



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**April 28, 2024 A.D.**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

*This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the psalm 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. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.*

*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.**

## Psalm

*From John 16 and Psalm 145*

**P** A little while, and you will see me no longer;

**C** **and again a little while, and you will see me.**

I will extol you, my God and King,

**and bless your name forever and ever.**

Every day I will bless you

**and praise your name forever and ever.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful,

**slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,

**and all your saints shall bless you!**

My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,

**and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.**

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

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## Scripture Lesson

*(John 15:1-8)*

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the

fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

### Sermon

✠ *The Vine & The Branches* ✠ *(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

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### 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.**

### Bethany's Prayer List

#### **Entrusting into God's Care**

- Jena (friend of Ann Balvanz) - hospice care
- Chuck Stoelting - hospice care
- Mickie Sjullie - employment search
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

#### **Healing**

- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Debbie (sister of Phil Hedtke) - health issues
- David (father of Chris Frampton) - health issues

- Tina Freese - recovering after surgery
- Bonnie Bubke - recovering after hospitalization
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Erin Wilson - recovering after surgery
- Marvie Foreman - recovering after surgery
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Ron Prescott - health issues
- Kris Dunn - recovering after surgery
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

### **Homebound**

- Cindy Broadwater - at home

### **Mourning, friends and family of**

- Vic (friend of Ken Armbrecht) - died 4/19
- Jeffrey Jasper - died 4/13
- Rev. Paul Scheidt (Asst. Pastor at Bethany 2000-2010) - died 4/5

### **Serving Our Country**

- Amber (daughter of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, stationed in RI
- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard
- Devon (friend of Hedtkes and Chitticks) - deployed to Korea

### **Collect of the Day**

Let us pray... O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Concluding Prayers**

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**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.**



✠ *The Vine & The Branches* ✠

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

There is a danger for Christians in thinking that if things are going well for us, that our relationship with God must be OK. Conversely, another, perhaps more serious, danger exists in thinking that if we are facing severe trials and temptations that God has somehow turned His back to us or abandoned us. In this morning's Gospel lesson from John 15, Jesus helps correct these misunderstandings.

His teaching from our Gospel lesson this morning is pretty clear. He says that He is the vine, we are the branches, and God the Father is the vinedresser – the one that takes care of the whole plant. If a branch does not bear fruit the Vinedresser cuts it off from the vine and throws it into the fire to be burned and destroyed. But if a vine does bear fruit, it is not left alone, rather it is pruned so that it may bear even more fruit.

In regards to this teaching Martin Luther wrote that to our sorrow we will always see that in the Church there be some wild and useless branches that bear nothing but immature fruit, which ultimately must be rejected. It is true, they may have come from the vine; but they do not remain there. These people are baptized, they hear the Gospel, and they have the forgiveness of sins. At first, as Christ says, they are on the vine, that is, they are in Him. But as time goes on, they regress into wild offshoots and are Christians in name only. To be sure, they use God's Word, seem to glorify Him, but only make use of and enjoy the sap of others. Consequently, they can develop into rather large branches. They want to be honored and acclaimed as the best of Christians. They often display their Christianity where everyone can see it and can put on an appearance that outdoes all the rest. But it is all sham, and one day they will be exposed for what they are: decayed wood without true sap and strength. They do not teach and confess the Word properly; or even if they do, they fail to conform their lives to it. For them their faith is all make-believe. These are the branches that do not bear fruit and the Vinedresser will take them away.

But the Vinedresser does not destroy the branches that actually bear fruit. Rather He prunes them. If you are not familiar with taking care of grape vines or pruning, Jesus is saying that an able vinedresser is not content with a good vine and true branches; He would like to have vines and branches that bear a lot of fruit. Therefore He quickly works on them, to trimming and pruning them, to remove the unnecessary leaves; He aids and tends them to improve their growth and fertility.

God does the same thing with every Christian on His vine, whether he is pastor, a choir member, or a child in Sunday School. He does not let her be idle but sends her trials which compel

her to exercise her faith. He lets the devil and the world hound her with temptations from within and from without. But it is through all of this that God purifies and trims the branches, making them stronger and better. All of this is done that they may bear all the more fruit; that they may praise God all the more, pray, preach, and confess. Then the Word and its power will increase everywhere. The result will be fruit that is not only large and perfect but, as Christ says here, also abundant.

Therefore, we should not worry if we suffer or are tempted and harassed—whether inwardly by the terror and fear with which the devil would like to bring Christians to disbelief or despair and embitter their life to such an extent that they walk away in sadness; or outwardly by the world with violence, tyranny, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, or loss of life. All this must promote and serve the strengthening of a Christian’s faith and make him more resolute to resist and overcome the devil. For by such trials he is driven to seek help and comfort in God’s Word and to exercise and increase his faith by prayer and devotion – to become all the stronger in knowledge and all the more humble, all the more patient and perfect. Thus, as it has been said before, God uses all trials and sufferings, not for the Church’s harm, as the devil and the world intend, but for its welfare, so that it may be purified and improved, and bear much fruit for the Vinedresser.

The fruit that the church and Christians are to bear is described for us in St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians. In chapter 5 he writes, “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” While these fruits are things that everyone wants to have, Jesus tells us that apart from Him they are impossible to bring about. Some may argue here that there are plenty of people today who show love and patience and goodness and yet are separated from Christ. How then can Jesus say that apart from Him we can do nothing? But here we must remember to look at the fruits of people from God’s perspective and not our own. Two people may appear to do the exact same thing, show the same love and patience, yet only the one attached to the True Vine of Jesus is actually bearing fruit.

It’s as if a mother tells her three children to clean their rooms. All three spend the time making their beds and picking up the clutter. But the first does it expecting a generous reward, perhaps an extra piece of desert. The second child cleans their room out of fear of being punished, knowing that if they don’t they might be grounded or something even worse. But the third child know how much their mother loves all of her children and so, without expecting a reward or fearing their mother’s anger, is happy to clean up their room. Now, which child bore good fruit according the mother’s eyes. What would be the motivation we would want our children to have? Fear? Rewards? Or Love?

From God’s perspective, Christians bear fruit when they love, show patience and kindness, are gentle and self-controlled, have and are willing to share joy and peace with others, because they know they are loved by God. Christians show the fruit of the Spirit not out of fear from Hell or expecting to earn their way into Heaven. Jesus says in the Gospel lesson that we are already clean! Christ has already died on the cross, already rose from the grave, Hell is not an option and we are going to heaven because our sins are already forgiven! This is what God’s Word teaches us and is the reason Christ abides in us, and we abide in Hm. To bear the good fruit that Jesus wants us to, stay close to Jesus by staying close to His Word. Not expecting the glory of Heaven if you do, or thinking that your fruit will keep you from Hell. Bear fruit as a good branch attached to the True Vine of Jesus because He loves you, and all of the promises of salvation and forgiveness are already yours. Amen.