



# Celebrate

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

February 16, 2025

*Blessings and curses abound on the sixth Sunday after Epiphany. We would do well to listen closely to whom the “blessed are” and the “woe to” are directed and to find our place in the crowd among those who desire to touch Jesus. The risen Christ stands among us in the mystery of the holy supper with an invitation to live in him, and offers power to heal us all.*

## Prayer of the Day

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Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Jeremiah 17:5-10

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*These verses compose a poem that is part of a larger collection of wisdom sayings that contrast two ways of life. Life with God brings blessing; the power and vitality of God are active in our life. Life without God brings a curse, the power of death.*

Thus says the LORD:

Cursed are those who trust in mere  
mortals  
and make mere flesh their  
strength,  
whose hearts turn away from  
the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>They shall be like a shrub in the  
desert,  
and shall not see when relief  
comes.

They shall live in the parched  
places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are those who trust in  
the LORD,  
whose trust is the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>They shall be like a tree planted  
by water,  
sending out its roots by the  
stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not  
anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

<sup>9</sup>The heart is devious above all else;  
it is perverse—  
who can understand it?

<sup>10</sup>I the LORD test the mind  
and search the heart,  
to give to all according to their ways,  
according to the fruit of their  
doings.



They are like trees plant-ed by streams of wa - ter.

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel <sup>1</sup> of the wicked,  
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats <sup>1</sup> of the scornful!

<sup>2</sup>**Their delight is in the law <sup>1</sup> of the LORD,  
and they meditate on God's teaching <sup>1</sup> day and night. R**

<sup>3</sup>They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that <sup>1</sup> do not wither;  
everything they <sup>1</sup> do shall prosper.

<sup>4</sup>**It is not so <sup>1</sup> with the wicked;  
they are like chaff which the wind <sup>1</sup> blows away.**

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when <sup>1</sup> judgment comes,  
nor the sinner in the council <sup>1</sup> of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>**For the LORD knows the way <sup>1</sup> of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked shall <sup>1</sup> be destroyed. R**

*For Paul, the resurrection of Christ is the basis for Christian hope. Because Christ has been raised, those who are in Christ know that they too will be raised to a new life beyond death.*

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup>If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; <sup>14</sup>and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. <sup>15</sup>We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it

is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup>For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. <sup>17</sup>If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup>But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Gospel

Luke 6:17-26

*After choosing his twelve apostles, Jesus teaches a crowd of followers about the nature and demands of discipleship. He begins his great sermon with surprising statements about who is truly blessed in the eyes of God.*

[Jesus] came down with [the twelve] and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup>They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup>And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

<sup>20</sup>Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom  
of God.

<sup>21</sup>“Blessed are you who are  
hungry now,  
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup>“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

<sup>24</sup>“But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your  
consolation.

<sup>25</sup>“Woe to you who are full now,  
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing  
now,

for you will mourn and weep.

<sup>26</sup>“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

## Prayers of Intercession

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The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Blessed is your church transformed by your Spirit. Give us courage to proclaim to all people the promises made true in the death and resurrection of Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed is creation. As earth experiences destruction from harmful practices and climate change, give us courage to help bring about its restoration. Encourage those who work in forestry to be a voice for the hidden places of creation and provide skills for its conservation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed are the nations. We pray for presidents, prime ministers, and leaders of nations. Grant that their courage will not run dry in the face of challenge, but that they will delight in the fountain of your righteousness. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** Psalm 120. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Martin Luther, renewer of the church, 1546) 2 Corinthians 1:12-19. **Wednesday** Jeremiah 22:11-17. **Thursday** Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40. **Friday** 1 John 2:12-17. **Saturday** Luke 12:57-59. **Seventh Sunday after Epiphany** (commemoration of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156) Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38.

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Blessed are those in need. Give to all facing illness wise and caring doctors, nurses, and therapists. Draw close to those who feel far from you or who are suffering in any way (*especially*). Provide an extra measure of your grace and love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed is this congregation. Like a tree planted by streams of water, we are nourished by faith in you. Provide courage in times that feel dry, trusting that you sustain us in many ways. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Blessed are those saints who now rest in your peace. Through lives of both sorrow and joy, challenge and triumph, they provide witness of faith in all times. May their lives be a witness to the living. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people.  
**Amen.**