



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

January 26, 2025 A.D. Third Sunday after Epiphany

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 Psalm 102)

You will arise and have pity on Zion;
it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come.
Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD:
that he looked down from his holy height;
from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,
to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die,
that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD,
and in Jerusalem his praise,
when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

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 Sermons tab and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Luke 4:16-30)

¹⁶[Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.*

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²²And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." ²⁴And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. ²⁵But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, he went away.

Sermon

(A copy is included at the end of this service.)

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.

Bethany's Prayer List

Entrusting into God's Care

- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Stephani (daughter of Mary Nanke)- cancer surgery & treatment
- Mitch Myers - recovering after surgery
- Harold Schoen - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery

- Paul LeFevere - recovering after hospitalization
- Tom Larson - health issues
- Everly Zimmerman - knee injury
- Phillip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Dave Christian - cancer treatment
- John Hamm - recovering at assisted living in Waukee
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Dorothy Freese - Keystone Place

Mourning, friends and family of

- Kenton Zenor - died 1/4
- Fred Henkelmann - died 12/25

Serving Our Country

- Aiden (grandson of Foremans) - US Army
- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (dght of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, stationed in Germany
- 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, Germany
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard

Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; 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

Lord God, gracious and merciful Father, because You have promised to hear us when we bring You our cares, we implore You not to deal with us according to our sins but according to Your mercy. Send seasonable weather so that in due time the earth may yield her increase. Remind us ever to receive with thanks our daily bread, trusting You as our Gracious God; 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.



Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

As Jesus entered the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth, He no doubt recognized many familiar faces from His childhood. Gathered in this building were the men, women, and children that He had grown up with – merchants, friends, babysitters – all sorts of people that surrounded Him before He left home to begin in public ministry. But in addition to having known Jesus from His childhood, there was one other thing about this group of people gathered in the synagogue that was particularly important. Those gathered to hear Jesus teach were Jews. They were and looked upon themselves as part of God’s chosen people. They were a people chosen by God out the nations of the world to bless all other people. They were special, they knew it, and they wouldn’t hesitate to tell you about it.

So, when Jesus started teaching in the synagogue that day everything went well at first. He read a portion of Isaiah that described a special time of God’s favor. It would be a time when the poor would finally hear Good News, the blind would have their sight restored, that captives would be freed, and those who were oppressed would be liberated. And Jesus told them that because He had come, today was that day. Jesus told them that He would be the One who would bring this time of God’s favor, and the people in the synagogue were amazed. They asked, “How could Jesus be the One whom God would use it such a fantastic way”, after all, He was Joseph the carpenter’s son. But regardless of their amazement, they believed what Jesus had said and spoke well of Him. And it was here that Jesus’ teaching that day started to rub God’s chosen people the wrong way. For the people to whom Jesus was speaking knew God would be with them and they were waiting for a great leader chosen by God, a messiah, to restore the nation of Israel to its’ former glory.

But that is not what Jesus was teaching about in that synagogue. Even though He was the Messiah sent by God, He did not come to free people from Roman Rule or liberate people from credit card debt. Although He did at times give sight to the blind, that was not the reason He was Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. Instead He came to free people from their sin. He came to liberate those who were held by guilt and feelings of inadequacy before their fellow man and even God. The ultimate sight that Jesus would give would allow people to see that they are not part of the kingdom of heaven because Abraham is their grandfather or because they live really good lives, but because they trust that Jesus died on the cross for them. That when Jesus hung there nailed to the cross, even though He healed and fed many and even commanded the wind and the waves, He did not “heal thyself”. This was the type of Messiah that Jesus was, and He knew that the people wouldn’t like it.

But Jesus was in good company as He sat there in that synagogue, for people always have a tendency to reject those who share in God's Word in truth and purity. The nation of Israel rejected Elijah and Elisha, the great Old Testament prophets. In their time God's chosen people wouldn't listen to them, so God sent His great prophets to a widow and leper who would - even though they were not Jews, but Gentiles. By reminding the synagogue crowd of the two prophets, Jesus is saying the same thing will happen to Him. Even the people from His hometown may reject Him, but He will nevertheless go to the cross and take this Good News anywhere and everywhere that people will hear it.

We need to hear this message today more than ever. I know that this sounds a little harsh, but whether we are speaking of ourselves as individuals, a congregation, or even a community or a country, it is clear that God does not need us. He loves us, and He wants us to be with Him. If you doubt this just think of His own Son on the cross dying for you and ask if you would do that for those who have rejected you. But, if we turn away from God, He will go to those who do not reject Him. In Elijah's day and Jesus' day and even in St. Paul's when the Jews rejected God and His Word, God worked with and amongst the most unlikely of all people: a Sidonite, a Syrian, Corinthians, Ephesians - people who were not Jews, but believed the Word of God and therefore became His people.

As we stay in God's Word through things like family or individual devotions at home, listening to the Scripture readings and Sunday School and Bible Study, we need to accept Jesus for the type of Savior that He is. Now at first this sounds a little ridiculous, but like the synagogue crowd in our Gospel lesson, we all have an idea of what Jesus is suppose to be like and we get ticked off if someone, maybe even Jesus Himself, tells us that He isn't like that! If we are at war, we want Jesus to be a fearless, conquering general. If we are sick, we want Jesus to be a skillful doctor or a caring nurse. If we don't have enough money, we look for Jesus to be a rich uncle who will help us win the lottery or at the casino.

It sort of reminds me when many of us were children and we would talk about our fathers. Out on the playground I use to brag that my father was the toughest, meanest guy in town. He was in the Army and could beat up anyone who made him mad or disrespected me. But when I broke his thermometer one day, I wanted dad to be gentle, meek and forgiving. Often children want their parents to act and behave in ways that fit their own selfish needs, and not in ways that they need.

And so it is with many of our attitudes about Jesus Christ. We want Him to be the type of God we want, not what we need. But just as immaturity of children give them a hard time distinguishing between needs and wants, sin blinds us as well. Our sinful nature leads us to believe that we need a God who will cure every illness, lead us to victory in every war, never let our hearts be broken or our bank accounts get too low. But the best thing about the type of God and Savior that Jesus really is, is better than anything we could ever dream of! For sin makes us think that we are sinless. But God cuts through our sin and misconceptions with His Word. And there we see not only that we are sinners. But that God washes away our sin with the holy and innocent blood of the Messiah - Jesus Christ. Amen.

