

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Without the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we would be unable to bear the burdens of physical afflictions. You have changed our despair into expectation by the assurance of Your salvation. All Your promises are made certain in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Send us Your Holy Spirit that He will keep us firm in our faith. Help us recognize the real needs of others, and bless our efforts toward meeting those needs. Allow us to hear the Word of Jesus to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we would be primarily concerned for their spiritual needs. Bless our heart and tongue that we would greet those who visit our church as brothers and sisters.

To that end we pray for the well being of Your Church throughout the world: that we would be guided and governed by Your Good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians are led in the way of the truth. Send down on all Ministers of the Gospel and the congregations committed to their care the healthful spirit of Your grace.

We further implore You to look in mercy on all who have needs, all who have any affliction of body, mind or spirit. Give them patience in the midst of their suffering, and a happy release from their afflictions. Be with those who are traveling this day, and especially we pray for those of our brothers and sisters who could not be with us as we praise Your Holy name.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**

Bless our nation with peace, and help us dwell in harmony with Your will. Help us as Your Church fulfill our primary mission and assure us of Your presence. In Jesus' name we pray.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY SEVEN

Chant Tone



Introit

The Lord is merciful and —gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love.

Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and all that is within me, bless His
| holy name!

Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and forget not all His | benefits,
Who forgives all your in | iquity,*
Who heals all your dis — eases,
Who redeems your life | from the pit,*
Who crowns you with steadfast
love and — mercy,
Who satisfies | you with good*
so that your youth is renewed like
the — eagle's.

He does not deal with us according to
our sins,*
nor repay us according to our
iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above
the Earth,*
so great is His steadfast love toward
those who — fear Him;
as far as the east is from the west,*
so far does He remove our
transgressions from us.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

The Lord is merciful and —gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in
| steadfast love.

(Antiphon, Psalm 103:8;
Psalm 103:1-5, 10-12)

Collect of the Day

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all — nations!*

Extol Him, all — peoples!

For great is His | Love toward us,*
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for —ever.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His name,*
bring an offering and come in | to His courts!

(Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Dear God, in You I live if I am to be alive. I confess I am filled with sadness. I have lost the sense of joy. I have become sick of today, and I do not care about tomorrow. I feel the hours drag on. God, my Father, release me from this emptiness. In the midst of this oppressive weakness, restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Remind me of the cross on which Your Son bore the guilt of my sin. Remind me of the empty tomb by which He gained for me the freedom to live. Help me live in the joy of my freedom and prepare me to meet every new day, every new task and even the terrors of this world with joy and confidence. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

WE OFTEN OVER PROMISE AND UNDER PERFORM. It is something of a human condition. Much of the time we over promise because we intend to perform. Sometimes we simply lied to look better. God fulfills what He promises. In fact if anything God makes a promise and then over performs. As God, Jesus fulfilled the entire will, purpose and law of God, and then took that over performance, (faithfulness) and gave it to us as our faith. In the power of the Holy Spirit that faith is seen by God the Father just-as-if we did the works of Jesus. In the water and word of our Baptism we have been changed into the faith-filled believers who have Heaven as their home, guaranteed in the work and person of Jesus.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Your Sins Are Forgiven

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 103:8;) Psalm 103:1-5, 10-12

In Psalm 103, David gave thanks for the benefit of the confidence that we are God's children. In our verses for today we praise Him for all the blessings and benefits we receive through Jesus, especially the forgiveness of our many sins (all that keeps us from God.)

COLLECT

After some 40 year we returned to the historic prayer. We very simply ask to be protected from our personal struggles against sin that attempt to tear us away from God.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 43:18-25

My two favorite commentators divide Isaiah 43 into four parts. We have taken the middle out of parts two and three which gives us two thoughts.

1. "God's people know the power of his grace, the sweetness of his comforts, the kind care of his providence, and the truth of his promise." (Matthew Henry) 2. God "will undertake Himself the entire and complete blotting out of the guilt of His people. (John Peter Lange) Things were not going well for the people (because of their sin.) God's promise, of a Savior, continued even in the face of their doubts.

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

Psalm 117 (written anonymously speaks of things that would make the Jews uncomfortable, especially the praise of "all nations," as acceptable to God. Psalm 96 (likely written by David) was sung as the Ark was moved into Jerusalem. It looks beyond that event to the reign of the Christ and especially when the Gentiles will join in the celebration of the kingdom. Together we find our expectation and assurance of sins forgiven.

EPISTLE LESSON—2 Corinthians 1:18-22

In the final verses of 1 Corinthians, Paul told them he would come to visit. For some reason that visit didn't happen. They appear to have suggested that he had misled them and they were questioning all of his word. Without calling them petulant children, Paul told them that Jesus, because He is God, was always correct, He always had the truth "in him it is always Yes." Whereas Paul had only told them what he was planning to do, Jesus was doing God's Plan of salvation. Therefore, the Gospel of Jesus is not subject to a "Yes and No" argument, but is only the "Yes" of Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL LESSON—Mark 2:1-12

"Which is easier, to say...'Your sins are forgiven,' or...'Rise...and walk?'" Honestly, the first is more important. Forgiveness from Jesus means that you are made one with the plan of salvation, you get to declare Heaven as