



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

May 17th, 2020 A.D. – The Sixth 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 32*

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

² **Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

⁷ You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹ Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

¹¹ **Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**

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 17:16-34

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?” ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.”

²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for

“ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’;
as even some of your own poets have said,

“ ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”

²⁹ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” ³³ So Paul went out from their midst. ³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Sermon – ✠ *Resurrection Wisdom* ✠ *(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; Ron Prescott - *Recovering after eye surgery*, 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)- *Recovering after Cornea transplant*, 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. Rebecca Ballsteadt - *mourning the death of her father*, Dwight; Tina Freese - *mourning the death of her mother*, Maryellen; Rob Willms - *mourning the death of his mother*, Jeanette; Kevin Hansen, *mourning the death of his mother*, Shirley; 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) - *serving in the U.S. Armed Forces*.

Collect of the Day

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; 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

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 lives sanctified, and our work this day be 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.



✠ *Resurrection Wisdom* ✠

The great Roman philosopher, Pliny the Elder said that the idea of life after death is a fiction of childish absurdity and belongs to a mortality greedy for life unceasing. The Greek Aeschylus (ee-skill-ous), known as the father of tragedy, has Apollo say in one of his works that, “*When the dust has soaked up the blood of a man, once he has died, there is no resurrection.*” And the Roman statesman, Cicero, wrote that some Greeks believe that the soul of a person endures for a little while after death, but not forever; while other Greeks believe that the soul ceases to exist when the body dies. As you can see, there was a wide variety of opinions about death in the world during the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry. But one thing almost everyone could agree upon was – there is no such thing as the resurrection from the dead. This, however, did not mean that the Greeks to whom Paul would reason with were not religious. As he waited for Silas and Timothy in the city of Athens, Paul could see the many idols in the city. Statues of both gods and men, whom the Athenians revered and, in some cases worshipped, filled the city streets and public spaces. It seems as if they were looking for someone or something to fear, love, and put their trust in, as Luther might say, but they weren’t quite sure of what or who that should be.

Perhaps this should sound familiar for many of us today. To be sure, society has come a long way from worshipping statues of Zeus and Apollo, but in many ways people are still just as misguided. Just think, the false gods of Greek and Roman mythology were invented by people to help them understand things they couldn’t explain. When they saw lightning, they didn’t know about charged particles in clouds, so they reasoned it must be Zeus throwing lightning bolts at his enemies. This not only explained why there was lightning, but also gave them someone to turn to when they needed help.

Our knowledge of the world has grown incredibly since those days, but make no mistake about it, there are still plenty of things we don’t understand. Just listening to the politicians and

scientists discussing how to open up our nation and state during this current pandemic makes one thing clear – no one understands the clear way forward! Whether we are talking about the viral pandemic, global warming, artificial intelligence, or the future of work or of the economy – there is so much that people don't know or don't understand. And so where do people turn? Where do people go for help or for meaning? Just like the Greeks in the Bible, they often turn to their idols.

The idols today that give us meaning or give us hope and comfort are not statues made of stone or wood. Rather they are made at the US Mint or the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. We often can't find our idols on the streets or in the public places, but we follow them or search for them on the internet. We don't imagine our idols to hurl lightning and control the ocean waves, but sometimes we trust our idols to explain the lightning or to predict the waves of the sea. Money, fame, science - these are often the idols of today. They are the things to which we turn to not only understand the world and ourselves, but also to give us comfort and peace. And while all of these things have their rightful places, and indeed can be incredible blessings to all of humanity, so often we love them more, we trust them more than we do God. And when that happens, we have an idol. An idol that can never give us what we most desire in life. Whether it be safety or peace; happiness or meaning in life. Loving and trusting in anything other than the One True God will ultimately lead to only more confusion and despair and trouble because it will pull us away from God – the only One who can actually give us the things that we look for today.

Paul, in that great city of Athens, saw the idols that the people had made for themselves and his spirit was moved because he knew not just the seriousness of the Greeks idolatry, but also the futility. And so out of love for them, he began to speak the truth. He was angry over their idolatry, but he was also loving and generous, so he also had to be honest. And so he began telling them about God. But more than just describing God as the Creator or explaining His transcendence above all of their temples and the works of their hands, Paul told the Greeks the most important thing to know about God. He told them about what God has done through Jesus Christ.

Paul said, *“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead”* (Acts 17:30-31). In the past God had overlooked the idol worship of the Greeks. But Paul warned them of a day of judgment, when God would overlook their transgressions no longer. Therefore, Paul urged the Greeks to repent, or turn away from their idols and sin and turn to God. And doing so, not only would all these learned philosophers, the Stoics and the Epicureans, be given by God what they were seeking in their learning, they'll be given so much more. Because Christ's death and resurrection doesn't just give us peace, or joy, or meaning in life. Christ's death and resurrection give us forgiveness. And as Luther says in his *Small Catechism*, “Where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation.”

Today, I think we're all looking for a little bit of certainty in these uncertain times. Maybe we're looking for peace, for joy, for some understanding. I'm sure none of us have an altar to the unknown god in our houses, but nevertheless we're often frustrated not knowing what God is planning. But in the midst of this, let us hear Paul's words to the Greeks, and repent, turning from our idols and to the One true God who has already saved us through Christ. Give thanks for the money we have and pray for the scientists who are working on a cure or vaccines and other blessings that we enjoy in this life. But may we never let any of these things become

our idols. Because no matter how long this pandemic, or any other suffering, lasts, God's salvation will last forever. And that only comes through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ.

What will happen today or tomorrow, none of us really knows. But being saved, we do know where peace is found – at the cross where Jesus died for our sin. Having been forgiven, we do know where hope is found – at the empty tomb where Jesus rose from the grave giving us victory over sin and death. And today we even know where the meaning of our lives are found – in living as God's redeemed people whom He loves. Paul shared this message in Athens and Dionysius and Damaris believed it. By the power of the Holy Spirit working upon our hearts and minds, may we believe as well and join with them, St. Paul, and all the saints in heaven and on earth in receiving eternal life and all of God's gifts through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

