



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

May 10th, 2020 A.D. – The Fifth 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 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. 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.

Opening Psalm *Psalm 130*

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!

² **O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!**

³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ **But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.**

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

⁶ **my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.**

⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.

⁸ **And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.**

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 – Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60



⁶ Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will

appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”
⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

^{7:2a} And Stephen said:

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Sermon – *Seeing the Son of Man (A copy is included at the end of this 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

Bethany's Prayer List

Those suffering during the pandemic; the homeless; the unemployed; our medical professionals and first responders; workers in the Church, here and throughout the world; Thanksgiving for Mothers; Jill (daughter of Dick & Karen Hass) - *Recovering after surgery*, Joyce Fritz-*Recovering after hospitalization*; Izzy (granddaughter of Mary Nanke) - *Health issues*, Zoe (granddaughter of Mary Nanke) - *Cornea transplant 5/11*, DeWayne (father of Steve Hanchera) *Recovering after hospitalization*, Mary Lou (mother of Becky Thur) - *health issues*, Shirley Deetz - *recovering at home after hospitalization*, Richard Pfeil - *recovering at home after hospitalization*; Bev Linman - *recovering from illness*, Dave Christian - *recovering after hospitalization*; Bonnie Bubke - *recovery of strength*; John Hamm - *recovering after surgery*; Kris Dunn - *health issues*; Brenda Heims - *recovering after surgery*; Betty Hein- *recovering at home*; Stephanie Macke - *recovering after radiation treatments*; Nadine Wax - *recovering at home*; Al Bachman – *cancer*; Homebound: Del & Dee Block- Summit Point, Marion. Rob Willms- *mourning the death of his mother, Jeanette*, Shirley Hansen- *Died 4/29*, Amanda Segebart - *mourning the death of her grandfather, Harold*; Mark Bornemann – *mourning the death of his nephew, Nathan*; Aaron Moffett – *mourning the death of his friend, Tod*; Taylor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) – *servicing in the U.S. Armed Forces*.

Collect of the Day

Dear Heavenly Father, may we, the sheep of your pasture, during this crisis and all the days of our life continue to hear the voice of our Good Shepherd, Your Son Jesus Christ, and follow Him to the abundant life that He promises here and into eternity. In His name we pray.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Heavenly Father, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts to direct and rule us according to Your will, to comfort us in all our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into all truth; 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.



✠ *Seeing the Son of Man* ✠

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

In today's Scripture reading from the book of Acts, St. Luke introduces to us a very important Christian named Stephen. Perhaps best known for being the first Christian martyr, the life and death of Stephen can provide helpful insights and guidance for every Christian who suffers today. And whether it be from persecution because of our faith or isolation and unemployment from the virus, Christians are suffering today, right along with everyone else. But thanks be to God, that unlike everyone else in this time of confusion and uncertainty, we know where hope and peace are to be found today.

St. Luke writing in Acts tells us that a complaint arose in the early church over the distribution of aid to widows. The apostles, recognizing the validity of the complaint, did not want to give up their tasks of preaching and teaching the Word of God, in order to solve this. It was not that they had no concern for the widows in the Church, quite the contrary. So seriously did they take this complaint that they appointed seven of the best men they knew to help resolve the issue. One of the men was Stephen, who Luke says was full of grace and power and able to do great wonders and signs among the people. It should come as no surprise then that Stephen drew the attention of many, especially the enemies of the early Church, who soon began to argue with him.

In response to this dispute, Stephen gives one of the longest recorded speeches in the book of Acts. In it, he reviews the history of God's people, essentially showing them two important things. First, is that God is not just the god of the Jews living in Israel and worshipping in the temple. God is the god of every nation and people. And second, Stephen in his speech shows how both his listeners and their ancestors have consistently rejected God. Their ancestors by rejecting Joseph, Moses, and the prophets; Stephen's listeners by crucifying Jesus Himself. It should surprise no one that Stephen's audience didn't like hearing this, but we should also note that it was only after Stephen had a vision and said, "*Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God*" (Acts 7:56), that the Jews covered their ears because they couldn't stand to hear him anymore. So they grabbed him, took him out of the city and in the traditional Jewish fashion, stoned him to death.

