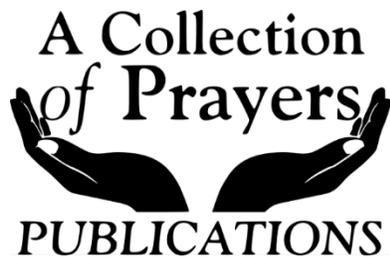
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Introduction

Minor Festivals

The minor festivals seem to be observed mostly in our higher schools, Seminaries, and in some of the “high church” devotionals. The occasions seem to get more attention in our churches.

The purpose of the minor festivals is not to praise the saints, but to praise Christ for preserving his saints, and for the work he has done and continues to do through them. We also consider the encouragement from the letter to the Hebrews, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Carefully consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

When a minor festival date occurs on a Sunday, a congregation may consider replacing the usual Sunday focus with the minor festival.¹

Traditionally, some of the minor festivals were considered *principal feasts*, important enough to displace the regular propers when they fell on a Sunday. The festivals in **bold** in the list below were traditionally observed when they occurred on a Sunday.² Reference numbers are also listed here.

November

30 St. Andrew, Apostle M01

December

21 St. Thomas, Apostle M02

26 St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr M03

27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist M04

28 Holy Innocents M05

January

1 **Circumcision and Name of Jesus** M06
New Year's Day

18 Confession of St. Peter M07

24 St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor M08

25 Conversion of St. Paul M09

26 St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor M10

26 Timothy, Titus and Silas, Missionaries³ M10A

February

2 **Presentation of Our Lord** M11

24 St. Matthias, Apostle M12

¹ Johnold Strey in *Christian Worship: God Gives His Gospel Gifts*, p. 197.

² *Lutheran Service Book: Propers of the Day*, p. xi.

³ On some calendars, Timothy, Titus and Silas are remembered together on January 26.

March

19	St. Joseph, Guardian of Our Lord	M13
25	Annunciation of Our Lord	M14

April

25	St. Mark, Evangelist	M15
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May

1	St. Philip and St. James, Apostles	M16
31	Visitation	M17

June

11	St. Barnabas, Apostle	M18
24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist	M19
25	Presentation of the Augsburg Confession	M20
29	St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles	M21

July

22	St. Mary Magdalene	M22
25	St. James the Elder, Apostle	M23

August

15	St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord	M24
24	St. Bartholomew, Apostle	M25
29	Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist	M26

September

14	Holy Cross Day ⁴	M27
21	St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist	M28
29	St. Michael and All Angels	M29

October

18	St. Luke, Evangelist	M30
23	St. James of Jerusalem	M31
28	St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles	M32
31	Reformation Day	M33

⁴ Holy Cross Day was originally the commemoration of the finding of the original cross during the excavation for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the year 335. Legends and traditions aside, many Lutherans use this day to reflect on Martin Luther's "theology of the cross," the divinely chosen way of humility and service, of suffering as an instrument of God's salutary discipline, and finally death as the gateway to eternal life in Christ.

November

1	All Saints' Day	M34
	Reading the Names of the Departed (All Saints' Day)	M35

Occasions

As I said before, the occasions seem to be more frequently observed among us since the occasions address events and concerns in the life of the church.

These prayers are more varied in their styles. Some are presented in two formats, the first format is similar to the prayers for Minor Festivals and in other volumes of responsive prayers, the second format has the congregation read a full sentence as a response (Similar to the prayers in *Christian Worship* 1993).

Some prayers are written in the second format/style only. One is a responsive reading with a collect prayer at the end (Sanctity of Life). One follows the style of a traditional litany (Time of Crisis).

Styles of prayers can be adjusted for personal or local preference. See "Using These Prayers."

