



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

May 3rd, 2020 A.D. – Good Shepherd Sunday

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 6 – A penitential Psalm of David.*

O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

³ My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O LORD—how long?

⁴ **Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.**

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?

⁶ **I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.**

⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes.

⁸ **Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.**

⁹ The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer.

¹⁰ **All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.**

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 – John 10:1-10



[Jesus said] “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is

the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Sermon – *The Abundance of Sheep (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 the marriage of John (son of Tom & Deb Mills) & Jackie Josten; Thanksgiving for the birth of Brooks, (grandson of Mark & Julie Elias); Zoe (granddaughter of Mary Nanke)- *Cornea transplant on the 11th*; 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*; Joyce Fritz - *health issues*; Betty Hein- *recovering at home*; Stephanie Macke - *recovering after radiation treatments*; Nadine Wax - *recovering at home*; Al Bachman - *cancer*; Ann Meyer - *homebound at Terrace Glen*; The family of Jeanette (Rob Willms' mother who passed away); The family of Shirley Hansen – *mourning her death on April 29th*; 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

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.



✠ *The Abundance of Sheep* ✠

In his book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Phillip Keller describes how even the strongest and healthiest of sheep may get themselves into real and serious trouble by becoming “cast down” or simply “cast”. He says that sometimes when a sheep lies down, its’ center of gravity will shift, so that it can’t get back on its’ feet. Of course this only makes the sheep panic, so that with feet flailing around in the air, it’s impossible for the pitiful creature to get back up.

Throughout the book, Keller goes on to talk about how helpless sheep are. Among all the animals in the world, it seems that sheep have gotten the short end of the stick. From all accounts they are of limited intelligence. They are terrible at finding their own food – often following familiar paths through barren places even though excellent pasture is just off to the side. They also tend to wander off, with some accounts of them walking right into open fires! Shepherds confirm that they are timid and stubborn. They can be frightened by the most ridiculous things, though at other times nothing can move them. And of course, they are absolutely defenseless. There is no way a sheep can defend itself from a predator. And many say, that of all the animals in agriculture, sheep take the most work. All of this led Dr. Bob Smith, a retired philosophy professor at Bethel College, to say that the existence of sheep was all the evidence needed to disprove the theory of evolution.

I do not know whether that is true or not, but I do know that sheep are a very appropriate symbol for human beings. They represent us so perfectly that the Bible frequently uses that image. In Psalm 100:3 we read, “*Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*” In the first part of Isaiah 53:6 we read, “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way...*” And in the Gospel lesson for Good Shepherd Sunday, Jesus picks up all of this imagery Himself. But instead of just talking about how helpless or foolish sheep are, He also talks about *The Abundance of Sheep*.

This is not Jesus talking about how many sheep there are in His flock. This is not Jesus talking about how many sheep there are in the world! Rather, when Jesus is talking about the abundance of sheep, He is talking about the abundance that the sheep have! And these are not just any old sheep – these are sheep who have Jesus as their shepherd. And following Him, they will have, as Jesus says, “*...life and have it abundantly.*”

However, today it seems as if an abundant life is just a far off dream to many in the world. As if we were not facing enough problems two months ago, now we are all dealing with the global pandemic of COVID-19 and the impact that it is making all over the world. So instead of an abundance of life, it seems as if now there is an abundance of virus! An abundance of symptoms, sickness, and death that the virus causes. Instead of an abundance of life - an abundance of people who are having difficulty making a living. Today there just seems to be an abundance of fear of contamination; an abundance of frustrations; an abundance of social isolation. This is what we see an abundance of today, and not just for the sheep who have wandered off by themselves or who have followed another shepherd who has come to kill and destroy. But this is what even those of us who have the Good Shepherd are seeing. So how can He, how can Jesus actually say with everything going on right now, that He has come so we can have life and have it abundantly?

Well Jesus can say it, and we know that it is true, because Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We don’t have an abundant life because we’re sheep or even because we are really good sheep! It’s not because we are brilliant, or beautiful, or energetic sheep. We are sheep, and even the

best of us are defenseless. We don't know where to go, or what direction in life to head in. And sometimes we get cast down, stuck on our backs, flailing around so that it is impossible for us to get back up on our feet by ourselves! These effects of sin have always been around, but perhaps never seen so clearly. As the one thing that this viral pandemic has made clear to me, is that the Bible is spot on when it talks about us as sheep. So that's not where the abundance of sheep comes from. Rather our abundance comes from Jesus.

The imagery that Jesus uses in John 10 would be familiar to most people of that time living in towns and villages. Shepherds out in the countryside would keep their flocks at night in sheep pens that consisted of low walls made of rocks and sticks. These small pens would contain only the sheep of the shepherd who would lie in the entrance way, keeping his own flock safe from danger. But in town, several flocks would be kept in a much larger and permanent sheep pen, that was guarded by a gatekeeper. When a shepherd wanted his sheep, the gatekeeper would recognize the shepherd and open the door for him. Looking at the sheep, many might think that the shepherd would have an impossible task sorting out his from all the rest. But in actuality, the shepherd would call out to the sheep, sometimes even by name, and the sheep would hear his voice and follow him out of the pen to safely graze in the green pastures to which he would lead.

Jesus promises that when we hear His voice as our Good Shepherd and follow Him as His sheep, we'll graze in an abundant life ourselves under His protection. This abundant life does not mean material things. It does not mean that we will always have everything that we want. It does not mean that we will always understand where Jesus is leading us or go where we want to go. But what it does mean is that through the work of Christ, we already have more life than we could possibly expect. Remember, we don't always listen to our Shepherd, so if we are honest with ourselves we'll find we actually deserve nothing except death. Yet Jesus has mercy on us and forgives us, so that even if we have nothing right now, we at least have our lives. But when those too are taken away, be it from a pandemic or some other illness or tragedy or in any other way, then we will truly see an abundance that is beyond our expectation and imaginations. For while we may not know where our Good Shepherd is leading us in this life right now, we know that He has already led us to eternal life with Him and all of His sheep that have gone before us.

The Bible referring to us as sheep, reminds us that we never know as much as the Shepherd. We don't always know what is best for us or the best places for us to go. We know that by ourselves we are easy prey for the physical and spiritual predators that would devour us. This can be scary, frustrating, even agonizing at time for us, just as it is for sheep. But sheep trust their shepherd and listen to his voice and follow him, just as we do the same with Jesus. And because He is our Good Shepherd, despite what we see an abundance of in our lives and in the world today, we know that we will always have life and have it abundantly. Amen.

