



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**Epiphany 2021 A.D.**

*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 other parts of the service 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 72:1-11*

- Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!  
<sup>2</sup> **May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!**  
<sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!  
<sup>4</sup> **May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,**  
give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!  
<sup>5</sup> **May they fear you while the sun endures,**  
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!  
<sup>6</sup> **May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!**  
<sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!  
<sup>8</sup> **May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!**  
<sup>9</sup> May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust!  
<sup>10</sup> **May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute;**  
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!  
<sup>11</sup> **May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!**

*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 Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....*

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## **Scripture Lesson** – *Matthew 2:1-12*

<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

*6“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

**Sermon** – ✝ *Unexpected Places* ✝ (A copy is included at the end of this service.)

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### **The Nicene’ Creed**

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven  
and earth and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of  
God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.  
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ✝ of the world to come. 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

### **Thanksgiving**

- Linda Patten - recovering after hip replacement
- Wayne (relative of Knutsons) recovering after COVID-19

### **Entrusting into God's Care**

- Those suffering from the pandemic and the storm.
- The un/underemployed
- Workers in the Church, here and throughout the world
- Dee Rose - hospice care at Meth-Wick nursing facility

### **Healing**

- Kent Zenor - recovering after eye surgery
- Dave Johnson - healing
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
- Kris Dunn - health issues

### **Shut-Ins**

- Wayne Schilling - at home

### **Mourning**

- Leisa Knudson - mourning the death of father, Bud, on 12/17
- Del Block - mourning the death of wife, Dee, on 12/16
- Linda Patten - mourning the death of friend, Doug, on 12/11
- Ronda Anderson - mourning the death of sister-in-law, Janet, on 12/11

### **Serving Our Country**

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

## Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; 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

Lord and God, heavenly Father, because You sent us Your only-begotten Son for our salvation and gave Him the name of Jesus, grant that we may begin the New Year trusting in His saving name and live all our days in His service and praise to the glory of His holy name.

**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.**



✠ *Unexpected Places* ✠

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

In our Gospel reading for Epiphany this year we come across several people who don't belong in the places they're found. First, we have the Magi. They were from the "East" – that is, "not from around here" if you were a good pious Jew in Jesus' time. But of greater significance than where they were from was who they were. The Magi were Gentiles; they were not the heirs to the messianic promise made to Israel's patriarchs. Even worse, these Gentiles were Magi, sort of astrologers/magicians. And these were not your David Cooperfield or Penn & Teller type of magicians. These were spiritual magicians with whom a king could consult, like the court magicians that served pharaoh in Egypt or Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It would have been a safe bet to say the Magi were not true worshipers of the One True God. They likely had some sort of knowledge of the God of Israel, but they did not belong in Israel or Jerusalem for that matter, and certainly not bowing before the King of the Jews.

And yet, as we think about that, we find that Herod was in a place where he did not belong. Herod was an Idumean – a descendant of Esau – who was placed on the throne of Israel by a decree of the Roman Senate, not because of any royal lineage going back to King David. Herod really

had not rightful claim to sit on the throne of David. But thanks to political posturing and strategic wedding vows, that was where Herod found himself. And thanks to his ruthless and paranoid nature, there he stayed for quite some time.

And so the Magi made a terrible mistake when they sought the newborn king in the palace of Herod – a mistake that made the whole city of Jerusalem tremble with fear. For everyone knew that Herod’s anger and jealousy would be stirred up by Magi claiming a new king had been born. And the weeping mothers of Bethlehem would soon prove them to be correct.

But the King for whom the Magi searched wasn’t in the palace in Jerusalem. He was in Bethlehem, a small town among the clans of Judah. He was under the care of a carpenter and a young virgin whose husband was not His father. Here again, it seems as if someone is not where they belong. This King should have been in a palace, dressed in fine clothing, and attended by servants. Instead, the King of the Jews was laid in a manger at His birth, knowing no kingly comfort, with shepherds and Magi His only attendants and audience.

This, of course, would not be the last time the King of the Jews would be found in an unexpected place where He did not belong. After all, He would be found in the water of the Jordan, baptized among sinners, for sinners. John the Baptist noticed this. He knew that this is not where the King of the Jews belonged.

But who would have also thought that the King would be eating with tax collectors and prostitutes and other types of sinners? These were hardly the type of people that could make up a royal court. And the Pharisees noticed this. They thought this was not the place where the King of the Jews belonged.

But then again, who would have thought to look for the King of the Jews nailed to a cross? There, taking His place between two criminals? No one expected any of that. There were hardly the places to seek and find such a King, the Messiah, the heir to David’s throne.

And so just look at all that had to happen. A star had to guide the Magi to Mary and Joseph’s house. The Spirit had to descend upon Him in the form of a Dove and His Father had to open the heavens and speak at the Jordan River. The prophets had to describe the work of Christ as being for sinners. And of course, Pilate’s sign over Jesus on the cross, “The King of the Jews” had to be written. All of this was not just for the Jews of the time...but also for the Gentile nations for all time. This was so that all of humanity might be guided to Jesus Christ – the King of the Jews – and the Lord and Savior of all.

Today in our Gospel lesson we see all sorts of people who do not belong in the places where they are found and in this we rejoice. For it doesn’t take too much time when we examine ourselves to see that we do not belong in the presence of our Holy God. He is just and hates sin. Yet when we hold ourselves up to the mirror of God’s law, we see the ugliness of our sin.

Yet we come into the presence of God by His precious invitation, guided not by a star, but by the Holy Spirit, working in many and various ways to bring us life and salvation. We come into the presence of God trusting in His promise that we have been washed with waters of baptism. We come into the presence of God trusting that our hearts have been cleansed of all our sin by the pouring out of His blood. We come into His presence knowing that the Lord Himself has invited us, not to punish us but to give us His grace and blessing.

Of course we don’t belong here among God’s chosen people or the royal priesthood of believers, the holy nation in which we now stand. But here we are, drawn by God’s goodness and mercy, and given forgiveness and salvation so that we may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

None of us deserve this honor, but having been called, gathered, and enlightened, we now go into the world as light for the world, proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light (I Peter 2:9). The people of the world live in the darkness of unbelief and continue to search for the joy of salvation in places where it cannot be found. So like the star that led the Magi to Jesus, each one of us serves as the Lord’s chosen instruments to lighten others’ paths and guide them in the way of the Scriptures, so that those who walk in the darkness may also see Jesus’ great light, receive the precious gift of the remission of all their sin, and then kneel before Him and worship Him.

Here, God’s people must be patient. For the people being drawn by the work of the Spirit out of the darkness will not always “get things right”. They will often lean upon their own understanding – just as the Magi did when they stopped in Jerusalem and not Bethlehem, or even as we do at times. But the Spirit will continue to guide us truthfully and faithfully to Jesus, so that we may repent of our errant ways and in the end, be found with Christ in His kingdom of glory. Which is right where He wants us and all people. Amen.