Anniversary—Church	Oc01
Christian Education—First Format	Oc02A
Christian Education—Second Format	Oc02B
Confirmation	Oc03
Confirmation	Oc04
Confirmation	Oc05
Confirmation	Oc06
Dedication—Church—First Format	Oc07A
Dedication—Church —Second Format	Oc07B
Dedication—Musical Instruments	Oc08
Dedication—School—First Format	Oc09A
Dedication—School —Second Format	Oc09B
Environment	Oc10
Installation/Ordination/Anniversary of Ministry— First Format	Oc11A
Installation/Ordination/Anniversary of Ministry— Second Format	Oc11B
Marriage and Family	Oc12
Military Service	Oc13
Ministerial Education	Oc14
Missions—First Format	Oc15A
Missions —Second Format	Oc15B
Nation—First Format	Oc16A
Nation—Second Format	Oc16B
New Year's Eve—First Format	Oc17A
New Year's Eve—Second Format	Oc17B
Sanctity of Life	Oc18

Social Concern	Oc19
Stewardship	Oc20
Synod	Oc21
Thanksgiving Day	Oc22
Thanksgiving Day	Oc23
Time of Crisis (Litany)	Oc24
Vocation	Oc25
Witness	Oc26

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 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” to “presiding bishop... bishop of our diocese” or whatever may be appropriate.

Other volumes in the *Praying with the Readings* series are available for the Three-Year and Historic Lectionaries.

I am indebted to Richard Lauersdorf for his book, *With Our Eyes on Jesus: Devotions on the Minor Festivals of the Church Year*, and *Festivals and Commemorations: Handbook to the Calendar in Lutheran Book of Worship*, edited by Philip Pfatteicher. These books helped me understand the history of the minor festivals, and more importantly, the significance of the saints and the work God has done for his church on earth through them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Paul C. Stratman, S. T. M.
Festival of St. James the Elder
July 25, 2022

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 Jesus Christ, when you call your servants to follow you, you also call them to leave the world behind. With your Word of grace, open hearts to hear your call to discipleship.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

You also call some to serve others with your Word in public ministry. Make your servants bold to speak your commands and promises, that the righteous may be strengthened in you, and the wicked may turn to you.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

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 Jesus Christ, when you call your servants to follow you, you also call them to leave the world behind. With your Word of grace, open hearts to hear your call to discipleship.

We cry out to you with our mouths; your praise is on our tongues.

You also call some to serve others with your Word in public ministry. Make your servants bold to speak your commands and promises, that the righteous may be strengthened in you, and the wicked may turn to you.

We cry out to you with our mouths; your praise is on our tongues.

If a more classic litany is desired, replace the response with a more traditional litany response. .

Lord Jesus Christ, when you call your servants to follow you, you also call them to leave the world behind. With your Word of grace, open hearts to hear your call to discipleship.

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

You also call some to serve others with your Word in public ministry. Make your servants bold to speak your commands and promises, that the righteous may be strengthened in you, and the wicked may turn to you.

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

Or:

Lord Jesus Christ, when you call your servants to follow you, you also call them to leave the world behind. With your Word of grace, open hearts to hear your call to discipleship.

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

You also call some to serve others with your Word in public ministry. Make your servants bold to speak your commands and promises, that the righteous may be strengthened in you, and the wicked may turn to you.

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

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

Special petitions or intercessions may be prayed.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you the thoughts and cares from the depths of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

Lord Jesus, just as you call us, move us by your Holy Spirit to answer your call, to rise, listen, follow, and share you; 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., [M03], [Oc03].

