



## Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**8<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 A.D. – 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

*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

(Psalm 70)

Make haste, O God, to deliver me!

**O LORD, make haste to help me!**

<sup>2</sup>Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life!

**Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt!**

<sup>3</sup>Let them turn back because of their shame who say, “Aha, Aha!”

<sup>4</sup>**May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you!**

May those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!”

<sup>5</sup>**But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God!**

You are my help and my deliverer;

**O LORD, do not delay!**

*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 Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Apostles’ Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....*

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### Scripture Lesson – Matthew 25:1-13

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Afterward

the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

**Sermon** – ✚ *You Can’t Get Ready, So Be Ready* ✚ (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**

- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Dee Rose - hospice care at Meth-Wick nursing facility
- Workers in the Church, here at Bethany and throughout the world

#### **Thanksgiving**

- Veteran’s Day
- Kristi Montague - recovering after second eye surgery
- Robby & Annie Russman - recovered after COVID-19
- Rick Heller - recovering after COVID-19

## **Healing**

- Donald (brother of Carol Edwards) - hospitalized with COVID-19
- Steve Hanchera - hospitalization
- Linda Patten - recovering after hip replacement
- Kim Neuhaus - health issues
- Steve & Erin Wilson - recovering after COVID-19
- Pat Krekeler - health issues
- Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders - health issues
- Kent Zenor - recovering after second eye surgery
- Darlene Eckert - recovering after broken leg
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
- Kris Dunn - health issues

## **Shut-Ins**

- Del & Dee Block– Summit Pointe, Marion

## **Mourning**

- Bonnie Bubke - mourning her son, Scott's, death on 10/27
- Linda Patten - mourning her brother, Steve's, death on 10/17

## **Serving Our Country**

- Tailor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) – serving in the U.S. Armed Forces

## **Collect of the Day**

Let us pray... Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son to lead home His bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, 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.**



✠ ***You Can't Get Ready, So Be Ready*** ✠

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

For years I had always wanted to buy a generator. I grew up in Michigan where it was not all that uncommon to lose power because of storms and blizzards. I lived in Pennsylvania where we had flooding and even an earthquake. And of course, here in Iowa, tornados and other severe weather always pose a risk for homes to lose electricity. So being the kind of person who generally likes to be prepared for things, (you may remember the 25lbs of rice I bought several months ago), I knew it would be a good idea to have a generator that could run our refrigerator and the furnace in the event of an extended power outage. But even though I wanted to be ready, and that I knew it would be a good idea to be prepared, (and truthfully, also wanted to have another cool tool around the house), I never got around to buying a generator. I reasoned that they're kind of expensive and I always wondered just how much I would actually use one – it's not like we lose power every week and when we do, its usually just for a few hours.

And then August 10 came along with the derecho. Like most of Cedar Rapids, we lost power at our house before the storm was over and it quickly became apparent that we would not be getting it back any time soon. And as the sun began to set that day, and our house was only illuminated by a few candles and a flashlight, I realized - I should have bought that generator! I had years to prepare. I knew that this could happen, that it was even likely to happen. I knew what had to be done to be ready for this, but – I never got around to it and now it was too late. I wasn't ready when the storm hit and so there we sat in the darkness with an increasingly warming refrigerator.

Our Gospel lesson today is the parable of the 10 virgins. And while there are many details of this parable that aren't very clear to modern day listeners, the main point is obvious. Jesus says in verse 13, "*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*" Jesus tells us this parable so that we might be ready – be ready not for a once in a lifetime storm or some other disaster, but for the culmination of God's plan of salvation when He returns. And Jesus tells us this because just as it's too late to prepare for a storm when the wind starts blowing, you won't be able to get ready when Jesus comes back. You have to be ready when He does.

In the parable, of the 10 virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom to return, only five of them were found to be ready when he did. The groom here represents Jesus and, just as the virgins were waiting for the groom to come to marriage feast, the church here on earth waits for Jesus to return in glory. But in the parable 5 of the virgins were foolish because they didn't bring enough oil to keep their lamps burning while they waited. Instead, they had to go out and look for

more oil, while the 5 wise virgins had enough and entered into marriage feast when the groom came. When the foolish virgins returned, with or without oil – we don't know, they are not allowed to enter.