Reading of how Stephen died, one might easily see the similarities between his death and that of His Lord. Both Jesus and Stephen were taken outside of the city to be killed. Both men

called out to God to receive their spirits, although it should be noted that Jesus called out to the Father and Stephen to Jesus. And surprisingly, at least to many, both Jesus and Stephen prayed that God would forgive those who were killing them as they were killing them. It is fitting that in this hour of death, a disciple of Christ is found to be doing the very same things that his Lord was doing when He was killed.

But, while the actions of both Stephen and Jesus were similar when they were killed, it's really the reason why they were both murdered that impacts us today. You see, Jesus' enemies had been wanting to silence Him for a long time. But it was only when Jesus told the religious leaders, "*But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God*" (Luke 22:69), that they finally took Him before Pilate to be killed. Likewise, while people didn't necessarily like what Stephen told them, it was only when he said he saw the Son of Man at the right hand of God that they seized him to stone him. It seems that there is just something about Jesus, being at the right hand of God, that makes people angry. Angry enough to kill.

Today, here at Bethany, most of us are not being persecuted because of our faith. We are not suffering because we believe that Jesus is God, reigning in Heaven over all things. But, today, here at Bethany and indeed around Iowa, our nation, and even the world, most of us are suffering because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Whether it is the loss of health or life, the loss of livelihood or social interaction in order help slow down the spread of the virus, we all have had to take measures, or have at least had measures impact us, that easily cause us real pain or suffering. This is especially true given the uncertain nature of our situation. Most of us were ready to weather this storm for a week or two, maybe even a month. But as things go on and on, with no signs of the virus slowing down even as our society may begin to open back up, it can begin to wear on even the toughest among us. And somewhere along the way, we may begin to wonder what God is really up to, or even if God cares, or even exists.

When there is suffering and hurt like what we've been seeing recently, this idea of Jesus being up in heaven may not get us martyred, but it certainly can seem foolish. One might easily conclude that if Jesus is supposed to love us then He is not controlling things at the right hand of the Father. Or if He is, then He certainly can't care too much about what is happening! So, what can we do? What can we do to stay faithful? To have some hope when everything seems so, if not hopeless, then just depressing? What can we do to be like Stephen, living his faith in the midst of death – his own death – even praying for those who are causing him his pain?

Stephen said that he saw Jesus at the right hand of the Father, but he didn't call Him "Jesus", he said "Son of Man". Likewise, when Jesus said that He would be at the right hand of the Father in Luke 22, He called Himself the "Son of Man". And when we see or think about Jesus as only "Jesus" in Heaven with glory and power it may seem hopeless in the midst of our suffering today. But when we see Jesus, or know Jesus as the "Son of Man" at the right Hand of God, there is hope in the midst of suffering. Because Jesus being the Son of Man, means He is more than just the Son of God. He is the Messiah who came to suffer for us. To suffer with us. So that when He comes again to judge, we'll suffer no longer. That is who is in Heaven and in control. The Son of Man, who never promised His followers that they themselves would never suffer, but did suffer Himself on the cross so that we might be saved from our sin and all evil when He comes again.

And I pray that our Lord Jesus would come back quickly and I look forward to that day when sin and death are finally defeated. But until that time, I also pray that this viral pandemic would go away. But it seems as if that won't happen any time soon. So rather than getting lost in despair and hopelessness over the things we must now endure, I try to remember Stephen, and

how he lived out his faith in the midst of being killed. And He did that because He was a holy and a righteous man. But also because in the midst of his terrible death, He saw Jesus as the Son of Man who suffered and died for his sin, alive and ruling over the world. In the midst of our suffering or even death, may we too see Jesus, if not in a vision, than in His Word with the eyes of our faith. And see Him not just as our God, but as our God who, as our brother, knows our suffering and loved us so much that He would suffer and die Himself to take away our suffering forever. The result is that like Stephen, we can live as His people. But even more than that, in the midst of things that we don't always understand, when we see the Son of Man, we may have real peace and real hope in our lives today. Amen.