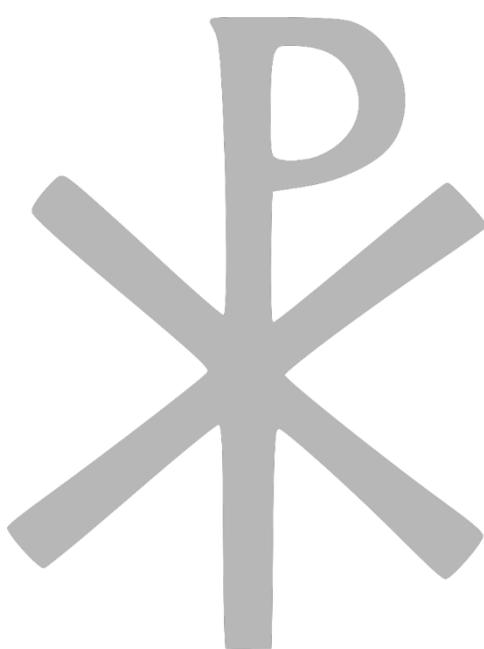
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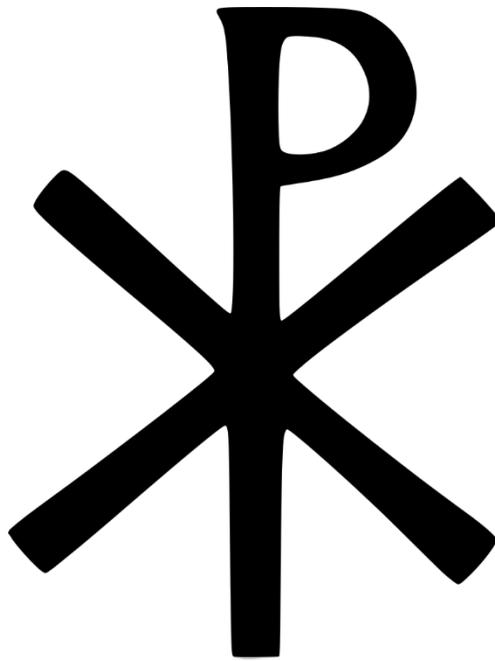
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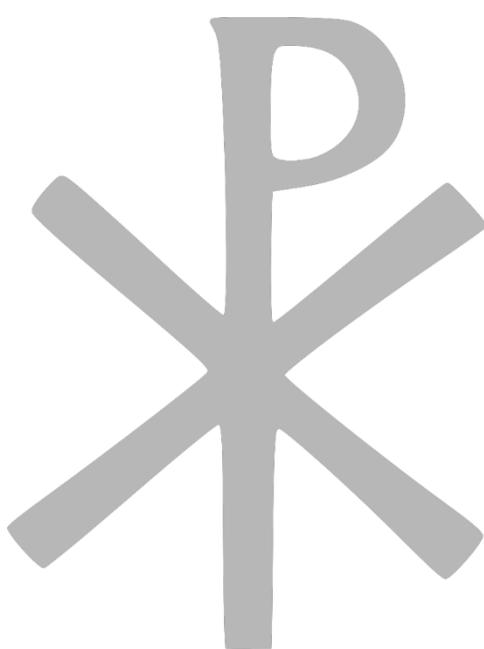
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Minor Festivals





St. Andrew, Apostle
November 30

[M01]

Lord Jesus Christ, when you call your servants to follow you, you also call them to leave the world behind. With your Word of grace, open hearts to hear your call to discipleship.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

You also call some to serve others with your Word in public ministry. Make your servants bold to speak your commands and promises, that the righteous may be strengthened in you, and the wicked may turn to you.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

Give all your people the missionary zeal of Andrew, that we also may be bold to testify, “We have found the Messiah,” and bring people to you.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

Give all your people zeal to share your good news, those called to faith and those called to gospel ministry, that more people may be brought to you, and that your church may be filled with joy.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

Just as Andrew arose and followed you without delay, give us eagerness to follow you and take to heart all you tell us.

We cry out to you with our mouths; **your praise is on our tongues.**

Special petitions or intercessions may be prayed.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you the thoughts and cares from the depths of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

Lord Jesus, just as you call us, move us by your Holy Spirit to answer your call, to rise, listen, follow, and share you; you live and reign, now and forever.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 66:17.

St. Thomas, Apostle
December 21

[M02]

Lord Jesus Christ, you rose gloriously to give your disciples and us the assurance that because you live, we will live also. Drive out all doubts and fears, and fill us with faith in your promise and power.

In you, Lord, is our hope. **Let us never be put to shame.**

You restored the faith of Thomas by showing yourself to him alive. Strengthen the faith of all who doubt or waver in faith with the living Word of your gospel.

In you, Lord, is our hope. **Let us never be put to shame.**

Thomas confessed you as his Lord and his God. Open our lips to proclaim your goodness and faithfulness to others. Create faith in those who walk in darkness, and bring them into your light.

In you, Lord, is our hope. **Let us never be put to shame.**

Make us sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see. Keep our faith steadfast in you, that we never doubt, but enjoy the blessings of those who believe.

