

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, HANOVER, PA

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Prayer of the Day

Leader: O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Cong.: Amen.

The First Reading: Isaiah 65:1-9

¹I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask,
to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, "Here I am, here I am,"
to a nation that did not call on my name.

²I held out my hands all day long
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;

³a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and offering incense on bricks;

⁴who sit inside tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat swine's flesh,
with broth of abominable things in their vessels;

⁵who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."

These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all day long.

⁶See, it is written before me:
I will not keep silent, but I will repay;

I will indeed repay into their laps

⁷their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together,
says the LORD;

because they offered incense on the mountains
and reviled me on the hills,

I will measure into their laps

full payment for their actions.

⁸Thus says the LORD:

As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, "Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,"

so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.

⁹I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;
my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall settle there.

Psalms 22:19-28 (read responsively)

¹⁹But you, O LORD, be not | far away;
O my help, hasten | to my aid.

²⁰**Deliver me | from the sword,
my life from the power | of the dog.**

²¹Save me from the | lion's mouth!
From the horns of wild bulls you have | rescued me.

²²**I will declare your name | to my people;
in the midst of the assembly | I will praise you. R**

²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's | line, give glory.
Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- | spring of Israel.

²⁴**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their
poverty; neither is the LORD's face hid- | den from them;
but when they cry out, | the LORD hears them.**

²⁵From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live
forever! R**

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

²⁸**For dominion belongs | to the LORD,
who rules o- | ver the nations. R**

The Second Reading: Galatians 3:23-29

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

The Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

²⁶Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”—²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Prayers of the People

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their need.

(A brief silence.)

Leader: Gracious God, we pray for the church. Keep us faithful to you, so that your people may stand as your witnesses to proclaim all that you have done for us in Jesus Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the well-being of creation. You have made us in your image and to be your stewards. Guide us, strengthen us, and abide with us that we may serve You alone in all that we think, say, and do. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the nations. Share your word and wisdom with governments, humanitarian institutions, and local church partnerships, and give us courage to cast what is evil and contrary to your will and your ways. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Be with those who know demons of any kind, and clothe us all together in Christ's Word of freedom and compassion. Especially we ask your Spirit's presence with all those we lift before you now in the earnest prayers of our hearts. (P-A-U-S-E) Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for this congregation. Restore our faith in You alone, and in your sacred word. Strengthen us to be servants of your love, and bless those who stand against tyranny everywhere. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

(Here other intercessions may be offered.)

Leader: O God, you have called the saints your own. Gather us, with them, into your kingdom, in the promise of life forever with you. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Cong.: Amen.