

Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families, and in other settings. When more than one person is present, the versicles and responses may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. Prayers that are in bold type are to be prayed by all.

March 22nd, 2020 A.D. – The Fourth Sunday in Lent

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Opening Versicles

In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;

In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.

Psalm 5:3

My mouth is filled with Your praise,

and with Your glory all the day.

Psalm 71:8

O Lord, open my lips,

and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Psalm 51:15

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

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located on Bethany's website (www.bethanycr.org) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson – Matthew 6:24-34

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so

clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Sermon – *See attached copy at the end of the order of service.*

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life † everlasting. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Please pray for the sick, our medical professionals, and all others close to you.

† **Thanksgiving**

Noah (grandson of Bonnie Bubke)- Born 2/26, *David Jasper- Recovering after surgery

† **For Strength, Comfort & Wisdom**

Virus containment, Maryellen (mother of *Tina Freese)- Cancer reoccurrence, Family Promise Families Sharp family- Missionaries to Uruguay, Bethany’s Staff & Lay Leadership

† **Healing**

*Dave Christian- Recovering after hospitalization, Carolyn (mother of *Mary Vezina)- Shingles, Doug Sorenson (former member)- Rehab after surgery, Katie (daughter of *Mike & *Lora Raymon)- Recovering after surgery, *John Hamm- Recovering after hospitalization, *Dave Johnson- Recovering after surgery, *Kris Dunn- Health issues, *Vern Happel- Health issues, *Brenda Heims- Recovering after surgery, *Joyce Fritz- Health issues, *Bonnie Bubke- Recovering at home after hospitalization, *Betty Hein- Recovering at home, *Stephanie Macke- Recovering after radiation treatments, *Nadine Wax- Recovering at home, *Al Bachman- Cancer treatments

† **Our Homebound Member:** *Ann Meyer- Terrace Glen, Marion

‡ **Grief (Comfort for family and friends of)**

Gary Arp (former IDE President) -Died 3/12, Jason Hahn (son of *Cindy Broadwater)- Died 3/7, Pastor Gallo (friend of Ackermans)- Died 3/7

‡ **Prayers for Safety**

Taylor (grandson of *Kim Neuhaus)- Marines, Charlie (grandson of *Kim Neuhaus)- Army,

Concluding Prayers

Almighty God, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day be well pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Together we pray... **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon for March 22nd, 2020 A.D.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the † Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To say that this last week has been unique, may be the understatement of my life. Last Sunday many of us were going about our business as usual - gathering for worship, making plans for the week, and whatever else it is that we normally do on Sunday. But then, in the course of what seemed just a few days if not hours, everything changed. For almost 18 years I have invited, pleaded, sometimes even begged people to come to church for Sunday services – but this last week we cancelled those services and encouraged people to practice social distancing. The economy, healthy and robust a short time ago, is suffering – the stock market is way down and many people's jobs are threatened or already gone. And people, even faithful Christians, are suffering. Perhaps some from illness, some from fear, almost all from uncertainty. Times have certainly changed from just a week ago.

And yet last week, I realized in some ways, things are still the same. It was Tuesday evening and after I arrived home Christine asked me to take the garbage out – like I said, some things never change. But in addition to that, when I was outside I noticed something that I hadn't noticed for a long time. I noticed that the birds were singing! In the trees and on the powerlines, they were singing as loudly as I had heard them for months. They didn't seem to care about Covid-19. They didn't worry about the stock market or supplies in the stores. After a long winter and with spring right around the corner, it seems that the birds were out enjoying the beautiful day God had given them.

In our Gospel Lesson for today from Matthew 6, Jesus points out the birds of the air and reminds us that we are worth so much more to God. And if God takes care of these creatures, do we think that He won't take care of us? Will the Father, who sent His Son to die on the cross while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), leave us when we call to Him in our time of need? Of course not! But Jesus tells us when we are worried about our food, our clothes, the safety of our homes, our families, and ourselves – He says, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (Matthew 6:33).

Now to be clear, Jesus is not teaching us a “theology of glory” here. He is not saying seek the kingdom and you'll have everything your heart desires. He is talking about the necessities of life, which in the past, we have often confused with our wants. But even with this promise, Jesus is also not saying that there will never be times of need. When Jesus talked about the birds and the lilies in our Gospel lesson, His hearers knew that sometimes birds get sick or eaten by predators. Lilies often succumb to drought and disease. But God still takes care of them and He always takes care of us.

This doesn't mean that there will never be difficult times. God works according to His ways and not ours. Therefore, there will be times of sickness, times of financial trouble, times of worry and fear. But knowing that God loves us, that the Son of God died for us, we can be confident that God will provide what we need. So do not worry! And seek the kingdom of God.

Some may ask, “What does seeking the kingdom of God” look like when we are being told to social distance and stay home as much as possible? Well, it means to live life in response to what to what Jesus has done for you. It means putting our worries aside, knowing that Christ has died for our sin, so that no matter what happens ahead, the victory over death and evil belongs to us through Christ. Seeking the kingdom of God today means listening to the authorities whom God has placed over us, so that we might engage in the best practices to help our community and nation. Seeking the kingdom means praying – for the sick, for our leaders, for all our medical workers, knowing that God hears our prayers and answers them according to His will. Seeking the kingdom means helping where we can – not only praying, but also checking in on our friends and neighbors, and putting aside our wants so that other might have their needs.

And finally, seeking the Kingdom means being in the Word of God and receiving His sacraments. This is difficult during these times, but needed now more than ever. In terms of receiving Holy Communion, we're working on that and will have more information out to everyone shortly. In the meantime, I would encourage all of you to continue or start reading God's Word daily as part of your devotional life. Also, take full advantage of the resources proclaiming the Gospel message that are being sent out from our congregation and share them with others when you can. I myself feel the sense of loss of not being with our brothers and sisters in Christ during this time. But when I am in the Word, God promises me that I am with Him. And if you are in the Word and with God too, then in a very real way we remain together even when we're apart.

Things have certainly changed since last week, and it appears that they will continue to do so for quite some time. But remember, the birds are still out singing. So don't worry, but seek the kingdom of God. Because God is still in charge and if He loves and cares for the birds, He will certainly take care of us. Amen!

And now may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds forever in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.