In you, Lord, is our hope. **Let us never be put to shame.**

Special petitions or intercessions may be prayed.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you the thoughts and cares from the depths of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, when your disciple Thomas doubted, you taught us how blessed it is to believe without seeing. Confirm us in the true faith, and move us to always serve you to your glory; you live and reign, now and forever.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 25:2.

Closing collect is adapted from a Mozarabic collect.

St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
December 26

[M03]

Lord Jesus Christ, in your tender mercy you send your servants to gather and serve your people. Hear the prayers of your servants. Be their rock and fortress. Lead and guide them.

Into your hands we commit our spirits; **deliver us, Lord, God of truth.**

Fill your servants with your grace and power, and fill their mouths with your wisdom as they speak your Word.

Into your hands we commit our spirits; **deliver us, Lord, God of truth.**

Hear our prayer for those who are persecuted because they confess you as Lord and King. Strengthen their faith, that they may hold on to you through all troubles, threats, and losses.

Into your hands we commit our spirits; **deliver us, Lord, God of truth.**

Give us a forgiving and merciful spirit, that we always speak the truth in love and pray for our enemies, confident that your Word will accomplish your purpose.

Into your hands we commit our spirits; **deliver us, Lord, God of truth.**

Be merciful to all who are in distress. As you comforted and strengthened Stephen with a vision of you in heaven, comfort and strengthen the dying, the sick, and all who suffer in mind or body. Hide them in the shelter of your presence. Show them the wonders of your love.

Into your hands we commit our spirits; **deliver us, Lord, God of truth.**

Special petitions or intercessions may be prayed.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you the thoughts and cares from the depths of our hearts.

Silent prayer.

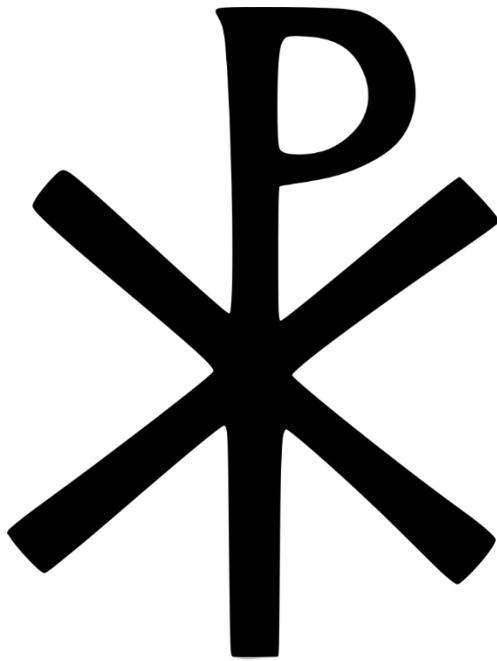
Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks and rejoice that you have given your crown of life to those who were faithful to you to the point of death. Give all your servants boldness and confidence to speak your Word, that they may be faithful witnesses to your gospel in their teaching, and show its fruits in life and death; you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 31:5

Occasions



Anniversary—Church

[Oc01]

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise for blessing the efforts of those who have gone before us, who established this congregation.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for those who planned, supported, and built this house where your Word is taught in its truth and purity, and you are worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for your servants who have led your people in worship here, who have preached your Word and administered your sacraments to build up your holy people.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for making this a place where people come to seek you, and we give you thanks and praise that here they find you in Word and sacrament.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for making our children your own in holy baptism,
for assuring us with your presence and forgiveness in your holy Supper,
for blessing the vows of husbands and wives who pledge their love to you and to each other,
and for the great comfort of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come
for our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for the teaching of your Word,
for those who have confessed their faith in Jesus Christ at your altar,
and for all who share in the life and work of your church.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

We give you thanks and praise for the peace of forgiveness of all our sins,
for giving your rest to the weary and burdened,
for the peace that passes all understanding,
for faith, courage, and Christian conviction, powered by your Word,
and for guidance and strength for our daily lives.

Not to us but to your name be the glory, **because of your love and faithfulness.**

You are good, O Lord, and your mercy endures forever.

