

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH—LENT

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

**We confess that without your love we are lost.**

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

**Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.**

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

**By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.**

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

**Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.**

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

**Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.**

Hear us as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## ALTERNATE OPENING FOR LENT

*Lent stresses penitential preparation for the celebration of Easter. Therefore, traditionally, the “Gloria” song is omitted in Lent, as well as the use of the word “Alleluia” (reflected in our seasonal Gospel Acclamation). To replace the “Gloria,” we will follow this opening of service, which utilizes verses from hymn 916, “Today Your Mercy Calls Us.” These verses bring to mind our Lord’s loving call to repentance. This opening also uses alternate pastoral parts of the spoken “Kyrie,” recalling various thematic elements that will come up in the season of Lent.*

### OPENING HYMN

*Stand*

### INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION (FORGIVENESS)

When God’s children rebel and wander from his ways, he desires that they return to him for pardon and peace through his Son. The courts of heaven resound with joy when a single wayward child returns home.

**There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**

*Luke 15:10*

Children of God, the time to turn to our Father for forgiveness is now. God made Christ our sin that we might become his righteousness. He implores us to be reconciled to him, promising:

**In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.**

*2 Corinthians 5:21-6:2*

*The congregation sings: (Hymn 916, v3)*

**Today our Father calls us, his Holy Spirit waits;**

**his blessed angels gather around the heav’nly gates.**

**No question will be asked us how often we have come;**

**although we oft have wandered, it is our Father’s home.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*The congregation sings: (Hymn 916, v2)*

**Today your gate is open, and all who enter in**

**shall find a Father's welcome and pardon for their sin.**

**The past shall be forgotten, a present joy be giv'n,**

**a future grace be promised, a glorious crown of heav'n.**

**LORD, HAVE MERCY (KYRIE)**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For minds set on heavenly things, for hearts that long for heavenly glory, and for the will to bear our earthly crosses, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the gifts of humility and repentance, for faith that finds security in Christ and does not use God's patience as an excuse for sin, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For perspective to see that, apart from Christ, gain is loss, and in Christ, loss is gain, and for the perseverance to press on and take hold of our heavenly prize, let

us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

*The congregation sings: (Hymn 916, v4)*

**O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,**

**what should we do without you when heart and eye run o'er?**

**When all things seem against us, to drive us to despair,**

**we know one gate is open, one ear will hear our prayer.**

*The Service continues with the Prayer of the Day.*



*The image above serves to center our thoughts on the season of Lent. It is based on themes and images found in the Lenten gospel accounts over the three years of the lectionary (rotation of readings for church). It also serves as a visual reflection of the proper preface for Lent (see pg. 166 in the hymnal). The result is a dramatic image that contrasts a "before and after" and "light and dark" theme meant to show the striking contrast between the first Adam and the Second. Images associated with temptation fill the dark half of the image while images associated with new life in Christ fill the light half. A central "tree of the cross" links the two sides.*