Jesus wants everyone to be like the wise virgins who are ready for His return. And in the parable what distinguishes the wise from the foolish virgins is if they have enough oil for their lamps. The oil for the lamps is whatever it is that we must have to be ready for Jesus' return. Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs says this could mean that the oil represents different things at different times for different people. For the persecuted Christian this could be perseverance and courage. For the Christians surrounded by false teachings, this could be the Christian truth found in God's Word. For the Christians that have stumbled or have fallen, this could be humble repentance. Of course, all of these things must first have faith and trust in Christ for them be present in our lives at all. But after saving faith, we should earnestly desire whatever else we need to wisely honor Christ upon His coming again.

As I write this, (or talk to you today) there are currently two major events that our nation is dealing with that, I'm afraid, will not be resolved any time soon. As we wait for the Second Coming of Christ, whenever that might be, we are told to be ready and the parable of the 10 virgins seems to tell us to be ready in light of what we are going through right now. Of course, the two major events that I'm talking about are the Covid-19 global pandemic and the national elections that were held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. As the number of Covid infections continues to increase and we and our communities see more and more effects of the virus upon our lives, what is the oil that we need to have in our lamps to be ready for Jesus? As not just the election results may still be in question, but certainly the reaction to the results are uncertain, what kind of oil do we need to wisely honor Jesus for His second coming? These, I believe, are fair and important questions for Christians to ask these days.

In this time of fake news and not knowing what information we can trust, let us as Christians never fail to turn to God's Word that is eternal and always true. And there we easily see what we are to do in times of pandemic and national uncertainty. When asked by a scribe what the greatest commandment is, Jesus replied in Mark 12:30-31, *"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

As we wait for election results or wait to see how the political divisions in our country will either grow or be narrowed, we must not forget that Jesus is our Lord, in a very real way. Regardless of where you are on the political spectrum, He is the one that we are to trust in above all things. And He is the one who grants our governing authorities their power. And so, no matter who is in Washington, or Des Moines, or any other seat of power, if we disrespect them, we disrespect God and won't have a lot of oil in our lamps.

Likewise, as we all want this pandemic to be over so that we can get back to the way things were before - are we trusting in God to get us there? Or do we trust our own social distancing efforts, personal protective equipment, or this doctor or that political leader? To be clear, all of these things come from God and can be used by Him to help us in our time of need. But when we trust them more than God Himself, we run out of oil and might be on the wrong side of wedding feast door. And so, let us remember what Jesus says to the scribe. Facing the pandemic in the months ahead, living in this political climate, let us always love God above all things. Knowing that He uses things in this world, let us never fail to trust Him above all else to guide us, to protect

us, and to save us. This doesn't mean that we don't trust other things at all, but rather we love and trust in Him above all else.

And this leads us to follow the second greatest commandment according to Jesus - to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is unreasonable to expect that every one of your friends, your neighbors, or your family members will agree with you on every political or social issue facing us these days. But it is not unreasonable for you to love them as our Lord commands us. This doesn't mean we have to politically agree with everyone, but it does mean that we should treat them as we want to be treated. I often find it frustrating when Christians are mistakenly or maliciously portrayed as ignorant or hateful. But if I don't like that when people do that to us, why would we do the same to those who are not Christians. Instead, I would hope that someone would listen to what I have to say and try to understand where I'm coming from and disagree or engage in conversation with me in a respectful and loving way. Yet I know that I can't expect that from others, if we, as disciples of Christ who have His command to do so, are not willing to love others as we want to be loved.

As we enter the winter months and wait for God to guide our doctors and scientists to a vaccine, loving our neighbor as ourselves will be more important than ever as we also live through this pandemic. Instead of talking about our rights as Americans, we should start talking about our responsibility to love as citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven. As an American, you have the right not to check in on your lonely or sick neighbor; the right not to help those who have lost their job or who have had their pay decrease; the right not to practice this or that safety procedure. Yes, you have those rights in this country, it is true. But if you would like to honor Christ while you're living in the Kingdom of Heaven you need to ask yourself not what are your rights, but what is your responsibility to love? Of course, this can be inconvenient and maybe even difficult or hard. But the love that Christ showed for you on the cross was not convenient. And the love that He calls upon you to have for your neighbor is not always easy. But it is how the faithful will keep their lamps burning and be ready of Jesus' return.

As we move into the middle of November, the Church begins a few weeks of focusing on the end times and Jesus' return. As we do this, we once hear Jesus' warning in our Gospel lesson for us to be ready for that day. For when that last day finally does arrive, the time to prepare will be over - you'll have to be ready. You'll need faith in Jesus as your Savior from sin, but a faith that burns with our love for God and for our neighbor as well. With this type of faith we'll have plenty of oil in our lamps as we wait for Jesus during storms, pandemics, or anything this world may throw at us. Amen.