You have built your church on the rock of Jesus Christ to give us an unchanging refuge
in changing and troubled times.

You have given us Christian friends for our journey toward our heavenly home.

For all the blessings you have given this congregation, we give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Psalm 115:1.

Christian Education

First Format

[Oc02A]

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you for blessing your Church among us with your word of salvation and eternal life. Since you have commanded us to feed your lambs, help us to bring up our children in all godly and useful knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. **Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

In your great goodness, preserve the teaching of your Word a blessing for us and for our children and for the generations after us. Remind us of the importance of a Christian education, and teach us to regard it as your Holy Spirit doing his work, increasing and strengthening the faith of our children. Move us to support the teaching of young and old with our prayers, our words, and our treasures.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. **Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

Bless our teachers with your Holy Spirit, that they may be faithful servants, always working for your glory by teaching our children your holy laws and gracious promises. Keep the heavenly goal of leading children to your arms always before us.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. **Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

Give our children humble and teachable hearts that they may love and respect their teachers, learn about your grace, and treasure your commandments and the knowledge of your love in their hearts. Let them be like trees planted by streams of water produce fruits of faith to your glory.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. **Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

Hold our children in your arms keep them to your heart. Preserve them from the evil in the world, and take them at last with us and all your chosen people into your eternal kingdom. Help us all to grow day by day in knowledge of you and in all good works, until we shall see you face to face, and know you even as we also are known, and with all the company in heaven give you praise, glory, and honor, now and forever.

Amen.

Notes:

Response is adapted from Proverbs 9:10.

Christian Education

Second Format

[Oc02B]

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you for blessing your Church among us with your word of salvation and eternal life. Since you have commanded us to feed your lambs, help us to bring up our children in all godly and useful knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

In your great goodness, preserve the teaching of your Word a blessing for us and for our children and for the generations after us. Remind us of the importance of a Christian education, and teach us to regard it as your Holy Spirit doing his work, increasing and strengthening the faith of our children.

Move us to support the teaching of young and old with our prayers, our words, and our treasures.

Bless our teachers with your Holy Spirit, that they may be faithful servants, always working for your glory by teaching our children your holy laws and gracious promises.

Keep the heavenly goal of leading children to your arms always before us.

Give our children humble and teachable hearts that they may love and respect their teachers, learn about your grace, and treasure your commandments and the knowledge of your love in their hearts.

Like trees planted by streams of water, let them produce fruits of faith to your glory.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

Hold our children in your arms keep them to your heart. Preserve them from the evil in the world, and take them at last with us and all your chosen people into your eternal kingdom. Help us all to grow day by day in knowledge of you and in all good works, until we shall see you face to face, and know you even as we also are known, and with all the company in heaven give you praise, glory, and honor, now and forever.

Amen.

Notes:

These prayers are based on “Dedication of a School” in *Liturgy and Agenda*, 1918, 1921, Concordia Publishing House. Prayer Oc09A and B have references to the school as an institution and as a building.

Confirmation

[Oc03]

Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and Teacher, look on *these brothers and sisters* who have studied your Word and now pledge their faithfulness to you.

Keep the teachings of your Word on their lips, in their hearts, and in their lives.

Joshua 1:8

O Lord our God, be with them wherever they go.

Joshua 1:9

Keep them steadfast in your Word. Keep them strong and courageous. *Joshua 1:6,7*

Your Holy Spirit has called them by your gospel and enlightened them with his gifts.

Strengthen and keep them in the one true faith. *2 Thessalonians 2:15*

Give them determination to fear, love and trust in you above all things.

Encourage and strengthen them in every good deed and word. *2 Thessalonians 2:17*

Special prayers or intercessions may be made.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you for teaching us your truth. Seal and preserve this testimony in our hearts and preserve us from all errors, so that we may remain steadfast in faith and obedience, always rejoicing in hope, and finally may obtain the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls; through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, our Lord.

Amen.

Notes:

Based on Confirmation Set 1 readings: Joshua 1:6-9, Psalm 119:129-136, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17, Luke 14:25-35

Closing collect is adapted from Wilhelm Loehe.

