

need.

We pray for the church throughout the world. Form us into communities of forgiveness and grace. Help us to notice where you are calling us into new relationships, and give us courage to embrace the uncomfortable and unfamiliar. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the earth and all its inhabitants. Protect lands at risk of wildfire and heal dying forests. Where fire brings destruction, raise up new growth. Guide us in tending precarious ecosystems. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern nations, tribes, and cities. Open them to the cries of people in need. Direct them in shaping policies that prioritize the health and well-being of all who struggle with hunger and housing insecurity. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all who are ill, all who are lonely or anxious, and all who grieve (especially). Draw them close to you and soothe them with the promise of your enduring love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for teachers, professors, librarians, school administrators, staff, and all who support the education of young people. Sustain them as they shape learning communities, rooted in equity and authenticity. We pray for children of all ages in their learning. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember our beloved dead (especially), who with the great cloud of witnesses bear witness to your saving grace. Accompany us in our pilgrimage of faith, that we too place our hope and trust in you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Sunday, September 15: 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Prayer of the Day

O God, through suffering and rejection you bring forth our salvation, and by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

⁹It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

¹I love the LORD, who has | heard my voice,
and listened to my | supplication,
²for the LORD has given | ear to me
whenev- | er I called.
³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave | came
upon me;

I came to | grief and sorrow.

⁴Then I called upon the name | of the LORD:

“O LORD, I pray you, | save my life.”

⁵Gracious is the | LORD and righteous;

our God is full | of compassion.

⁶The LORD watches o- | ver the innocent;

I was brought low, | and God saved me.

⁷Turn again to your rest, | O my soul.

for the LORD has dealt | well with you.

⁸For you have rescued my | life from death,

my eyes from tears, and my | feet from stumbling;

⁹I will walk in the presence | of the LORD

in the land | of the living.

Second Reading: James 3:1-12

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters,
for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater
strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes
no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body
in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to
make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships:
though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet
they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot
directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great
exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue
is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of
iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature,
and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird,
of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the

human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil,
full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and
with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From
the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and
sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the
same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my
brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can
salt water yield fresh.

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea
Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people
say that I am?” ²⁸And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and
others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹He asked
them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You
are the Messiah.” ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone
about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo
great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and
the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said
all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke
him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter
and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not
on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If
any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and
take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save
their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and
for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them
to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can
they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me
and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them
the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory
of his Father with the holy angels.”

Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with
confidence for the church, God’s good creation, and all who are in